

## LESSON #11 - REASON

As a high school quarterback, I never stepped onto the field wondering if we could win. My JV coaches—a science teacher and a math teacher—prepared us so thoroughly that when game day arrived, they simply turned us loose to play. We knew the offense, understood our opponent, and I never called a play without knowing exactly what to do. Our confidence came from preparation.

God's wisdom works the same way. Biblical wisdom is more than accumulating knowledge; it is knowing how to apply truth when it matters most. It is the continual process of learning, growing, and being transformed.

Nicodemus and Paul are powerful examples. Both were highly educated and deeply versed in the Scriptures. Nicodemus sought truth with humility and ultimately stood with Jesus. Paul, once a violent persecutor of Christians, encountered Christ and became history's greatest missionary. His deep understanding of Scripture allowed him to reason with people, leading many to faith.

Knowledge informs us. Wisdom transforms us. God doesn't simply want us to know His Word—He wants us to live it with confidence when life puts us on the field.

### **Nicodemus: A Journey from Curiosity to Courage**

#### **1. He Sought Jesus (*John 3:1–2*)**

Nicodemus was a respected Pharisee and member of the Sanhedrin, yet he knew something was missing. He came to Jesus seeking truth.

#### **2. He Learned He Must Be Born Again (*John 3:3–6*)**

Jesus taught that entering God's kingdom requires a spiritual rebirth—not religion, good works, or knowledge alone.

#### **3. He Heard the Gospel (*John 3:16–17*)**

Jesus revealed God's plan of salvation: eternal life comes through faith in the Son.

#### **4. He Defended Jesus (*John 7:50–51*)**

Though cautiously, Nicodemus stood for justice when others sought to condemn Jesus.

#### **5. He Honored Jesus Publicly (*John 19:39–40*)**

After the crucifixion, Nicodemus helped bury Jesus with costly spices, publicly identifying himself with Christ despite the personal risk.

Nicodemus reminds us that God patiently leads those who sincerely seek Him from curiosity to conviction and from private faith to public devotion.

In *The Chosen* (TV show about Jesus), Nicodemus is portrayed as a man relentlessly pursuing the truth. He spends countless hours studying the Torah and the prophecies concerning the coming Messiah. As he listens to Jesus' teachings and witnesses His miracles, he carefully records the evidence.

One powerful visual shows his study wall covered with strings connecting Old Testament prophecies directly to the words, miracles, and life of Jesus. Each string represents another fulfilled prophecy—another piece of evidence pointing to one unavoidable conclusion: Jesus is the promised Messiah.

As a respected rabbi, Nicodemus understood that his calling was not simply to preserve tradition, but to examine the evidence honestly. He wrestled with the implications, weighing every prophecy against every fulfilled promise. His search was not driven by emotion but by a sincere desire to know the truth, no matter where it led.

Whether or not every detail of this portrayal is historical, it beautifully illustrates a biblical principle: genuine faith is never afraid of honest investigation. The more Nicodemus examined the evidence, the closer it led him to Christ.

### **Lessons from Nicodemus**

- Religious knowledge is not enough—we must be born again.
- Faith often grows one step at a time.
- Following Jesus requires increasing courage.
- Jesus welcomes sincere seekers
- **John 19: He stood with Jesus publicly.**

### **Paul, a man of reason**

Paul is perhaps the greatest example in the New Testament of using **reason, evidence, and Scripture** to persuade people to believe in Jesus. He didn't ask people to have blind faith. He explained, answered questions, and appealed to both the heart and the mind.

#### **Paul's Method: Reasoning, Not Arguing**

The Greek word often used to describe Paul's teaching is **dialegomai**, from which we get the word *dialogue*. It means to discuss, reason, or exchange ideas.

#### **1. Paul Reasoned from the Scriptures (Read the book of Acts) Acts 17:2–3 (NKJV)**

"Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, 'This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ.'"

Paul's approach was:

- Reason > Explain > Demonstrate > Invite a response

## **2. Paul Adapted His Message to His Audience**

To Jews, he started with the Old Testament.

To Greeks, he began with creation, philosophy, and their own poets.

### **Acts 17:22–23 (NKJV)**

"Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious..."

He found common ground before presenting Christ.

## **3. Paul Persuaded Rather Than Forced Acts 18:4 (NKJV)**

"And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks."

His goal wasn't to win arguments but to win people.

## **4. Paul Welcomed Questions (Acts 24–26)**

When speaking before governors Felix, Festus, and King Agrippa, Paul calmly answered accusations and presented the gospel.

King Agrippa famously replied: "You almost persuade me to become a Christian."

And Paul said, "I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains." (Acts 26:29)

## **5. Paul Used Logic Alongside Faith**

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul built a careful argument for Christ's resurrection.

**He essentially says:**

- If there is no resurrection...
- Then Christ isn't risen.
- If Christ isn't risen...
- Our faith is futile.
- But Christ **has** risen.

It is one of the clearest logical arguments in the New Testament.

## **6. Paul Was Gentle and Respectful (2 Timothy 2:24–25)**

"And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition..."

Paul believed truth should be spoken with humility.

## **Paul's Principles for Sharing the Gospel (Can you do the following?)**

- Know the Scriptures.
- Understand your audience.
- Start with common ground.
- Ask thoughtful questions.

- Explain patiently.
- Present evidence.
- Trust the Holy Spirit for the results.

Paul understood that faith is not irrational—it is reasonable. He appealed to history, prophecy, eyewitness testimony, and personal experience, always pointing people to Jesus Christ.

**As he wrote: 2 Corinthians 5:11 (NKJV)**

"Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men..."

Paul's ministry demonstrates that Christianity welcomes honest questions. He reasoned with people because God invites us to love Him not only with our hearts, but also **with all our mind** (Matthew 22:37).

## SUMMARY

The lesson for me is that the wisdom God desires is not simply filling my mind with biblical knowledge. True wisdom is allowing God's Word, prayer, and the Holy Spirit to transform the way I think, live, and love. It is learning how to continually grow, apply His truth, and become more like Christ.

Jesus gave us one great mission: to go and tell others what He has done in our lives. Our personal testimony, grounded in Scripture, allows us to reason with people—not to win arguments, prove we're right, or tear others down—but to lovingly point them to the hope of salvation with patience, humility, and grace.

When I look back, I'm grateful for the coaches God placed in my life, including my father. They didn't just teach me football or hockey; they taught me how to prepare, how to think, how to learn, and how to keep growing. Those lessons shaped the way I've approached every area of life. I've largely been self-taught in art, illustration, design, and technology because they gave me the confidence to keep learning.

The same is true spiritually. The day we stop learning from God is the day we stop growing. Spiritual maturity is not a destination; it is a lifelong pursuit.

Nicodemus and Paul remind us that God can use educated minds surrendered to Him. Both searched for truth, reasoned from the Scriptures, and ultimately pointed people to Jesus. Their knowledge became wisdom because it was transformed by an encounter with Christ. That is the kind of wisdom I want—a wisdom that not only knows the truth but helps others discover the Savior.