

Establish  
Session 3

A  
Modern  
Day  
Miracle

## A MODERN DAY MIRACLE

### Introduction

During the last two sessions, we've learned that:

- A Christian is one who has a personal relationship with Jesus, who loves Him, who trusts Him, and who obeys Him as his Lord.
  - The real reason Jesus came was to bring the Kingdom of God to earth!
- 1) His first message ... "the kingdom of God is at hand"
  - 2) His first petition ... "Thy kingdom come"
  - 3) His first priority ... "Seek ye first the kingdom of God"
- We are saved as we allow Jesus to establish His Kingdom in our hearts and lives!

The question is:

- How do we get in?
- How do we become a citizen of His Kingdom?

The answer is:

- "A modern day miracle"
- *"In order to gain entrance to the Kingdom of God, every person must be "Born Again" into spiritual life by opening his innermost being to Jesus and receive Christ onto the throne of his life as personal Lord and Savior."*

**A MODERN DAY MIRACLE**

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**1. NECESSITY OF SPIRITUAL BIRTH** — You must be born again!

Where do we get this “born again” business?

*After dark one night a Jewish religious leader named Nicodemus, a member of a sect of the Pharisees, came for an interview with Jesus. “Sir,” he said, “We all know that God has sent You to teach us. Your miracles are proof of this.” Jesus replied, “With all the earnestness I possess I tell you this: Unless you are born again, you can never get into the Kingdom of God.” “Born again!” exclaimed Nicodemus. “What do You mean? How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?” Jesus replied, “What I am telling you so earnestly is this: Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. Men can only reproduce human life, but the Holy Spirit gives new life from heaven. So don’t be surprised at My statement that you must be born again! Just as you can hear the wind but can’t tell where it comes from or where it will go next, so it is with the Spirit. We do not know on whom He will next bestow this life from heaven.” — John 3:1-8.*

Who is Nicodemus?

A Pharisee

extremely religious, scrupulously keeps the law

A Member of The Sanhedrin,

a judge of his people, a man of influence, power and good reputation.

- a man of culture, wealthy and intelligent
- a man of prayer, undoubtedly upright and pure

Why must Nicodemus be:

“born of water”            =            **Physical Birth**  
 and  
 “born of the Spirit”      =            **Spiritual Birth**

What a fine illustration this is:

Bound and cramped in the darkness of the mother’s womb, entirely dependent on her life, one day the fetus has a power greater than any power within itself move upon it and ushers it forth by the miracle of birth into the physical world of life. With this birth all the physical and mental equipment and potential one needs to live a normal human life is given. It just has to be developed and released. Without this birth one cannot live as human being.

## I. Necessity of Spiritual Birth

Jesus introduced the concept of being “born again” to a man named Nicodemus in chapter 3 of the gospel of John. Read John 3:1-8.

Who was Nicodemus?

- no ordinary sinner
- an outstanding citizen
- part of the ruling class in Jerusalem
- **PHARISEE** ... very religious person
- **MEMBER OF THE SANHEDRIN** ... a member of the national court, a judge, a member of high society

Nicodemus was drawn to Jesus. There was something lacking in his life, even though he highly religious and moral. There was something Jesus had or knew that he didn't!

- Nicodemus paid Jesus a fine compliment ...
- Jesus saw his need and was almost rude and bluntly states:
  - *John 3:3 ... “You can't see the kingdom of God unless you are born again!”*
  - *John 3:4 ... Nicodemus' reaction? Confused. “How can a man be born again ...?”*
  - *John 3:5-6 ... Jesus sets out to explain the two births:*
    - Born of Water = **PHYSICAL BIRTH**
    - Spirit = **SPIRITUAL BIRTH**
    - Man can produce the physical birth, but only God's Holy Spirit can produce the spiritual birth

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| and                 |   |                       |
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What a fine illustration this is:

Bound and cramped in the darkness of the mother’s womb, entirely dependent on her life, one day the fetus has a power greater than any power within itself move upon it and ushers it forth by the miracle of birth into the physical world of life. With this birth all the physical and mental equipment and potential one needs to live a normal human life is given. It just has to be developed and released. Without this birth one cannot live as human being.

**Read** the “fine illustration” ... *“Bound and cramped ...”*

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*So it is with spiritual birth. Bound and cramped in the darkness of sin, one day a power greater than any power within (the power of the Holy Spirit) moves upon you and ushers you forth by the miracle of birth into the spiritual world of life. All the equipment and potential necessary to live this spiritual life is given you in this birth. Without it you cannot live as a spiritual being.”*

Now this is the point to which we must come to enter the kingdom – the point where we repent, the point where we trust, where we are willing to let Him become Lord!

