

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Christian Living
Study Guide

UNDERSTANDING SALVATION

LESSON 7: REGENERATION

INTRODUCTION

This Study Guide is part of a Discipleship Essentials module titled *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 discussing these principles as well as how to effectively apply them to your life. This module is ideal to use when discipling new believers to ensure they fully understand these concepts.

The Study Guide is intended for an individual to look deeper into a specific lesson on their own. The lessons can be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials, such as the video and audio productions found on www.discipleshipessentials.org.

Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

All other content is © 2019 Trans World Radio Canada, and may be used in any way you like as long as you use it with the purpose of reaching the world for Christ and do not charge for the use of the material. See more license details at www.discipleshipessentials.org/licensing.



UNDERSTANDING SALVATION

LESSON 7: REGENERATION

WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

There are a series of miraculous changes that happen within a person when they receive salvation. This lesson is the first in three to examine these changes – regeneration, justification and sanctification. You will see the Biblical definition of these changes and be able to see God more clearly at work in your life.

JUST SO YOU KNOW...

Regeneration is the term for being made new, or becoming a new creation. We also may use the words 'quickening' 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 or even the desire to change. Regeneration is being given new life and being spiritually made alive from the dead. The part of our spirit and soul that was destroyed by sin is healed, so we are capable of seeing the things of God and responding in faith to His call on our lives. It is a beautiful thing!

GETTING STARTED

1. What changes did you see in the lives of others when they first believed in Jesus?

2. The Bible uses the phrase 'born again' to describe what happens to 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?



STUDY

- ❖ **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.

Jesus spoke about being born again to his followers, and some were confused by it. A wealthy man named Nicodemus came to visit Jesus one night. Nicodemus recognized that Jesus spoke powerfully and wanted to know more about Him. Jesus answered Nicodemus in a kind of riddle.

- Read John 3:1-13. What was Nicodemus’s question about being born again? How did Jesus reply?

While this sounds like a riddle, Jesus was giving Nicodemus a picture of how a person can be right with God. Nicodemus was used to doing many things to try and impress God. 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, and which we cannot do for 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).

- 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?

- ❖ **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 results of sin in our lives.



- What does Ephesians 2:1-3 tell us about what we are like before we undergo spiritual regeneration?

Before regeneration, sin destroys us and clouds our minds and hearts. Because of this, three relationships are affected. God-ward we are disobedient, self-ward we are deceived and enslaved by the flesh, world, and devil, and man-ward we are malicious, envious, and hating 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, but we have been given new life.

❖ **WHAT HAPPENS TO A PERSON WHO IS BORN AGAIN?** The Bible tells us that after we are saved we become new. We undergo a series of experiences that allow changes to occur. We are given eyes to see what areas of our lives need to change.

- How does God regenerate us? Look up these two passages from the Bible and write down what you learn. Titus 3:3-7, and 2 Corinthians 5:17

The Holy Spirit removes the defilement in our soul, which is caused by sin, and makes it new! We receive new life, and we become spiritually awakened. Look at the following verses in the chart and write down what they say about our old life before regeneration, and our new life. If you get stuck, a copy of the chart is on the next page filled in for you. But try it yourself first!

Scripture	Our Old Life	Our New Life
Ephesians 2:1-5		
Romans 8:11		
Titus 3:3-7		
1 John 3:9		
1 John 5:18		
2 Corinthians 5:17		
John 1:12-13		



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

What does all this mean? That God causes a radical change in our spirits and souls. There is a stark contrast between the old and new life!

❖ **WE ARE MADE NEW!** Our identity changes when we become Christians. We receive divine life inside us; we undergo a change of dramatic proportions.

➤ Read Romans 8. What does it say happens to a person who is regenerated?

To summarize, when we are made new in Christ, we experience the following:

- We receive divine life and are no longer dead. (Galatians 2:20, Romans 8:10)
- We are born into God's family; we are children of God and heirs with Christ. (Romans 8:17)
- We are regenerated into a new state; we are given a new heart and new mind. (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- We receive the Spirit of God inside us. (Romans 8:13)
- Nothing can separate us from the love of God. (Romans 8:39)



IN SUMMARY

- ❖ Regeneration is the miraculous process of being made new, or being born again, that takes place after we have heard and received the Word of God as ultimate truth.
- ❖ Nicodemus wondered how we could be born again without returning to our mother’s womb. Jesus was giving Him a picture of the type of radical change that was necessary for holiness.
- ❖ Regeneration is like being born again, because it is not something we can do for ourselves but it is something God does for us. We receive a new life inside us.
- ❖ We were once dead because of our sinful state – regeneration makes us spiritually alive, and able to obey God and resist sin.
- ❖ Our identity changes when we are regenerated. 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 a new mind.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. 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. How have you changed? Are there further changes you need to make in your life?

2. 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?