

John 1:43-51 (New International Version, ©2011)

⁴³ The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, “Follow me.”

⁴⁴ Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. ⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

⁴⁶ “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked.

“Come and see,” said Philip.

⁴⁷ When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, “Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.”

⁴⁸ “How do you know me?” Nathanael asked.

Jesus answered, “I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you.”

⁴⁹ Then Nathanael declared, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel.”

⁵⁰ Jesus said, “You believe^[a] because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that.” ⁵¹ He then added, “Very truly I tell you,^[b] you^[c] will see ‘heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on’^[d] the Son of Man.”

Footnotes:

- a. [John 1:50](#) Or *Do you believe ... ?*
- b. [John 1:51](#) The Greek is plural.
- c. [John 1:51](#) The Greek is plural.
- d. [John 1:51](#) Gen. 28:12

OASIS: LivingClose: Pointing People, John 1: 43-51

Preface: Welcome to our 7th Bible study in our six sermon LivingClose series, as we explore biblical relationships that are spiritually influential and inspiring. The sermons are complemented by four LIFE Community studies, which use the same biblical text and help your LC go deeper in personal application. (Move this study along at a good pace, as 10-15 minutes are needed for the summary and application at the end.)

Possible starter question: Think of one person who helped point you to Jesus. In what ways was that person effective? What made that person credible in your eyes?

Transitional comment: Today we are going to look at a passage in John where one friend takes initiative with another. Let's see what we can learn as we listen as its read aloud. Since there are roles for a narrator and 3 others--Jesus, Philip and Nathanael--who is willing to be on our reading team?

(Pray for the Holy Spirit to lead your study, if you haven't already prayed.)

Personal time to read and overview: Take several minutes (3-5) to yourself to read this again. What verbs are repeated or similar? Get a sense for the flow. What do you learn about Philip and Nathanael? How does Nathanael's interest develop—and what contributes to his growing interest?

- O What repeated or similar verbs did you notice?
- O Let's quickly note the context. Where is this occurring? What has just preceded this?

(n.b This occurs in the area of the southern Jordan River, where John the Baptist has been preaching and baptizing. He has recognized Jesus. Several of John's disciples have begun to follow Jesus. Andrew has gone and found his brother Simon, who will be called Peter, and brought him to Jesus, declaring "we have found the Messiah." Now, Jesus is going to Galilee to begin his ministry.)

First Section (vs. 43-46):

- O What is Jesus doing in verse 43?

- O In vs. 44-46, what initiative does Philip take?

I What is your sense for the kind of person Philip is? Any reason why you sense this?

- O What is Nathanael's hesitation?

(n.b Nazareth was located in the Galilee region, but was rather remote and isolated. It had gained the reputation of being crude and unsavory, and thus was viewed skeptically, as kind of a town on the "other side of the tracks.")

I If you were Nathanael, how might you have felt about Philip's declaration in v. 45? What might have held you back?

I What is the wisdom of Philip's response at the end of v. 46?

Second Section (vs. 47-51):

- O What does Jesus recognize about Nathanael?

- O What does Nathanael's response in v. 48 imply?

I How might Jesus have perceived such about Nathanael? It is okay to speculate as the text gives only limited information in the end of v. 48.

I What might Nathanael have been doing under the fig tree? (Again, okay to speculate. Try to elicit multiple ideas, as the reality is that the text doesn't tell us, so we don't know!)

O In v. 49, what does Nathanael perceive about Jesus? What do the terms imply?

*(n.b. Rabbi—this is a term of respect for the person’s wisdom and teaching; later on it would be more closely associated with educational achievement and rabbinical schools.
Son of God—in this context, Nathanael is ascribing the closest of relationships between Jesus and God; while it doesn’t necessarily equate with deity, it comes very close.
king of Israel—some of the Messianic hopes of Israel were closely aligned with the promises of an unending series of kings proceeding from the lineage of David, who was always regarded as the greatest king during the time of the nation’s greatest prosperity.*

O In the final two verses (vs. 50-51) what does Jesus convey to Nathanael?

I Given the allusion to Genesis 28:12 (Jacob’s dream about the staircase descending from heaven), what expectations and hopes do you think Jesus was trying to implant?

(n.b. Son of Man—the phrase Jesus uses most often about himself; an OT phrase with Messianic connotations; see Daniel 7:13-14)

I What are some “transferable insights from these two verses that can motivate us?

Summary & Application overview:

O What are some of the qualities and characteristics about Jesus that we have seen in this story?

A What insight/s about Jesus do you need to take to heart or embrace?

A Given the ways Philip was a friend and witness to Nathanael, how can we imitate him?

A Who might be the Nathanael in your life that God is placing on your heart this Easter?

Prayer together: Pray...

- ❖ for our own growth and experience in knowing the real Jesus, and
 - ❖ for faith, courage and love to be the kind of friend and witness to our “Nathanaels.”
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Text notes (you can access biblical texts via www.Biblegateway.com)

- a. BIG idea: Spiritual friends provide witness and space for their friends to consider Jesus.
- b. Key verse: John 1: 46b: “Come and see,; said Philip.
- c. KEY: O = Observation; I = Interpretation; A = Application (or C = Challenge)

Advice to study leaders:

- d. Complement OIA questions with “process questions” (what else? what more? what do others think?).
- e. Determine the core questions you’ll ask (know which ones to skip if pressed for time).
- f. Always reword questions in words that are comfortable for you (and, if the question doesn’t make sense to you, then discard it.) You want to “own” each question.
- g. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don’t rush people but encourage their participation. And avoid answering your own questions!
- h. Timing/pacing: allocate your time and move forward gently, with a steady pace.
- i. Application: Pace the study to conclude with “difference making” application.
- j. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into “teaching,” rather than facilitating. It can cause people to feel distracted or de-powered.
- k. I recommend the 1 vol. New Bible Commentary, Revised (21st Century ed, IVP). Well worth \$35.