And then something supernatural happens - a miracle is produced within us by God at the time we commit ourselves to Christ.

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## Let's talk about the "cannot" that Jesus declared

There are at least three reasons we cannot get into the kingdom of God without being born again:

### 1) The "born-only-once" man is spiritually dead

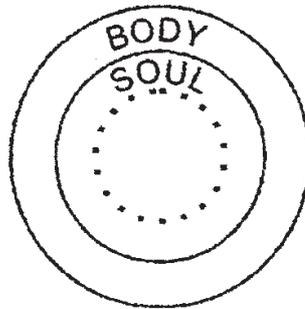
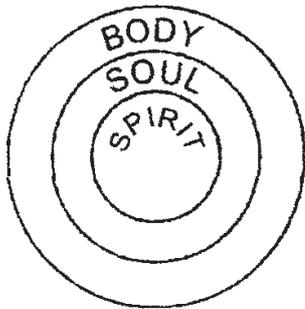
- *Eph. 2:5-6 ... "dead in trespasses"*
- Diagram in the notes – man has a body (his house), a soul (thinks, speaks, feels) and a spirit (the part in fellowship with God) ... our spirit is dead through sin
- Story of Adam and Eve – in whom was represented the entire race of men.
- Their spirit was knocked out of commission
- They were separated from God's presence and began to die. All of their life was affected
- From now on man would be operating with just 2 cylinders (body and soul), and they are damaged
- At New Birth = spirit reborn, communication is reestablished, eternal life is once again possessed.

## 10 F.L.C.— ESTABLISH: Building the Foundation

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### 1. The “born-only-once” man is spiritually dead.

*Even though we were spiritually dead and doomed by our sins. God gave us back our lives again when He raised Christ from the dead — only by His undeserved favor have we ever been saved — And lifted us up from the grave into glory along with Christ, where we sit with Him in the heavenly realms—all because of what Christ Jesus did. — Ephesians 2:5-6*



Body — The house he lives in

Soul — The part that thinks, tells, plans, reasons.

Spirit — (Genesis 1:27) The part in fellowship with God and capable of living forever.

### 2. He is not able to understand or appreciate spiritual matters

*Satan, who is the god of this evil world, has made him blind, unable to see the glorious light of the Gospel that is shining upon him, or to understand the amazing message we preach about the glory of Christ, who is God. —II Corinthians 4:4 (see also I Corinthians 2:14)*

### 3. He must receive the capacity to live spiritually as well as physically. John 3:5-6

## II. THE MIRACLE OF SPIRITUAL BIRTH

Nicodemus mentioned miracles and Jesus talked to him of the greatest of all miracles, the New Birth.

### 1. God performs a miracle. When you accept God’s Kingdom and invite God’s Son onto the throne of your life, a brand new spiritual life is born.

2) The “born-only-once” man is not able to understand or appreciate spiritual matters

- *I Cor. 2:14 – we cannot understand the things of the Spirit; only those who have Holy Spirit in them can understand.*
- *I Cor. 4:4 –we are spiritually blind*
- illustration - blind man and green rice fields
- illustration - former blind girls first glimpse of starry night (it had been there all the time; she just wasn't capable of seeing it).

3) The “born-only-once” man must **receive the capacity** to live spiritually as well as physically

- illustration – a desperate criminal being chased who runs into a prayer meeting where they are worshipping & praising God. Will he be happy there? No, he will feel out of place, like a fish out of water. He will want to leave because he has not received the “capacity” to be part of a spiritual environment.

Through the miracle of the new birth, we are spiritually reborn, we receive the ability to understand spiritual things, and we receive the capacity to live a spiritual life.

## **I. The Miracle of Spiritual Birth**

Nicodemus was awed at Jesus' miracles. Then, Jesus addressed Nicodemus' greatest need ... the miracle of the “new birth”.

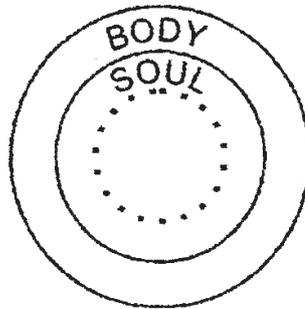
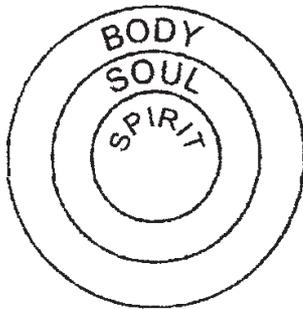
1. Jesus lets Nicodemus know that the new birth is a miracle produced by God.

