



NEW TESTAMENT • LESSON 9

NICODEMUS

You must be born again to enter the kingdom of heaven.



MONDAY

THE STORY: JOHN 3:1-15

“Unless a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Nicodemus came to Jesus at night. In view of John’s use of light and darkness (John 3:19), we may deduce that Nicodemus, though seeking, was an unbeliever fearful of being seen with Jesus in the daylight. Jesus’ words, “born again,” can be literally translated “born from above.” Nicodemus took them literally, but upon further explanation Jesus revealed that a person needed to be born of the Spirit of God to enter into heaven. Nicodemus did not understand. We are not told how Nicodemus responded, but he is mentioned later in John 19:39 with Joseph of Arimathea caring for Jesus’ dead body. One would like to believe that Nicodemus eventually understood what Jesus meant, and one day in heaven we may see Nicodemus.

TALK ABOUT IT:

What does it mean to be born again? (Rather than think of “born again,” think “born of God.” Before people are saved, they are, according to the Bible, spiritually dead in their sins. They do not have the ability to respond to the gospel with faith. In order for people to have saving faith in Jesus Christ, God must first touch

them with His power, making them alive by His Spirit. Then they can believe. Once God causes our spirits to come alive, or be born again, our hearts respond in faith to the gospel. At that time, God gives us His Spirit and comes to live with us. God tells us that He places His Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee that we are going to be with Him forever in heaven. (See 2 Corinthians 1:21, 22.)

Can anyone become a Christian without the work of the Spirit? Can anyone become a Christian by doing something themselves? (No. The Bible is clear that our faith is not brought about by our works. (See Ephesians 2:8, 9.)

PRAY:

Pray for each person in your family and ask God to pour out His Spirit upon them, cause them to be born of God, and give them faith to believe.



TUESDAY

THE STORY: JOHN 3:16-18

Apart from Christ, man stands condemned. When Adam and Eve sinned, all mankind was condemned to die. Jesus came into the world to save the world, not to condemn it. Those who don't believe stand condemned already.

TALK ABOUT IT:

What does it mean to be condemned? (Condemnation is the judgment of eternal death and punishment that comes to all those who have been found guilty of sin by God. Since we are all sinners, we all deserve to be condemned.)

Why are those who believe in Jesus free of condemnation? (When Jesus received God's wrath for our sin on the cross, He took the condemnation of all those who believe.)

PRAY:

Thank Jesus for taking God's wrath in our place so that we can be free of condemnation.



**WEDNESDAY
WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?**

THE STORY: 1 JOHN 5:1-5

The third chapter of John introduces the idea that becoming a Christian is a new birth. This new birth comes to everyone who believes in Jesus. What we believe about Jesus is of primary importance. 1 John 5:5 tells us we must believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

Many people celebrate John 3:16 all by itself. But we need the whole of the Scriptures, which tell us everything we need to believe about Jesus. It is not sufficient to believe that Jesus was a good teacher or that He was a prophet. We must believe that Jesus was both man and God, that Jesus died for our sins taking the penalty we deserved, and that He rose from the dead as He said He would.

Jesus bore the wrath of God for our sin. That is why a man who trusts in Christ is "not condemned" (John 3:18). If Jesus was only a good teacher, or a remarkable prophet, or a man like any other, He would not have been able to take away our sin. When we believe in Jesus, God places His commands in our hearts and places the Holy Spirit to live within us. It is by the power of the Spirit of God that we obey God's commands and live for Him. In fact, though all believers struggle with remaining sin, they are able to overcome sin and grow in the grace of obedience.

TALK ABOUT IT:

What does John tell us we need to do in order to become a Christian? (We need to believe - see 1 John 5:5)

What evidence marks the life of those who believe? (They love God by obeying His commands.)

PRAY:

Pray that God would help you to believe and place your trust in Jesus as the one who died on the cross for your sins and then rose again. Pray that God would fill you with His Spirit and change your sinful heart so that you would desire to obey the Lord and honor Him with your life.



THURSDAY

THE STORY: JOHN 3:19-21

Wickedness hates the light. John tells us that light has come into the world and that men hate the light because their evil deeds are exposed by the light. John 8:12 records these words of Jesus: “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” Jesus came to expose the teachers of the law. They appeared to be righteous, but inside they were sinful. Time and time again Jesus exposed the hidden, sinful motive of men’s hearts.

TALK ABOUT IT:

Why do people hide the evil they have done? (People keep the evil of their hearts hidden to appear more righteous than they really are.)

Can God see the sin that we hide? (Yes. Even if everyone else does not know our sin, God does. If we confess our sin and bring it out into the light, God promises to forgive us and cleanse us from our sin. (See 1 John 1:9.)

PRAY:

Take time to ask your children if they have any sin they are trying to keep hidden. If they do, ask them if they would like to confess and share it with you. (Offer to speak to them privately.) Then pray for them, and pray that God would help your whole family to walk in the light.



FRIDAY
ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

THE STORY: ISAIAH 52:13

This passage falls in a section of Isaiah that very specifically points to Jesus. Here in this verse, the servant will be raised and lifted up, and then highly exalted. John 3:14 says that Jesus will be lifted up - a reference to His crucifixion.

TALK ABOUT IT:

Read Isaiah 52:13 and Philippians 2:7-10. How does Paul's description of Jesus match Isaiah's description? (Paul tells us in Philippians 2:7-10 that because Jesus took on the nature of a servant, God exalted him.)

What are the three key ideas that match? (Jesus was a servant, was lifted up on the cross and is highly exalted.)

PRAY:

Thank Jesus for taking the nature of a servant and dying in our place on the cross.