

## Teachings of Jesus - # 6 Growing in Christ

### Memory Verse

**John 3:3 (NKJV)** *Jesus answered and said to him, **Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.***

### Who Was Nicodemus?

**John 3:1** *There was a man of the **Pharisees** named **Nicodemus**, a **ruler** of the Jews. Nicodemus recorded only by John, mentioned 5 times. **Pharisee** = Hebrew *Pharash*, to set apart "the separated ones". Jesus denounced them, in the strongest language as hypocrites.*

**Luke 18:11, 12** *"God, I thank You that I am not like other men; extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess." Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots, and Essenes. Paul was one.*

**Matthew 5:20** *"For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.*

**Nicodemus** (Nih kuh dee' muhs) = "Victory Of The People". - A person of the name of Nicodemus, the son of Gorion, is mentioned in the Jewish writings, who lived in the time of Vespasian, and was said to be so rich that he could support all the inhabitants of Jerusalem for ten years. - A. Clark

**Sanhedrin** = "Sitting Together" great council of 70 High Priest.

### To Be Born Again **Read John 3:1-15.**

One in three adult Americans say they've been "born again,"

**\*John 3:3** *Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*

**Ezek 18:30-32** *..."Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin. "Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and **get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit.** For why should you die, O house of Israel? "For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies," says the Lord GOD. "Therefore turn and live!"*

**Jeremiah 31:33** *"But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.*

- There are two spirits abroad in the earth: the spirit that works in the children of disobedience and the Spirit of God. These two can never be reconciled in time or in eternity. The spirit that dwells in the once-born is forever opposed to the Spirit that inhabits the heart of the twice-born. - A. W. Tozer
  - If you are born once, you are born in the devil's family, if you are born twice, you are born in God's family.
  - "He that is only born once will die twice, but he who is born twice will die only once." **God will have no grandchildren in heaven.**
  - You must be born again. This is not a command, it is a foundational fact. **The characteristic of the new birth is that I yield myself so completely to God that Christ is formed in me.** - Oswald Chambers
- 1 Samuel 10:6, 9** *"Then the Spirit of the LORD will come upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man.... So it was, when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, that God gave him another heart; and all those signs came to pass that day.*

### A New Creation

**Psalms 51:10** *Create (Not repair) in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.*

During the days of the old west a simple farmer who took his gun to the **gunsmith for repairs**. After examining it, the smith said: "Your gun is in a very worn-out, good-for-nothing condition. What sort of repairing do you want?" "Well," said the countryman, "I don't see as I can do with anything short of a new stock, lock, and barrel. That ought to fix it up again." "Why," said the smith, "you're better off buying a whole new gun."

**\*2 Corinthians 5:17** *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*

**Deu 10:16** *"Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer.*

Seller of an old home was promising to fix up home before sale. The buyer said, "Forget about the repairs. When I buy this place, I'm going to tear it down and build something completely new. I don't want the building; I want the site."

It is true that there may be an outward correctness of deportment without the renewing power of Christ. The love of influence and the desire for the esteem of others may produce a well-ordered life. Self-respect may lead us to avoid the appearance of evil. A selfish heart may perform generous actions. - SC 58.

### The New Life in Christ

**Matthew 7:18–20** (NKJV) *A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them.*

**Titus 3:5–7** (NKJV) *not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, <sup>6</sup> whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup> that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

**Galatians 6:15** (NKJV) *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.*

**The old man cannot be saved. A tiger was shot at SF zoo for pretty much just being a tiger.**

**Jeremiah 13:23** *Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil.*

### Abiding in Christ

**John 15:5** (NKJV) *“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.*

**Mark 4:19** (NKJV) *and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.*

**John 15:6** (NKJV) *If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.*

**Psalms 80:8–9** (NKJV) *You have brought a vine out of Egypt; You have cast out the nations, and planted it. You prepared room for it, And caused it to take deep root, And it filled the land.*

**Isaiah 5:7** (NKJV) *For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, And the men of Judah are His pleasant plant. He looked for justice, but behold, oppression; For righteousness, but behold, a cry for help.*

**\*1 John 2:28** *And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.*

**1 John 3:6** (NKJV) *Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.*

In Christ or in Jesus is mentioned over 100 times in the New testament. **Is our effort in producing fruit or abiding.**

### Prayer

**Mark 1:35** *Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. Jesus made time for prayer during an incredibly busy ministry.*