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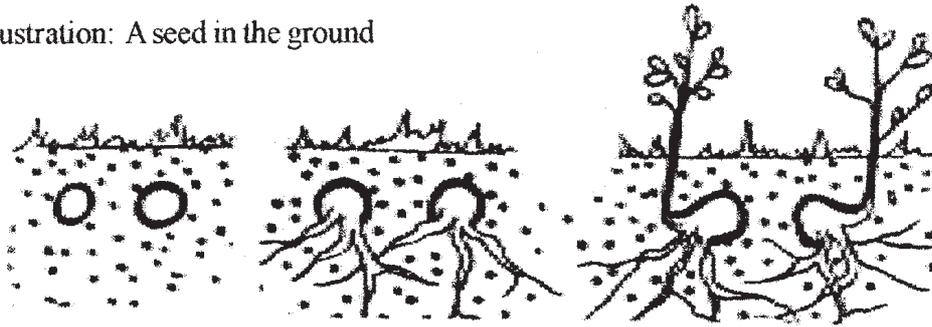
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- Illustration: A seed is placed in the ground
  - we don't know if there is life in the seed
  - forces of nature work on it
  - the roots begin to grow under the surface
  - all of a sudden ... pop! there it is; a little plant begins to come up out of the ground
  - out of that dead looking seed, a new life comes
  
- We don't control it; we don't initiate it.
  
- Read the paragraph below the seed illustration
  
- Illustration: Mary, the mother of Jesus
  - The Spirit of God entered into her.
  - He planted a seed within her.
  - And it took hold and began to grow.
  - And then at the appropriate time, it came forth through birth. And God was born in human life ... the incarnation!
  
- The same thing happens to us when we are born again ... the Holy Spirit produces a new life

Illustration: A seed in the ground



No person decides on their own, “Ok, right now I’m going to come into the kingdom.” don’t you know that God has been working within you for a long time? The Word of God was implanted in your heart. You began to feel stirrings, desires. The Word of God within you grew. The crust of your life was softened. Then, at the appropriate time, the Holy Spirit caused life to break forth and there it was for all to see. A new life has begun.

Illustration: Mary, the mother of Jesus

2. It is entirely produced by God:

Illustration: The caterpillar who wanted to fly

*It is by grace that you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yours,*

*It is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.*

—Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV)

OR

*(As “The Message” puts it) Saving is all His idea, and all His work. All we do is trust Him enough to let Him do it. It’s God’s gift from start to finish!... Now we neither make nor save ourselves. God does both the making and the saving.*

Note three things about the manner of our New Birth.

It is produced by:

— the **Will of God**

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*All those who believe this are reborn! — not a physical rebirth resulting from human passion or plan — but from the will of God.*

—John 1:12, 13

— the **Word of God**

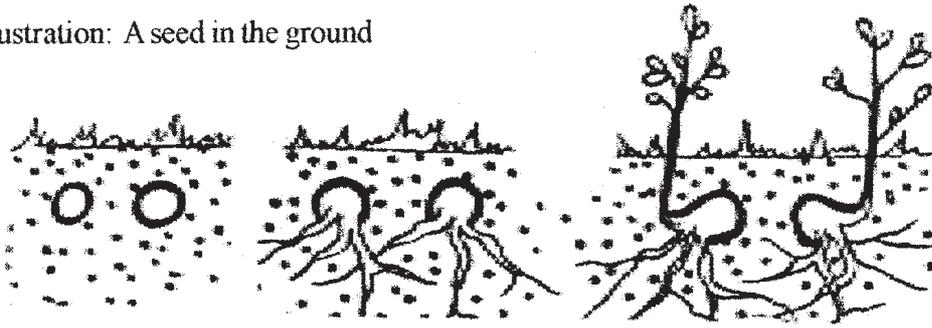
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*For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God*

— I Peter 1:23(NIV)

