The Disciples

Lesson 3: What Are You Thinking?

**Lessons in this series:** [1](http://www.teensundayschool.com/330/lesson/i-will-tell-your-name.php) [2](http://www.teensundayschool.com/331/lesson/love-in-your-obedience.php) **3**[4](http://www.teensundayschool.com/339/lesson/dealing-with-doubt.php) [5](http://www.teensundayschool.com/334/lesson/leaving-a-legacy.php)

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Goals

1. To introduce students to the disciple, Nathanael  
2. To educate students on what the Bible says about Godly thinking  
3. To give students an opportunity to strive for more Godly mental habits in a practical, worthwhile way

Topics

Apostles, Disciple, Following Jesus, Habits

Scripture Memorization

Colossians 3:2

OPENING PRAYER (5 to 10 minutes)

GROUP BUILDING (15 minutes)

**All Around Frozen (Game)**  
This game is basically like freeze tag, and will require some running around space. Start by selecting someone to be the first "Freezer". When the "Freezer" tags someone, he or she becomes frozen, and must remain still until someone who is not frozen runs a full lap around the frozen person. Once free, he or she is allowed to re-enter the game. The object is for the "Freezer" to try to get everyone frozen. The last person frozen can become the next "Freezer".

GETTING STARTED (5 minutes)

**General Discussion:**• Who can name all twelve of the disciples?  
• Have you ever met someone who knew you, but you didn't know them? How did that go?  
  
We have been talking about the disciples. In today's story, we hear about a disciple who Jesus knew, well, kind of.

DIGGING IN (20 minutes)

**Read John 1:43-46**

Here we have our introduction to Nathanael. He is most certainly the same disciple who is elsewhere named Bartholomew. We read this passage a few weeks ago in our study of Philip. Nathanael hears the gospel in the same way that most do, by word of mouth. But this encounter is interesting.

**Nathanael’s Reaction**  
  
**Discussion Questions:**  
1. What is Nathanael’s first reaction to news of the gospel? *(Doubt)*

He can’t believe that anything worthwhile like the Messiah would come out of Nazareth. This is true for several reasons:

• Nathanael from Cana, Jesus from Nazareth    
• Likely, Nazareth was considered the wrong side of the tracks  
• Living 10 miles apart in those days was not as simple as it is today. Can you imagine ten miles on foot or donkey?

But let’s not be so hard on Nathanael for being judgmental. Nathanael’s reaction to Jesus’ hometown might be similar to the response that we would give when God uses someone unexpected to do His Will in OUR lives.

• What does a homeless person know about preaching?”  
• What can a non-Christian teach me about Jesus?”  
• What can God do with someone like me who doesn’t have any flashy gifts?”

Often God uses people in situations that we would not expect. Sometimes, our view of other people is a concern. While other times, our own view of ourselves hinders us from seeing God’s bigger plan.

**Read John 1:47-51**

It is interesting how Jesus greets Nathanael. There is no formal greeting, or even a “come and follow me.”  Jesus begins His relationship with Nathanael by telling him something about him.

**Discussion Questions:**1. What would prompt Jesus to introduce Himself this way?  
2. How would you have felt if you were Nathanael?

Jesus possibly wanted to show Nathanael from the beginning that He was someone serious, not just some chum from Nazareth. Not only could He see right through Nathanael, He even knew Nathanael’s actions when he WASN’T there.  We can assume that Jesus wasn’t actually there in person from the context of the passage.

Jesus laid Nathanael’s thoughts bare. We will never know what Nathanael was doing or thinking underneath the fig tree. Some suggest that it was a Jewish custom of rabbis to study the law under a vine, fig tree, or olive tree. What we do know, as did Nathanael, is that JESUS knew what he was thinking. In his case, Jesus found nothing false.

3. What would Jesus say of us if our inner thoughts were revealed?    
4. What would Jesus say to you if He confronted you with your thoughts? Explain.

MAKING IT REAL (25 minutes)

**Read Psalm 94:11**

**Discussion Questions:**1. Which is more important, our thoughts or our actions? Explain.  
2. Is God able to hear and understand ALL the thoughts of EVERYONE at the same time?  
3. How does this change the way you view confessing sin? How about being honest with God?

**Read Matthew 22:37**

**Discussion Questions:**1. How important is our personal thought-life to God?  
2. Look back at the passage—what question is Jesus answering? *(Which is the greatest commandment?)*3. How do you love God with all your mind?

**Read Romans 8:5-7**

Paul suggests that our minds are leaning one direction or another. Either they are controlled by sinful nature or the Spirit’s nature. Verse 6 suggests that our minds will either offer us peace and life, or they will destroy us!

The Bible is CLEAR about the importance to give God our minds. Often we think of our service to God in terms of our commitment to church activities, our daily actions, and our daily Bible reading (all are important). However, our minds are the seat of our decisions, actions, and commitments. Our minds must be pure!

Think about a sin that you have committed in your life. Most of the time, our sins are rooted in thoughts we have had for some time. The fact is, each of us has thoughts in our lives of which we are not proud. What are we to do about it? Here are four responses to that question.

**1. RECOGNIZE IT**   
  
**Read Isaiah 55:8, and Psalm 94:11** (again)

We need to recognize and understand that our thoughts are NOT the thoughts of God. We are sinful people, and we are NOT OK to think some of the things we do. We also must remember that God knows all of our thoughts. We can hide nothing from Him.

A person once said that character is what you do when no one else is looking. The truth is, someone else is ALWAYS looking. When we recognize that impure thoughts about or toward others hurt God, we should be able to control our thought lives in a more Spirit-filled way.

**2. READ**

**Read Hebrews 4:12**

The Bible serves as such an important guide in our Spiritual walk!  How do we expect to keep our minds on God if we aren’t filling our minds with His Word?  His Word is living, and it will convict us when our thoughts are wrong.

**3.  PRAY   
  
Read Psalm 26:2**

God already knows your thoughts, but if you are serious about wanting to keep your mind pure in Him, ask Him to convict you of improper thoughts. If you are asking God to purify your mind and you are seeking to clean it out, I assure you He will help.

**4.  FOCUS   
  
Read Philippians 4:8 and Colossians 3:2**

If you want to be a great soccer player, your coach will tell you that you need to immerse yourself in soccer.  You need to play soccer, train for soccer, watch soccer on TV, attend soccer games, sleep with your ball, and have soccer posters on your walls. In much the same way, if we really want to be serious Christians, we have to immerse ourselves in the things of God! Our minds have to be focused on Spiritual things all the time.

Think for a minute on these tough questions:  
• With what is your mind filled?  
• If Jesus were to approach you at school or somewhere tomorrow, what would He say about your thought-life?    
• Could He say about you, “You are a true Christian, in whom I find nothing false”?   
  
**Read Colossians 3:2**

My challenge for you tonight is to look at your own life and see if there are any areas where you struggle to keep your thought-life pure. If there are some areas or even some potential areas, type out Colossians 3:2 and post it on that object. Whenever you use that thing, put what goes into your mind through the Colossians 3:2 filter.

CLOSING PRAYER (2 minutes)

Have your students pair up, share where they are going to put their Brain Cards, and pray for each other.