



Discussion Guide for “For Goodness Snakes” *The Devil in the Details* Week 4

What is the goal of faith? Is it safety? Is it a sense of control? Prestige and position? These were in Nicodemus’ mind when he sought out Jesus. But Jesus’ words to him are confounding: Jesus will become a snake, lifted up for the world to see. How does this image challenge our ideas of who God is and what God wants from us? How can Jesus-the-snake invite us to become more loving, more present in our world?

Scriptures for Further Reading

[John 3:14-21](#)

[Numbers 21:4-9](#)

[Psalm 107:1-2, 17-22](#)

[Ephesians 2:1-10](#)

Lenten Challenge:

Find an image of the crucifixion ([here’s a good one if you need it](#)). Spend 10 minutes a day this week meditating on the image of Jesus raised up like the snake. Ask God what it looks like for you to imitate him this week.

Questions for Discussion

1. What are your biggest goals in life?
2. Who was Nicodemus? What do you think he was after in life?
3. Why does Jesus compare himself to a snake? How would this have confused Nicodemus? What does it say about God?
4. Reread John 3:14-21. Why is a crucified God hard to follow, especially in our culture? How do we judge ourselves when we are offended by a God who dies?
5. Return to what you said in the first question. How can your biggest goals or deepest desires become idols? How does the crucified Jesus reframe those goals and desires?