1. This new life is entirely produced by God – not by us
  - *Eph. 2:8-9 ... “God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. 9 Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.”*
  - Illustration: The caterpillar who saw a butterfly and to fly like he did
    - This caterpillar got it into his head that if it flopped along on the ground and jumped off a cliff, it could fly. So it tried that, and you know what happened.
    - Then someone told him that he would need to study aerodynamics. So he went to school and he studied. And he said, “Ok, now I understand all these things.” And so the day came when he tried to fly again, and all he did was bruise his nose.
    - Discouraged, he gave up. And he said, “I’ll just go into a cocoon.” And so, he spun his cocoon and disappeared.
    - But a miracle took place. After a few months, the cocoon split, and guess what came forth? This is what the caterpillar always wanted to be. Now he was a butterfly, flying from plant to plant in this beautiful body.
  - Now this is what happens when we’re born again.
    - We stop trying by our own works to please God.
    - We accept Jesus into our lives.
    - And, He performs a miracle.
  - Now notice in your notes 3 things about this manner of the new birth.
    - It is produced by the **WILL OF GOD**
    - It is produced by the **WORD OF GOD**

Illustration: A seed in the ground



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- It is produced by the **SPIRIT OF GOD**
- All three of these work together – the will of God, the word of God and the Spirit of God. We don't control it and we don't initiate it. But these three working in us by the Holy Spirit, bring forth spiritual life. It is all of God.

### 3. The Holy Spirit comes to live with us

- Romans 8 – The Holy Spirit is the agent of our new birth
- Remember, just as Holy Spirit produced life within Mary, so the Holy Spirit is the one who produces the life of God within you and me!
- Romans 8:9 - if He hasn't come within - become resident - then no miracle of the new birth has actually taken place at all.
- Romans 8:16 – we can pray that the Holy Spirit will “bear witness” to those who accept Christ that they are children of God
- He produces the new life and His constant presence keeps it alive and functioning within you.
- This is both encouraging and convicting
  - God loves us so much that He is willing to actually become a part of us.
  - The miracle of spiritual birth is so that you could be His dwelling place on this earth! Just think of it.
  - But now that He is resident within you - He “goes” where you go, “does” what you do, “thinks” what you think, “says” what you say!
  - We are actually dragging the person of God back into the gutter with us if we go back into sinful ways, look at shameful things - doing, living, speaking.
  - We may grieve and quench the Holy Spirit, but He's there unless by a deliberate act of our will we tell Him to leave.

## 12 F.L.C. -ESTABLISH : Building the Foundation

### — the Spirit of God

*He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior. — Titus 3:5-6 (NIV)*

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*You yourselves are God's temple and God's Spirit lives within you.*  
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*Those who are still under the control of their old sinful selves, bent on following their old evil desires, can never please God. But you are not like that. You are controlled by your new nature if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that if anyone doesn't have the Spirit of Christ living in him, he is not a Christian at all).*

*For His Holy Spirit speaks to us deep in our hearts, and tells that we really are God's children. — Romans 8:8-9, 16*

### III. THE RESULT OF SPIRITUAL BIRTH

1. We receive a new heart

*And I will give you a new heart - I will give you new and right desires - put a new spirit within you, I will take out your stony hearts of sin and give you new hearts of love. And I will put my Spirit within you so that you will obey my laws and do whatever I command. — Ezekiel 36:26-27*

2. It begins a complete and permanent change

*When someone become a Christian he becomes a brand new person inside. He is not the same any more. A new life has begun! — II Corinthians 5:17*

There will be observable evidence:

The bent of the mind  
The affections of the heart  
The trend of the will

are all changed as this new spiritual life takes hold.

3. An "Alternate Life-Style" emerges

*Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but be a new and different person... in all you do and think. —Romans 12:2*

### **III. The Result of the Spiritual Birth**

Intro: Today “born again” is a commonplace term. For many, it has been watered down and robbed of its’ true meaning. That’s why we need to spend this session on what it really means to be born again.

#### 1. We receive a new heart

- Nicodemeus should have known – he was familiar with Ezekiel 36 ... *“And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations.”*
- On our own, we can’t do what God requires; but the day will come when He will change that.
- God promises to do a “heart transplant!” Not just repair the old heart or strengthen it. But transplant within us a new heart which now will be capable of loving, obeying, etc.

