

Discovery Lessons

For New Believers



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Dear Friend,

Congratulations!

You have made a wonderful and life-changing decision when you accepted Christ as your Savior and Lord.



Welcome to the Family of God!

This is just the beginning of your spiritual walk with God. To help you along the journey, this basic Bible Study material called *Discovery Lessons For New Believers* will help you better understand the decision that you have made. Just as a plant needs water and an infant needs milk to grow, so does a new Christian need spiritual food and guidance to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18).

This booklet contains four lessons that you can do on your own or with the help of your discipler. It could also be used in a small group Bible study setting. It is our desire that each lesson will help you discover truths from the Word of God that will help you be firmly rooted in your faith in the Lord.

God bless you as you begin your study!

In God's service,

Rev. Benjie M. Miranda
Associate Pastor
Spiritual Formation Ministry
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Discover What It Means To Be Born Again

Text : John 3:1-18

Start off : If you would live your life all over again, who would you like to be? Why?

Study :

Background

Read John 2:23-24. Jesus was in Jerusalem for the Passover Feast, one of the annual feasts that Jewish men were required to celebrate. While he was there, Jesus ministered to people through his teaching and miracles. Many believed in him. Others did not and remained skeptical. But even religious leaders came to see why the people were flocking to Jesus. One such man was Nicodemus. Of all the New Testament Bible characters, he was the only one to whom Jesus explained the second birth in detail. Let's go to our passage for study in John 3:1-18 and discover what being born again means.

A. The Meaning of the Second Birth

1. What can we learn about Nicodemus?
(v.1) _____

(v.10) _____

Was Nicodemus a very religious person? ____ Yes ____ No

The Pharisees were a prominent sect of the Jews in Christ's time. Some of them were indeed godly. But most of those who came into conflict with Jesus were hypocritical and envious of Him.

2. As Nicodemus approached Jesus, he said some things about the Master. How did he recognize Christ (v.2)?

Nicodemus' approach showed that he was open-minded and ready to receive a new revelation from God if this was genuine. He showed no hostility towards Jesus.

3. What was Jesus' reply to Nicodemus' statements (v.3)?

4. How did Nicodemus understand this? (v.4)

Was this what Jesus meant? Yes No

5. Jesus proceeds to explain to Nicodemus two kinds of births. Can you name the two and cite their characteristics? (vv.5-8)

Birth 1: _____

Characteristics:

Birth 2: _____

Characteristics:

Obviously, Nicodemus did not understand for he asked "How can this be?" (v.9)

6. If a person is religious, does that mean he is born again?

Yes Not necessarily

Why do you think so? _____

7. What does it mean to be born again?
- a. It is the requirement by which one could enter God's kingdom or heaven (v.3). State verse 3 in your own words.

 - b. It is being born of the Spirit of God (vv.5-6). On his own, man could not experience spiritual birth. Human work is not needed. It is the Spirit's work.
 - c. It is something that a person experiences inside him (v.8). It is not a visible experience. Like the wind, you can't see it but it is real.
 - d. It involves believing and accepting the testimony about Jesus (vv.11-12).
 - That He is the *only* source of Eternal Life (vv.15-16).
 - That He is the *only* Savior and through Him there is no condemnation (vv.17-18).

B. The Importance of the Second Birth.

Someone once said "Born once die twice. Born twice die once." Let us see why it is important to experience the second birth.

1. In verse 14 of our passage, Jesus was referring to a story familiar to the Jews. This is found in Numbers 21:4-9. In this story, there are several aspects that were applicable in Jesus' time (and ours as well). It shows the condition of man. Notice the parallelisms.

The Time of Moses

- (a) The ancient Israelites were guilty of disobedience and sin.
- (b) The Israelites were under condemnation and were being punished for their sin (death).
- (c) The poison of the serpent was deadly and there was no man-made antidote.
- (d) God's solution was the bronze serpent. The people were urged to look at it to receive healing. If a man believed in this provision and obeyed, he would not die but live.

The Time of Jesus (and ours)

- (a) All men are disobedient and guilty of sin.
- (b) All men are under condemnation and will be punished for sin (death).
- (c) There is no antidote for our sin. It cannot be removed by man's works.
- (d) God's solution was His Son, Jesus. If a man believes in Him, he is healed from the effect of sin which is death and he receives eternal life.

