

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Christian Living
Leader's Guide

UNDERSTANDING SALVATION

LESSON 7: REGENERATION

INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Discipleship Essentials module entitled *Understanding Salvation*. This series of lessons examines the very foundational idea of salvation, and what occurs in the life of a person who becomes a Christian. These lessons are critical for every believer to understand before they can effectively share the Gospel with others. Each lesson examines a concept from a Biblical perspective and includes time for discussion of these principles as well as how to effectively apply them to your life. This set of lessons is ideal for use with discipling new believers to ensure they fully understand these ideas.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

The intended audience for these lessons is new Christians or those who would like a refresher on the basics of Christian salvation. Those who are preparing for evangelism and discipleship may benefit from discussion of these ideas. These lessons assume the participant has made a decision to follow Jesus and wants to explore Christianity further.

The Leader's Guide is intended to help the leader prepare for the lessons and can be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials found on www.discipleshipessentials.org.

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UNDERSTANDING SALVATION

LESSON 7: REGENERATION

PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to reflect on the miracle that occurs for believers after they become Christians. They will understand the meaning of the term regeneration, and the effects it has on a believer's life.

LEADER'S NOTE

This lesson is the first of three that examine what happens to a person who is saved. Regeneration is the term for being made new, or becoming a new creation. We also may use the words 'quickenings' to describe the divine life imparted to us, and 'being born again' to describe the process. Regeneration is just the beginning of our new life in Christ, but it is what makes our future spiritual growth possible. Without regeneration we do not have the ability to change. Stress to your participants that while we may choose to come to God, it is His work in us, not something we can accomplish for ourselves, that causes us to change. How can you model your dependence on God as you teach this lesson today? What can you share with them about the change God has made in you?

INTRODUCTION

(Select two or three of the following questions)

- ❖ Do you have any young children of your own, or have you observed small children? What exciting firsts have you observed in a child? (First steps, first words, etc.) Why were they exciting?
- ❖ What mistakes did you make as a new believer? What advice from someone would have helped you?
- ❖ What changes have you seen in the lives of others when they first believed in Jesus?
- ❖ The Bible uses the phrase 'born again' to describe what happens inside someone when they become a Christian. In what ways is becoming a Christian like being given a new life? How could you explain this to someone else?



STUDY

TEACH

- ❖ **What Is Regeneration:** Regeneration is the miraculous process of being made new. This process takes place after we have heard and received the Word of God as ultimate truth. Romans 10:17 says "Faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of Christ." After a person hears the word of Christ and chooses to have faith, they become a Christian. In the Bible this process is explained by Jesus as "being born again" and it is a gift of God.
- ❖ **Nicodemus:** In the book of John we have the story of Nicodemus, a wealthy man who came to visit Jesus one night. We don't know why he came at night, but he may have been afraid to be seen, or perhaps he was very busy during the day and wanted Jesus' undivided attention. When Nicodemus spoke with Jesus, Jesus seemed to be speaking in a riddle. Nicodemus recognized that Jesus must have a power from God, but he did not know from where it came.
 - "Jesus answered him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.' 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?' Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit'" (John 3:4-6).
 - Jesus told Nicodemus that a complete re-creation of a person was necessary for holiness. Our character must be changed. We must be entirely different from what we were before. This great change is something that God works in us, and for us, which we cannot do ourselves.
 - What makes this a miraculous process is that our birth into the family of God is not a result of our good works. It is a result of God's mercy on us, and our being renewed by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5).

ASK PARTICIPANTS

Jesus often answered questions in a puzzling way. Sometimes, this was to show a person that He knew what was at the root of their question.

- Why would Jesus have explained salvation to Nicodemus in this way, describing the process as being born again?
- Is a baby an active participant in being born? Is being born something they do for themselves, or something that happens to them?

**TEACH**

- ❖ **We Were Dead in Our Sins:** When we come to Christ, our identity goes through a major change. God frees us from the guilt of our sin, but there is still a long battle to overcome the power and the products of sin in our lives. Ephesians 2:1-3 explains: “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.”
 - In our former sinful state we were foolish and three relationships were affected. God-ward we were disobedient, self-ward we were deceived and enslaved by the flesh, world, and devil, and man-ward we were malicious, envious, and hated one another. Battling sin is not something we can accomplish in our own strength. Becoming new and learning what areas of our lives need to change is a process that will take some time. We were dead in our sins and we have been given new life. Ephesians 6:10-11 says, “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.”
- ❖ **What Happens To a Person Who Has Been Born Again?** The Bible tells us that after we are saved we become new. We undergo a series of experiences that allow for these changes to occur. We are given eyes to see what areas of our lives need to change.
 - **How Does God Regenerate Us?** The answer is in Titus 3:3-7. *Read this passage together.* When a person receives Christ at conversion, the Holy Spirit removes the defilement of our soul and makes it new. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away, the new has come.”
 - *As a group, look up and discuss the following verses. Compare what the verses say about our life before regeneration and after. This could be done in small groups, on paper, or other medium you have available. Some answers are provided here for you as a leader.*

Scripture	Our Old Life	Our New Life
<u>Ephesians 2:1-5</u>	Dead in trespasses	Alive in Christ
<u>Romans 8:11</u>	Dead mortal bodies	Alive, His spirit dwells in you
<u>Titus 3:3-7</u>	Fools, disobedient, slaves, hate	Heirs with Christ, hope
<u>1 John 3:9</u>	Practice sinning	God's seed in us, free from sin
<u>1 John 5:18</u>	Keeps on sinning	Protected from the evil one
<u>2 Corinthians 5:17</u>	Passes away	A new creation
<u>John 1:12-13</u>	Born of men	Children of God



❖ WE ARE MADE NEW!

- **Our Identity Changes When We Become Christians.** We receive divine life inside us; we undergo a change of dramatic proportions. To summarise, the following three changes occur inside us:
 - We receive divine life and are no longer dead.
 - We are born into God's family; we are children of God and heirs with Christ.
 - We are regenerated into a new state; we are given a new heart and new mind.

DISCUSSION

- ❖ Consider the way you were—your actions, thoughts, the way you treated other people— before you became a Christian, and the way you are now. Are there changes you need to make in your life?
- ❖ How would you describe being born again to someone of another worldview? What would you need to keep in mind in describing this process?
- ❖ Regeneration is just the beginning of the process that ends with us as mature believers. What can you do to continue to mature into Christ-likeness?
- ❖ What does it mean for you that you now belong to the family of God? That you are God's child and an heir with Christ? What does it mean for you that you are a new creation?

PRAYER

Close the lesson in prayer. Thank God for the supernatural event that takes place inside us when we are regenerated. Praise God for His power to purify us, make us new in our attitudes, desires, beliefs, and conduct. Pray for wisdom and understanding for yourself and the participants as you share this message with others, and as you increase your own saving faith. Pray that all of you would continue on to maturity and Christ-likeness.