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*Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but be a new and different person... in all you do and think. —Romans 12:2*

## 2. It (the Spiritual Birth) begins a complete and permanent change

- It's just the beginning, like any birth, but as it grows it produces changes.
- II Cor. 5:17 [LB] – *“When someone becomes a Christian, he becomes a brand new person inside. He is not the same any more. A new life has begun.”*
- A person is known by their fruit. [Mt.7:18-21]
  - a fig tree has no thorns
  - blessing and cursing out of the same mouth? NO
- You'll know what's inside by what happens outside
  - Illustration: a seed of corn - what's the secret of life? don't know - it's something God put there. But when corn comes up and matures – from a blade to a stalk to a tassel to an ear to harvest - then I know that there was life in the seed.
  - So with being born again, it is grievous that many who make a profession end up being “still born”. They have had some kind of an experience, but it's a counterfeit! There is no real life in it.
  - Call it what you will - I want to see evidence, results don't you? I want to see that something has really happened here that's changed the:
    - The bent of the mind
    - The affection of the heart
    - The trend of the will

## 3. An “Alternate Lifestyle” emerges (continued on next page)

- Rom. 12:2 ... “Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.”

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*For His Holy Spirit speaks to us deep in our hearts, and tells that we really are God's children. — Romans 8:8-9, 16*

### III. THE RESULT OF SPIRITUAL BIRTH

1. We receive a new heart

*And I will give you a new heart - I will give you new and right desires - put a new spirit within you, I will take out your stony hearts of sin and give you new hearts of love. And I will put my Spirit within you so that you will obey my laws and do whatever I command. — Ezekiel 36:26-27*

2. It begins a complete and permanent change

*When someone become a Christian he becomes a brand new person inside. He is not the same any more. A new life has begun! — II Corinthians 5:17*

There will be observable evidence:

The bent of the mind  
The affections of the heart  
The trend of the will

are all changed as this new spiritual life takes hold.

3. An “Alternate Life-Style” emerges

*Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but be a new and different person... in all you do and think. —Romans 12:2*

There is a vast difference between the “World” and the “Kingdom”

- Use the table in the handout ... the world vs. the kingdom
- Isa, 5:20 - *“What sorrow for those who say that evil is good and good is evil, that dark is light and light is dark, that bitter is sweet and sweet is bitter?”* Have you seen any evidence of this in our society today?
- Light vs. darkness - try to put it out.
- When we are truly born again, we are changed at the core of our being – we have new eyes, new desires, and new understandings.
- His life is being formed within us — [this leads into Part 4]

#### 4. True righteousness emanates forth

- Pharisees = **OUTWARD** righteousness (following a religion, earning their own righteousness)
- Spiritually reborn = **INWARD** righteousness (because He now reigns in our heart – His righteousness now begins to change our own behavior)
- II Cor. 5:21 ... “...so that we could be made right with God through Christ.”
- II Cor. 3:18 ... “...makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image ...”
- We need to make clear that if you go out and try to copy Jesus or live by the rules you think Jesus set up – you will fail and be miserable! That will be impossible bondage.
- It’s not your righteousness you go about to establish, but His righteousness - which He now releases within you and through you. [Gal. 2:20]
- Here’s the way of the Kingdom - give Jesus the right to live His life through you. As He does, by the power of the Holy Spirit, you will begin to show forth a true righteousness
- When born again, with a new spiritual life within, your family, friends, associates, co-workers are going to see a difference because the righteousness of Jesus will start to emanate from your life, because you’re new and different on the inside.

THE WORLD

THE KINGDOM

Get as much as you can

Do not lay up treasure on this earth

Take care of yourself first

If you save your life you'll lose it, but if you lose your life for Jesus you'll save it.

Do to others as they do to you.

Love your enemies, bless those that curse you. Pray for those who misuse you.

Good and evil are all mixed up!

*They say what is right is wrong, and what is wrong is right; that black is white and white is black; bitter is sweet and sweet is bitter. — Isaiah 5:20*

4. True righteousness emanates forth  
Matthew 5:20

Pharisees = **Outward** righteousness \_\_\_\_\_

Spiritually reborn = **Inward** righteousness \_\_\_\_\_

The "Righteous One" reigns in our hearts

*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God. — II Corinthians 5:21*

*...we can be mirrors that brightly reflect the glory of the Lord. And as the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like Him. — II Corinthians 3:18*

*I have been crucified with Christ; and I myself no longer live, but Christ lives in me — Galatians 2:20*

**CONCLUSION — I John 5:11-12**

*And what is it that God has said? That He has given us eternal life, and that this life is in His Son. So whoever has God's Son has life; whoever does not have His Son does not have life.*

Faith is the hand that reaches out to receive God's gift of eternal, spiritual life.

## Review:

- We've learned Jesus is center of Christianity
- A Christian is one who loves, trusts and obeys Jesus as Lord
- Now, the way into the Kingdom is not by any works we can perform, but by asking and receiving from Him a spiritual miracle - called the new birth.
- I know I need heart changed, I need to be born again! How can this happen to me?