2. After showing the condition of man, what did Christ declare in verses 14-15?

3. What response should a person make to receive eternal life? (v.16)

4. What would happen if a person does not believe or rejects God's provision? (v.18)

Apply:

- 1. Have you placed your trust in Jesus who is the **only** one who could give you eternal life?
- 2. Have you believed in Jesus who is the **only** one who could save you from condemnation? If you answered **yes** to both questions, then you have been born again. Can you recall when you made this decision? If you answered **no** or you are not sure, turn to page 17.

Discover What It Means To Be A Christian

Text : 1 John 5:1-21

Start off : The Lord Jesus said that not all those who call Him 'Lord' will enter the kingdom of God. Not everyone who says he is a Christian is really one. Who is a true Christian?

Study :

Background

Through Christ, the believer has experienced the second birth. John uses the phrase "born of God" to describe this experience. He wrote this epistle with the major theme of fellowship with God. He wanted his readers to have the assurance of the indwelling God through their abiding relationship with the Lord (2:28; 5:13). Belief in Christ should also be manifested in the practice of righteousness and love for the brethren which in turn produces joy and confidence. In this lesson, we shall discover who a real Christian is. As we study the passage, we shall see five basic characteristics of one who is a child of God. What are these?

1. A Christian is one who is born again.

How can we know if a person is born again (or born of God)?
(v.1) _____

(vv.2-3) _____

Love for others (especially other Christians) and obeying God are not requirements to be born of God. Believing in Jesus is what's needed. Love and obedience are the results of being born of God. You cannot be a Christian without experiencing the second birth (read also John 1:12-13).

2. A Christian is one who is assured of victory in this world.

How is this victory made possible?

(v.4) _____

To whom is victory assured?

(v.5) _____

Without Christ and without faith in Him, overcoming this sinful world would be impossible. It does not mean that the Christian is perfect. It means he can continually experience victory over temptations and trials on a moment-by-moment basis.

3. A Christian is one who is assured of his salvation.

A genuine born again Christian *cannot* lose his salvation. Eternal life is permanent. Otherwise it is not eternal. Why can a Christian be sure that he has eternal life?

a) Because of the testimonies of the following:

(vv. 6-7) _____

(vv. 8-9) _____

b) Because of the character of God.

What is God's implied character in v. 10?

c) Because of the source of eternal life.

Who is the giver of eternal life and where is it found?

(v.11) _____

d) Because the believer himself can tell if he has Christ in his life.
Read verse 12.

Who has (eternal) life?

Do you have eternal life if you do *not* have the Son?

___ Yes ___ No

Can a person know that he has eternal life? (v.13) ___Yes ___No

4. A Christian is one who prays according to God's will.

What gives us the confidence to approach God in prayer?

(v.14) _____

(v.15) _____

Verses 16 to 17 illustrate a kind of prayer that God would like us to pray. We are to pray for our loved ones and other Christians who sin rather than judge them. God will do the judging. We ourselves are accountable to Him. (See also Gal. 6:1)

5. A Christian is one who experiences victory over habitual sin.

There is someone who could help the Christian from sinning. Who is he? (v. 18b, 20)

How can he help us from sinning?

(v.18) _____

(v.20) _____

One sin that he can help us overcome is idolatry (v.21). Idolatry is the worship of man-made images. It also includes anything that dethrones or takes the place of God in our lives.

But what if a Christian sins, will he lose his eternal life? Read God's provision in 1 John 1:9.

What is the Christian's part? _____

What is God's part? _____

Apply:

1. A person does not become a Christian just by being born into this world. He needs to be born of God (spiritually). This happens when the person believes in Jesus. Test yourself if you have this kind of faith by answering these questions:
 - a. Have you come to a point in your life where you are sure of going to heaven when you die? Yes No
 - b. Have you made the decision to personally believe in Jesus? Yes No
 - c. Do you have Christ in your life? Yes No
 - d. Do you know that you have eternal life? Yes No
Why do you say so?

2. Perhaps you know of a person who claims to be a Christian and yet his life denies his relationship with God. Don't let this stand in the way of your *own* relationship with God. Each one of us will answer to the Lord. If you know of a Christian who has affected your relationship with God, would you silently lift up this person to the Lord in prayer? Pray that God will help him or her.
3. Thank the Lord for giving you eternal life. You may want to write Him a short letter here or you could just praise Him silently.
4. Start memorizing: John 3:3 and 1 John 5:12-13

Discover What It Means To Live In The Spirit

Text : Romans 8:1-17

Start off : Did you resolve to do something at the beginning of this year? Were you able to achieve it? What helped in achieving this resolution?

