


WARM UP | Everyone who has been through school knows what it's like to have a teacher who seems to have eyes in the back of their head. Just when you think you could get away with something, making a quick comment to a friend or passing a note, your name gets called out and you are the centre of attention - and not in a good way. It is all too easy to see God that way - just waiting to catch us out in doing wrong. But, as we shall see, that is far from the case.

 **READ** | John 1:43-51



BACKGROUND |

The religion of the Israelite people in Jesus' time frequently made a mockery of true belief. Jesus was highly critical of the Pharisees and those making great public prayers to draw attention to themselves.

Some held to the heart of true belief. Nathanael was one of these. Nathanael's friend Philip told him he had found the Messiah, from Nazareth, and invited him to come and see him. Nathanael, knowing the poor scriptural and historical background to Nazareth, doubted his friend could be right. Jesus' unexpected greeting caused Nathanael to ask how Jesus knew him. Jesus' enthusiasm for Nathanael came from seeing him having his quiet time under the fig tree, out of sight of most, reading Scripture, praying and meditating alone when many others would have been skiving off. Nathanael was affirmed for what he was doing, and what that said about him, when he thought no one was looking.

QUESTIONS |

- 1 Have you felt like you need to show people a better image of yourself, a "church face" instead of the real you?
- 2 What areas of your life might there be that God praises but no one else knows about?

INSTRUMENT PANEL

3 Do you have things you need to confess which you are not proud of, that God has seen but you haven't dealt with?

4 How can you better support each other to genuinely "walk the talk"?

CONSIDER THIS |

In Psalm 139 the Scriptures tell us that God knows us more intimately and fully than any other person alive or dead. From our thoughts to our physical creation, God knows all. The psalmist concludes, "Search me, O God and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts, see if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." (Verses 23-24)

As a dad I know that the best change in a child is when they come to you and ask for help with something, not when it is imposed upon them. Those requests come when they know you, and spend enough time with you, to know your heart for them. In spending time with the Lord we learn His heart for us and we gain confidence in asking for His help in life, no matter how big or small we are!

MY RESPONSE AS A PROMISE KEEPER |

What do I need to apply from what I have learned from this study?

WRAP UP |

Nathanael recognised his own daily need to seek out God in quiet and reflection. Do we? Discuss how this works/might work for you.

IT'S TIME FOR PRAYER |

