

LESSON ESSENTIALS

UNDERSTANDING SALVATION

LESSON 7: REGENERATION

Salvation is much more than a ticket to heaven and the promise of eternal life. It also guarantees you a new life on earth, because Jesus changes our lives from the inside out. This lesson will help open your eyes to the miracle of salvation.

This lesson will help you understand the salvation experience and encourage you to reflect on the changes that you have seen in your own life.

When a person first becomes a Christian, he goes through a series of stages – he is given divine life, he is born again into God’s family, he is made new, and given a new heart and mind. Read on to learn more about this

“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away, behold the new has come.”

2 Corinthians 5:17

This is the heart of the Gospel, the Good News of what God has offered to all of us: when you become a Christian, you have new life in Christ! Do you remember who you were before you gave your life to Jesus Christ? Have you watched someone change after they become a Christian? God is at work restoring the broken parts of us the moment we decide to follow Him.

When we accept Christ as our personal Saviour, we are what some call ‘born-again’ or ‘regenerated.’ God changes our lives, as explained in Ephesians 2:4-5: “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.” This passage shows that a person goes through a major change when he is saved. God cleanses us completely of our sin. The Holy Spirit regenerates the soul, bringing it to a new state, completely different from the old one. This internal process involves a complete restoration – being made new in Christ! This is the most exciting thing that takes place within us. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away, behold the new has come.”

Now, the all-powerful Ruler of the universe has a relationship with us! He teaches us, brings us hope and a future, and is protecting us and showing us His love. Through His Spirit living within us, we begin to desire the things that God wants us to desire, and think the kinds of thoughts that God would have us think. As our values and priorities change, and we rely more on God, we may be surprised by the transformation that we see in ourselves, or by what we can do in His power.

God’s regeneration is the best thing that can happen to us. It teaches us our present identity as a child of God while also promising us hope for eternal life. The Holy Spirit living within us gives us the fruit of the Spirit: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23). As well, through God we are able to resist sin, submit to the will and desires of God, and love others with a selfless love. This change within us is supernatural!

As well, when we are ‘born again’ we enter into God’s family. This term must not be misinterpreted to mean re-incarnation – this is a spiritual rebirth, not a physical one. On earth, when we are born naturally we become a part of our parents’ family. But, in the spiritual sense, when we are born again we enter the family of God. John 1:12-13 reinforces this point: “But to all who did receive him,

who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.” Thus, it is our born-again status that gives us our identity as a child of God.

As a new child in the family of God, we begin to grow and mature into the image of Christ. By increasing in knowledge through prayer, reading God’s Word and obeying it, the ‘baby’ grows into the person God wants him to be. The apostle Peter explains in 1 Peter 1:23, “For you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God.” Let us listen to God’s word through the Bible and prayer, so that we can better reflect Him as we grow in our faith.

As we mature in faith, God gives us a greater awareness of sin as well as a desire and ability to resist it. We can learn more about sin as we observe the difference in ours’ and others’ lives before and after salvation. Before salvation, we didn’t fully understand the extent of our sin. But now, through God’s strength, we can look back and see our sin. Although we know we are forgiven from these things, and many of our desires have changed, we may be tempted to continue in our former sinful actions. But because these actions are offensive to God, we must correct these actions so that we can grow in our faith.

We will still be tempted by sin sometimes. Even Jesus was tempted – although He never succumbed to sin. As believers, we need to understand that conquering sin is not a personal battle – we can’t do it in our own strength. Trying to be good enough by ourselves will only result in guilt and frustration. But with strength from God, through prayer and reading the Word we can be more than conquerors, resisting sin through His power.

Some people think that when you become a Christian, you won’t have troubles any longer. That’s not true at all. Sometimes we go through hard times because God is disciplining us, just like a good parent would. We need to remember this discipline is for our own good. Hebrews 12:7-11 says, “It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for

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REFLECT

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Look at these verses
for more about
regeneration:

Titus 3:5

Ezekiel 35:26

1 John 3:9

2 Corinthians 5:17

Colossians 3:10

our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it." Discipline and suffering feel painful at the time, but there is always reward in the end. When we are in the midst of suffering, let's continue on toward Christ knowing that for us, there is an incomparable glory for us eternally: "For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison" (2 Corinthians 4:17).

IN REVIEW

- When a person believes in Christ as his Lord and Saviour, God imparts His Spirit into our soul, bringing us new life and including us into God's family.
- The new state enables us to grow in our relationship with God and become more like Him.
- In this new state, we still face temptation and go through hard times. But God is right beside us, protecting us, helping us, and preparing us for an eternal glory with Him.

HAVE YOUR SAY

- What is your biggest challenge as a Christian? What might you do to overcome this challenge?

- What is your greatest joy in being a follower of God?

- How has your life changed since you accepted Christ?

- How can you explain this change when you tell others about the Gospel?

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