Study :

Background

The Apostle Paul discussed the nature of the Law and the believer's relationship to it in Romans 7. The Law cannot save. One of its purpose is to show the sinfulness of man. Having believed in Christ, the Christian has been released from the bondage of the Law. Life is now lived not primarily by following the Law but rather by following the Spirit (Read 7:6). But if the Christian lives by the Spirit, he lives according to the Law for he follows the essence of the Law which is love for God. Jesus Himself said to His disciples "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching" (John 14:23). To live in the Spirit is in harmony with obedience to the Law. God has provided us the means to be able to obey Him by giving us the Holy Spirit. Let us discover what living in the Spirit means.

1. Living In The Spirit Starts With A Proper Relationship With Christ.

Who are those being referred to as having no condemnation?
(v.1) _____

What has Christ done that resulted in freedom from condemnation for the believer?
(v.2) _____

(vv.3-4) _____

What are the two kinds of life that we see here?

2. Living In The Spirit Submits The Control Of The Mind To The Holy Spirit.

What are the differences of the two kinds of life? Compare them in terms of the mind or the way of thinking. Some of the answers are by implication or the opposite of what we see in the other.

Life According To The Sinful Nature

Life According To The Spirit

(v.5) _____

(v.6) _____

(v.7) _____

(v.8) _____

What runs in our minds eventually controls our behavior and attitude in life.

3. Living In The Spirit Signifies That God's Spirit Indeed Lives In Us.

The evidence that a believer is living in the Spirit is that he is *not* living under the control of the sinful nature. That shows that the Spirit of God truly lives in him.

If the person is living under the control of the sinful nature, what two things does he not have? (v.9)

What things are true of the believer who has Christ in him?

(v.10) _____

(v.11) _____

4. Living In The Spirit Seals Our Commitment To Live A Godly Life.

What is our obligation according to Paul in verse 12?

What will be the result if we continually live according to the sinful nature?

(v.13) _____

It is highly probable that a person who continues to willfully sin may not be a Christian in the first place. There has to be a willingness to obey the Spirit and put to death the misdeeds of the body. Read again verse 13.

What are some of the "misdeeds of the body" that you need to "put to death" in your life?

What are some truths about our relationship with God that enables or encourages us to live a godly life?

(v.14) _____

(v.15) _____

(v.16) _____

(v.17) _____

What does it mean to be "led by the Spirit?"

How will that be evident in your life?

Apply:

1. Cite some changes in your life that has happened since you received Christ into your life.
2. What are the areas in your life that still need to be placed under the control of the Holy Spirit?
3. Pray and ask God to help you overcome a sin in your life.
4. Start memorizing: Romans 8:9

Discover What You Need To Grow In Christ

Text : Acts 2:42-47

Start off : What does a newborn baby need to grow?
What happens when infants or children don't eat or get enough nourishment?

Study :

Background

After Jesus ascended into heaven, on the Day of Pentecost, the Spirit came upon the disciples. Filled with the Spirit, Peter preached the gospel to the crowd that was gathered on that day. Those who accepted the message were baptized and added to their number (Acts 2:14-41). These people became Christians when they repented of their sins and believed. Their baptism was an act of identifying themselves with Christ. There were several things that they did soon after they accepted the message. The believers devoted themselves to doing these because of their importance in strengthening their faith. As Christians, we need to follow their example and their devotion to the following:

1. The Word of God (v.42)

Of the things the believers devoted to, what was mentioned first?

What do you think is the content of the apostles teaching?

_____ (see Matt. 28:18-20)

There is only one gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. To preach any other gospel other than what Christ taught is to be rejected. Read Paul's warning regarding this in Galatians 1:8. What is God's judgement to those who preach a different gospel?

Why should we have a daily intake of the Word of God?
(Matt. 4:4)_____

Growth Suggestion: As you are a new Christian, spend a reasonable time reading the Bible everyday. Start with one of the gospels to learn more about Jesus Christ. Also, seek to join a small group like a Growth Group, Discipleship Group or Sunday School class where the Word of God is taught.

