

Discovering What God Actually Thinks About You

Part 4: What does God think about my doubts?

John 3:1-17

**INTRO:** Raise your hand if you have questions/doubts about God...

Unfortunately organized religion doesn't have the best track record dealing with doubts and questions

Might have been what your experience felt like...

“Conform or leave... Stop asking so many questions... What’s wrong with you, just believe...”

BUT... what if God is big enough to handle our questions and doubts...

What if he isn’t bothered or annoyed by our questions, but invites them?

What if it’s in our questions that we discover what God actually thinks about *us*? Let’s talk about it... together.

**WE:** **We all have questions about God** Exist? Jesus- good teacher but God? Resurrected? Why pain and suffering?

And what about heaven/hell/sexuality/science/politics?

Unfortunately for many... Either we are afraid to ask questions for fear of where they will lead or fear of what others will think about us...

Or haven’t been allowed to ask questions...Often comes from someone who’s own doubts scare them.

Or we are more comfortable asking question after question and never actually reaching an answer.

But as we’ve seen, God wants us to know him... so much so that he entered into our story... Jesus God in a body...

But not what Ancient Jews expected... not conquerer/not restoring the power of Israel or the proper temple worship...

Confused quite a few people... a lot of questions, doubts...

John (BFF)- eye-witness tells as story that shows **God meets us in our questions and doubts**

**GOD:** Background: John the Baptist (Different John)- Lamb of God/Messiah. Jesus gains followers

Starts teaching- “You’ve heard it said... but I say.” Starts healing people

Then claims he can forgive sin- reserved only for God.

People start thinking maybe JB was right... this is the Messiah... then Temple cleansing

Leaders: “We need to check this out... we don’t want to get Rome’s attention unless this is really it...”

So out goes Nicodemus: Pharisee- Israel’s authority on all things religious. Part of upper-class/ Rich/Influential... practiced and taught strict observance of Jewish laws.

Member of Sanhedrin- Congress, Supreme Court, and Vatican all in one. Represented the Jews before Rome

**V.1-2** Rabbi- “You are obviously a good teacher, we’ve seen you do amazing things...” Jesus interrupts him...

**V. 3** Weird... Nic hadn’t asked him anything yet... Like Jesus is having a different conversation...

Jesus goes right to Nic’s real/personal question... “I think you might be from God/bringing Kingdom... but I’m skeptical.”

**Jesus accepts every questioner as an individual**... no pat/canned/simplistic answers.

Jesus- “The Kingdom of God is bigger and better than you think, Nic.”

It’s not about your ethnicity, laws and ceremonies, it’s not about building a Jewish government/kingdom.

To SEE God’s kingdom... someone has to be born again... FROM ABOVE... Have a radical inner rebirth...

This crazy answer fits nowhere inside of Nic’s framework... or understanding of the world.

Understood tangible, measurable religion... following rules, certain categories of people being in/out, etc.

**V. 4** “Ok... I’ll bite”

Maybe a bit of dumb/sarcastic question... but Jesus doesn't mock/argue... He patiently keeps trying to explain...

**Jesus’ patience with our questions gives us an opportunity to find what we need.**

**V. 5-7** Jesus- “The truth lies outside of your framework”

You’re trying to fit all of this into your preconceived ideas... you’re trying to understand the spiritual world in physical terms

You need your spiritual senses awakened. You can’t see spiritual truth through physical eyes...

You’ll never find satisfying answers to your real questions until you are Born of the Spirit...

It’s not something you can measure, categorize, or control... Gives an example of cause and effect

**V. 8** Pre-meteorology. Speaking in ways he can understand.

You can't see the wind... But leaves moving is evidence that leads us to the truth that the air is moving...

But since we can't really see the wind... we need to open our eyes and minds in order to believe it's really there.

The Kingdom of God is the same way... it's invisible until we open our eyes and consider the evidence around us

It's there but you have to be willing to look for it and accept it.

You can't always measure, categorize, chart how God works

So... Nic asks a legitimate, deep, and honest question. A question we all ask at some point... "Huh?"

**V. 9** Even though Nic was a respected/well-known teacher... he was willing to admit that he didn't understand...

### **To find real answers we need the humility to ask real questions**

Often we let our pride get in the way of actually finding the truth.

Nic- "How is there a spiritual change that has nothing to do with keeping the rules, religiousness, ethnicity, or being part of the "right" religion?"

**V. 10** Jesus- "You're a deep think deeper... want it all figured out..."

Get out of your usual framework of usual answers and usual ways of thinking of how things "have to be"

Keep digging... keep your mind open to the possibility that there's more..."

**V. 11-12** We = probably Jesus and JB. We've seen it...

I've tried to explain it to you in your way but this is bigger than that

**V. 13** Now things are getting crazy...

Jesus is claiming to not just be SENT BY God but to have actually come down from heaven himself ...

He's either nut job or he really is the ONE

For some reason Nic sticks around... Jesus gets to his main point... in terms Nic can understand- Jesus uses Jewish history.

