

Nicodemus meets Jesus

Key Scriptures:

Jn. 3:1-16 There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. ² This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." 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." 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?" 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. ⁶ "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' ⁸ "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."

⁹ Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?"

¹⁰ Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? ¹¹ "Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. ¹² "If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? ¹³ "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. ¹⁴ "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ "that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁶ "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Key Point: Regeneration is necessary for salvation. Jesus is not just something you add to your life. He must completely renovate it.

TALK IT OVER

Start talking: Pick a conversation starter for your group.

- When you have had questions about God, who did you turn to?

Steps of faith: Reflect on your recent walk with Christ.

- Share with the group a step of faith you recently took.
- If you don't have a personal example, can you think of someone else's step of faith that has been encouraging or inspiring to you.

Start thinking:

- Read through the key scriptures and share any observations or questions with the group.
- The Greek word *anōthen* translated "again" (v. 3, 7) has a double meaning. It can also mean "from above" like in John 3:31, 19:11, 23. How does changing the translation to "born from above" change your understanding of the conversation in John 3? (Note: the New English Translation has "born from above").
- Do you think it would be better to tell a person they need to be born from above rather than born again? Why or why not?
- What do you think Nicodemus is asking in v. 9?

Start sharing:

- Why do you think Nicodemus came to Jesus at night? How does fear or a desire for privacy play into our own spiritual journeys?
- Jesus tells Nicodemus that his whole life needs to be remade, not just improved. How do you think this idea challenges people who live good, moral lives but haven't experienced spiritual rebirth?
- Considering the house metaphor: When you first heard the gospel, did you understand it that your life needed complete renovation, not just some spiritual assistance? What did you understand?
- How does the story of the bronze serpent (Numbers 21:8-9) help us understand the significance of Jesus' death on the cross? How does "looking to Jesus" bring us healing?
- Nicodemus shared three things he knew to be true about Jesus. What do you know to be true about Jesus? (Do you know the scripture where those truths are found?)

Start doing: Are you counting on Jesus to supplement your life, or to regenerate, redeem and renovate you from the ground up?

Prayer Requests. It may be helpful to pray the scriptures back to God.

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