

Compelling Portrait

Part 6: Sometimes You Can't Make it on Your Own

Objective: To challenge us to recognize our need for Jesus.

Read together:

Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. 2 He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him."

3 Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."

4 "How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!"

5 Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. 7 You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' 8 The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

9 "How can this be?" Nicodemus asked.

10 "You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things? 11 Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. 12 I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? 13 No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. 14 Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, 15 that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him."

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

John 3:1-17

- If you grew up going to church, did your church focus more on how you behaved or more on the work of Jesus?
- Why do Christians spend so much time focusing behavior (or behavior modification)?
- When you hear "You can't make it on your own." How does that make you feel? (encouraged, discouraged, frustrated, etc. ?)
- If we can't do enough to make God love us or accept us, then does our behavior matter at all? Why or why not?
- What, if any, difference do you see between religion and a relationship with Jesus?
- What do you think of when you hear the term 'Born Again'?
- If being 'born again' (made new) is a simple matter of faith - trusting in Jesus, the Son of Man - then why do we struggle so much with the idea?
- What does it look like to trust in Jesus and be 'born again'? How does being 'born again' transform your life?

Final Thought: If you have been trying to earn God's approval, stop. Simply trust in Jesus and let him guide your life.

This Week: Watch for areas where you tend to 'try to make it on your own.' When you notice them, stop and ask Jesus to be more than enough in that moment.