### **Jesus uses who we are to help us discover who he is.**

(Snake background, Moses story)

**V. 14-15** Snake wasn't a formula or behavioral program... the people had to trust

“I am the messiah... it’s the same way” “I’m offering better than you think... it’s about trust.”

**V. 16-17** Not just for Jews- for everyone Not political / military- savior, but forgiveness of and he is conquering the power of sin

Not measurable rules/checklists... but trust.

Not knowing everything, not having it all figured out in a systematic formula... simply trusting.

Not blind faith... but skepticism that has landed on an answer, the source of truth... Jesus.

Was Nicodemus convinced? Not yet. Probably sounded too easy/too lovey-dovey... maybe not holy enough for him...

Needed time to think through this new idea. And that was ok. Jesus didn’t push/force a decision.

But isn’t the last we hear about him... Pharisees want to arrest Jesus ... Nicodemus steps in: **John 7:50-52**

See him one more time... **John 19:38-42**

Something had happened to Nic...

Think about it... How did John get details of the conversation between the Pharisees?

How much the myrrh and aloes weighed? Nicodemus.

Nic is named: John’s way of saying... “It’s not just me saying this stuff... go ask him too.”

Became one of the witnesses John used as proof of the accuracy of his story.

Why? Because Nic saw something that didn’t fit within his usual boxes... Jesus died... but then the tomb was empty... and Jesus was resurrected.

Luke tells us over 500 saw Jesus after his resurrection... Nicodemus was most likely one.

**YOU:** You might be, in your own way, asking the same questions as Nic...

Is there a God? What is he like? What does he want from me? Is he mad at me? Just trust?... seems too easy.

**Jesus invites our tough questions and is patient with our honest doubts.**

So this is your permission to ask your questions. Explore your doubts. And be as patient with yourself as Jesus is...

And just like Jesus said to Nic- like the wind you can’t see God but if you are willing to open your spiritual eyes you will see the effects of his movements (his influence) all around you.

Promise: **James 1:5**

**Ask:** What are my questions about God? (Maybe even write them down)

**Pray:** Show me who you are, where you are moving, and help me to be open to what I discover.

**Dig:** Choose to prioritize time to discovering who God is.

Don't have to do it alone:

**Resources on our Alliance Page.**

**Sign up for Connect Groups/Alliances**

Email us [info@yourcrosscreek.com](mailto:info@yourcrosscreek.com)

**WE:** What if God isn't afraid or angry at your questions and doubts?

What if you had the courage to ask the hard questions and the courage to accept the answers you find?

What if you had a community with whom you could explore your real questions and doubts? Someone to be open and honest with as you search together?

What if our kids could ask their big questions?

Will we always get the perfect answer to everything we want to know? No... but we will discover something better...

In our questions we'll discover the God who loves us and invites to truly know him

Like my friend who had a lot of questions, but was willing to dig wrote me a while ago...

*"With all of the confusion, I think what I'm hearing is Jesus loves me and he wants me. Just as I am. Where I am. Even if I'm scared, maybe terrified, to trust God. Even if I can only give a little piece of me? And if I can learn to trust him more, if I'm following him, offering my life daily, willing to continue to seek truth, then whatever I'm not interpreting correctly, whatever I'm doing that might be something he doesn't want for me, he will correct. He'll teach me the correct ways? And because no one ever has it all figured out, if/when I die while still in process, he'll still love me and want me and will finish whatever transformation didn't happen here on earth, in heaven. Because he'll want me there too. If I'm seeking him, seeking truth even while I'm falling apart and wrestling with everything else in life, he'll work out the rest?"*

YES!

Ask, search, dig, explore...

Because... **When we are willing to explore our questions and doubts we discover a God we can trust.**

We can trust him even when we don't know all the answers.

## Summary:

We all have questions and doubts about God. Unfortunately organized religion isn't always accepting of skeptics and freethinkers. But what if God is big enough to handle our questions and doubts. What if he isn't bothered or annoyed by our questions but actually invites them. What if it's in our questions that we discover what God actually thinks about *us*?

## Questions:

1. Where have you seen God this week?
2. Of the 3 categories of questioners Jon described (afraid to ask, not allowed to ask, always asking but never reaching an answer) which do you relate to most? Why do you think that is?
3. Read Proverbs 2:1-15. What are a few things that stand out to you in this passage?
4. What are some questions you have about God? What are some ways you can explore those questions?
5. How can your group pray for you this week?

## Main Points:

- We all have questions about God.
- God meets us in our questions and doubts.
- Jesus accepts every questioner as an individual.
- Jesus' patience with our questions gives us an opportunity to find what we need.
- To find real answers we need the humility to ask real questions.
- Jesus uses who we are to help us discover who he is.
- Jesus invites our tough questions and is patient with our honest doubts.
- When we are willing to explore our questions and doubts, we discover a God we can trust.

## Weekly Challenge:

- Ask: What are my questions about God? (Maybe even write them down)
- Pray: Show me who you are, where you are moving, and help me to be open to what I discover.
- Dig: Choose to prioritize time to discovering who God is.

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## SHOW NOTES

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