Conclusion - I John 5:10-12 ... *"And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God's Son does not have life."*

- v.11 - A gift, not earned or deserved
- v.12 - It's all wrapped up in His Son
- Illustration - of purchasing and offering someone an expensive gift. The price of the gift will take everything you have and all that is in your assets. But because of your love for them you're willing to pay that price. Offer it to them. Now ask, "When does it become yours"? The response = "Not when I offer it, but when you take it."
- "Faith is the hand that reaches out to receive God's gift of eternal, spiritual life!"
- "He that has the Son has life"

## F.L.C. — ESTABLISH: Building the Foundation 13

### THE WORLD

Get as much as you can

Take care of yourself first

Do to others as they do to you.

### THE KINGDOM

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### CONCLUSION — I John 5:11-12

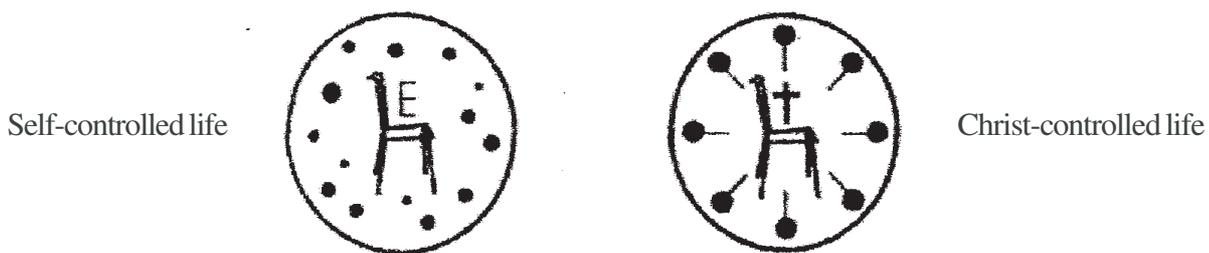
*And what is it that God has said? That He has given us eternal life, and that this life is in His Son. So whoever has God's Son has life; whoever does not have His Son does not have life.*

Faith is the hand that reaches out to receive God's gift of eternal, spiritual life.

1. What did God say He would do for those who are “born again?” See Ezekiel 36:27-27 and Psalm 51:10.
2. In II Corinthians 5:17 we learn that all who are truly “born again” become brand new persons inside and will be in the process of changing.
  - What is the source of this change? (Look up Romans 8:9, I Corinthians 6:19-20)
  - What will this change be like in practical experience? (You may get help from Ephesians 4:22-23)
  - What if no change is evident? (Look up Matthew 7:18-21, James 3:10-12)
3. What does Romans 12:1-2 teach about a Christian’s relationship?
  - To the Lord?
  - To the world?

**FOR PERSONAL CONSIDERATION**

These two circles represent two kinds of lives :



*Which circle represents your life?  
Which would you like to represent your life?*

Does this prayer express the desire of your heart?  
*‘Lord Jesus, I need you, I open the door of my life and receive you as my Savior and Lord. Thank you for forgiving my sins. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person you want me to be.’*

If it does, pray this prayer now, and Christ will come into your life as He promised.

**FULL LIFE IN CHRIST, Group Facilitator Suggestions**  
**ESTABLISH : Building the Foundation, Session 3**

**FIRST**

(1) Go over the answers to the question sheet for Session 2. You can give the answers so they can check their sheets or quickly let different ones respond. It is not wise to spend very much time on this unless they have important questions but it does help them get in the habit of doing their homework and provides a review.

**A GOOD WAY TO START** - Is to let each one in your group share-

*“Two interesting events that happened within your family as you were growing up.”*

**THEN** - You might provoke discussion of this week’s lesson with some of the following:

1. How is it that a good man like Nicodemus could neither see nor enter the Kingdom of God?
2. Read I Corinthians 2:14. Encourage the group to share illustrations of spiritual blindness from their own past life or from some of their acquaintances.
3. Discuss the difference between seeking to be righteous on the “outside” and becoming righteous on the “Inside”.

Note - Make sure they understand that “He is our Righteousness”. The key is Jesus, living His life within us and making us like Him.

4. Read John 15:16-21 - Let the group share experiences from their own lives or from other people which show that what Jesus said to the disciples in John 15 is still true of His followers today.

**FOR NEXT WEEK**

Call their attention to the question sheet for Session 3. Encourage them to take the time to respond to the questions.