2. Fellowship With Christians (v.42, 44)

The word fellowship in Greek is *koinonia* which means an intimate sort of association or communion. Someone once defined it as “life-sharing.” It is like the close relationship between Jesus and his twelve disciples. It is more than a social interaction. In a fellowship with other believers, the goal is to strengthen one another in the faith. How can we strengthen one another?

Growth Suggestion: It would be good to be part of a smaller group of believers in a church like those mentioned above. Ask your facilitator or pastor for the schedules of these small groups that meet for fellowship and spiritual growth.

3. Worship (v.42, 46, 47)

The “breaking of bread” in this passage and in 1 Corinthians 11 are in the context of worship. Whenever the early Christians gathered together to break bread, they sang psalms and hymns, they prayed, recounted and reflected on the words of Christ. Their worship was a celebration as well as a commemoration of the work of Christ. They also praised God when they came together. Praise in the Bible is often giving thanks and ascribing glory to God for the things that He has done. Breaking of the bread has come to be known in our time as “Communion,” “The Lord’s Table,” or “The Lord’s Supper. Today, we celebrate this as part of our worship services. The early Christians worshiped in the Temple and in homes. It is true that you can worship God even when you are alone and wherever you are. But the Bible also exhorts us to worship together with other believers.

What does Hebrews 10:25 say regarding our coming together for worship?

Growth Suggestion: Make it a point to attend Sunday Worship this week. If it is Communion Sunday feel free to take part in it. If you feel uneasy coming to church alone, come with a friend or a family member.

4. Prayer (v.42; see also Acts 3:1)

Prayer is definitely one spiritual discipline that is of utmost importance. We should pray not only when we have problems or trials. But we pray as we commune with God during our personal times of worship. Having a regular prayer time is a good habit to acquire. In Acts 3:1, Peter and John were going up to the temple "at the time of prayer." Prayer can be done in an assembly of believers or in private. An example of the church praying together is in Acts 13:1-4. What was the occasion all about in this passage?

An example of praying in private is in Luke 5:16. Describe what Jesus did when he prayed.

Growth Suggestion: Make prayer an important part of your Christian life. It has been said that "Prayer should be the key of the day and the lock of the night."

5. Witnessing (v.47)

Witnessing is testifying about Jesus Christ through our lives and through the proclamation of the gospel. When we live out our faith, even without saying a word, we become witnesses for Christ. This is where good works come in. Good works were prepared by God not for salvation but they are to be done by those who have experienced salvation (see Ephesians 2:8-10). They serve as a sign of our gratitude to God for saving us.

Going back to Acts 2:47, what did the believers enjoy as they came together and ministered to one another?

Witnessing is also proclaiming the gospel. There has to be the preaching or the proclamation of God's Word in order for a person to believe and experience salvation. Look at the last part of verse 47, what was the result of proclaiming the gospel?

Growth Suggestion: Witnessing not only means sharing the gospel. It also means living your life that is consistent with your faith. How will you do this?

Apply:

1. Take note of the Growth Suggestions and ask God to help you apply these.
2. You have just finished this Bible Study material **Discovery Lessons For New Believers**. For your next step, we suggest that you attend the Membership Class of the Church where you are attending.
3. Start memorizing: Acts 2:42

How To Experience The Second Birth

1. You need to acknowledge that you are a sinner before God. Every human being is born with sin that was inherited from Adam. Because of this sin, man is spiritually dead.

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23)

2. You need to know that because of this sin, the consequence is separation forever from God.

"For the wages of sin is death..." (Romans 6:23)

3. You need to believe that God loves you, the whole world in fact, that He sent His Son Jesus to die for our sins.

"But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

4. You need to be born again. To be born again, you must believe that Jesus died for your sins and declare that you accept Him as Savior.

"That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9)

5. God's promise is that if you accept the Lord Jesus as your Savior, He will accept you.

"Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved." (Romans 10:13)

Call upon the Lord right now and pray this prayer :

"Lord God, I know that I am a sinner and I cannot save myself. I ask You to forgive me. I believe that your Son Jesus died for my sins. I want to be born again and receive new life from Him. Lord Jesus, come into my life. I receive you as my only Savior. Thank you for the gift of salvation and eternal life. Amen."

If you sincerely prayed this prayer, you are born again because the Spirit of God is now in you. You now have eternal life (see John 3:3; Romans 8:9-10; John 6:47)

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