

LESSON 4

NICODEMUS, A HESITANT FOLLOWER

Scripture Texts: John 3:1-12; John 7:45-52



This lesson affords us an excellent opportunity to evaluate some of the reasons why some refuse to accept Christ. Nicodemus is not the only man who has had problems in making a clear-cut decision for Christ and His way of life. He is a type of those who become cautious because of great education and official position. They find it difficult to publicly confess Christ. Nicodemus came, but he came by night.

MEMORY VERSE: *" . . . Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*
John 3:3

Some Refuse to Accept Christ Because of a Distorted Sense of Values

Some men have a desire to live for Christ, having seen His works, but have gotten themselves involved in business relationships, social positions and public opinions to such a degree that they feel that it would nearly ruin them to become Christians. Thinking only about those things that seem secure for the present time, they fail to realize the price man must pay in the future for leaving Christ out of their lives. Nicodemus was one who, we might say, wanted to eat his cake and have it too.

Some Reject Christ Because of a Doubt of His Divinity

Like Nicodemus, some people hold Christ in high regard as a great teacher and prophet from God, but are unable to believe on Christ as the Son of God, or as "God made manifest in the flesh." Their faith in Christ is little more than the belief they have in other people of history—that they lived and did the deeds told of them. They agree with Christ's teaching in their heads, but continue to walk in darkness because of a lack of a change in their hearts. We receive just what we pay for. Christianity has no "Bargain Day Sales."

Some Reject Christ Because They Are Unwilling to Measure to His Demands

Motivated by a desire to be held in high esteem by others, they refuse to humble themselves to follow Christ. His plan and purpose runs against their plans and purpose. For everyone who refuses Christ because of failure to discern His true nature, a hundred refuse to follow because of His exacting demands. It is not easy to break away from old habits, associates, influences, and selfish ambitions after living a self-centered life for twenty, thirty, or more years. Only a spiritual rebirth that puts God as the center of life, that brings a complete subjection to God's will and way, can make it possible. It is not easy, but it pays great dividends.

Some Reject Christ Because They Lack Moral Courage

This seemed to be the weakness of Nicodemus. He lacked the courage to stand for his convictions. His deeds of courage came too late. Christ does not call for secret disciples. He calls for disciples who will "put their hands

to the plow and not look back."

The time to begin following Christ is now. Nothing but sorrow and regret can come to those who refuse to follow Christ. What might Nicodemus have been if he had lived by the courage of his convictions? We never know the measure of another person's temptation. Our attitude should be, "There but for the grace of God go I." How can we, as the Church of God, help these ones?

Just a Thought

**"When you break your word, you break something
that cannot be mended."**

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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