**Matthew 6:5** (NKJV) *“And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites.*

**Matthew 6:8** (NKJV) *“Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.*

**Pray With Passion**

**James 5:16-18** *The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.*

**Pray Believing**

**\*Mark 11:24** *“Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.*

### Die to Self Every Day

**Galatians 2:20** (NKJV) *I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*

**\*Luke 9:23–24** (NKJV) *Then He said to them all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.*

**Came To Jesus At Night** (Sincerity and timidity struggling within.)

**John 3:2** *The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.*

**John 7:50-52** *Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,)*

**John 19:39, 40** *And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes,*

**We should learn to commune with Jesus at night too.**

**At the close of the previous chapter Jesus says he can read hearts.**

**John 2:24, 25** *But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man. Then with Chapter 3 He proves it.*

## He Saw The Works

**John 5:36** *...the very works that I do; bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.* We also see the works of Jesus in creation and conversions!

**John 10:38** *"but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him."*

## Born Again - How?

**John 3:4** *Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"*

It's always funny to watch a half grown joey kangaroo jump back into the mother's pouch.

All the Jews believed in miraculous birth, Isaac, Samson, Hannah... A second birth was a mystery .

**1 Pet 1:23** *having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,*

**Phil 2:5** *Let this mind (Heart) be in you which was also in Christ Jesus...*

Busy with orders on his night job at Taco Bell, 17-year-old Nicholas Zenns was working the drive-up window. He heard a woman scream, turned, and saw a very pregnant Devorah Anderson standing in front of him. The high-school student pulled off his headset, called the paramedics, and tried to make the woman comfortable. But the baby wouldn't wait. Nicholas said. "The baby's head just popped out into my hands,"

**Compared to delivering burritos, delivering a new baby took priority.**

## Water & Spirit

**John 3:5** *Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."*

**Ezek 36:25-27** *"Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.*

Dirty Jobs. Clean up shower after logging work. Felt Born Again!

## Baptism...

**Mark 16:16** *"He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."*

## Flesh & Spirit

**John 3:6** *"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Feed the spirit, soul food."*

**1 Pet 2:11** *Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;*

**Rom 8:1** *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*

## Like The Wind

- Better not to have been born at all than never to have been born again.

**John 3:7, 8** *"Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."*

**Acts 2:2** *And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind,...*

A person may not be able to tell the exact time or place, or trace all the chain of circumstances in the process of conversion; but this does not prove him to be unconverted. Christ said to Nicodemus, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit." John 3:8. Like the wind, which is invisible, yet the effects of which are plainly seen and felt, is the Spirit of God in its work upon the human heart. That regenerating power, which no human eye can see, begets a new life in the soul; it creates a new being in the image of God. While the work of the Spirit is silent and imperceptible, its effects are manifest. If the heart has been renewed by the Spirit of God, the life will bear witness to the fact.

## Miscarriage?

- Sometimes being "born again" requires a long pregnancy. Suppose the battery of my watch were dead, what good would it do if I were to polish up the case until I could see my face in it? Why, not one

iota! The seat of the trouble is inside the watch and so it is with the sinner. The new birth, then, is something more than reformation.

### Nicodemus Defended Jesus

**John 7:50-52** *Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that **came to Jesus by night**, being one of them,) Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth? They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.*

### Served Jesus

**John 19:39, 40** *And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first **came to Jesus by night**, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.*

### He Came To Jesus

**Mat 11:28** *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

George Whitefield at the age of 16 became deeply convicted of sin. He tried everything possible to erase his guilt through religious activity. He wrote, "I fasted for 36 hours twice a week. I prayed formal prayers several times a day and almost starved myself to death during Lent, but only felt more miserable. Then by God's grace I met Charles Wesley who put a book in my hand which showed me from the Scriptures that I must be "born again" or be eternally lost."

Finally, by the work of the Holy Spirit in his heart, Whitefield came to understand Jesus' words in John 3. He believed and was gloriously saved. After he became a preacher, he spoke at least a thousand times on the subject, "Ye must be born again." He fervently desired that all who heard him might experience the transforming power of God's grace.

In 1752 George Whitefield wrote to Benjamin Franklin: "As I find you growing more and more famous in the world of letters I recommend to your unprejudiced study the mystery of the New Birth. It is a most important study and if mastered will abundantly repay you. I bid you, dear friend, remember that He before whose bar

we must both soon appear has solemnly declared that without it we shall in no wise see His Kingdom."

"How is it that almost every animal except man renews its beauty and youth at stated seasons? Birds molt their plumage, snakes slough their skins, even the cockroach casts off its old covering, and all come forth bright and beautiful as in the days of their youth; but we must wear the same skin until our dying days."