

Small Group Guide: The Miracle of New Birth

Scripture: John 3:1-21

Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

SOUL CHECK:

How are you doing in your soul? Is there anything that has been weighing you down that we can lift up in prayer?

Begin by asking God to open hearts and minds to understand the truth of new birth in Jesus. Pray for honest conversation and transformation.

Icebreaker (10 minutes)

Question: Share about a time when you thought you understood something completely, only to discover you were missing a crucial piece of information. How did that change your perspective?

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. New Birth is Necessary

- Religion, morality, and education cannot save us
- We are spiritually dead without Jesus
- New birth is not optional—Jesus said "you must be born again"

2. New Birth is Promised in Scripture

- God promises transformation throughout the Old Testament
- The promise is a new heart and God's Spirit dwelling within us
- Knowing the promise isn't enough—we need the encounter

3. New Birth is Only Possible Through Jesus

- Just as Moses lifted up the serpent, Jesus was lifted on the cross
- We must look to Jesus alone for salvation
- No other path, person, or practice can give new birth

4. New Birth is Received Through Belief

- "Whoever believes" is an open invitation

- Belief means entrusting your full weight to Jesus
- God offers salvation, not condemnation

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text (15 minutes)

1. **Why did Nicodemus come to Jesus at night?** What does this reveal about his heart condition and concerns?
2. **What was Nicodemus seeking from Jesus initially?** How did Jesus redirect the conversation to what Nicodemus actually needed?
3. **Explain the difference between being "born of water and Spirit" versus physical birth.** Why was this concept so confusing to Nicodemus?

Personal Reflection (20 minutes)

4. **The sermon stated: "You can very well be blessed by Him and never know Him."** What's the difference between seeking Jesus for miracles versus seeking Jesus for relationship?
5. **What changes when someone experiences new birth?** The sermon mentioned:
 - Language changes
 - Location changes
 - Worldview changes
 - How you love and forgive changes
6. Which of these resonates most with your own experience or what you've observed in others?
7. **The pastor said, "Every time you look in the mirror, you should see a miracle."** Do you see yourself as a miracle? Why or why not? What would need to change in your thinking?

Going Deeper (20 minutes)

7. **Nicodemus had all the religious credentials—education, position, moral living—yet Jesus said he needed to be born again.** What "credentials" do people today mistakenly trust for their salvation?

- 8. The sermon distinguished between condemnation and conviction:**
- Condemnation = guilt and shame that moves you away from Jesus
 - Conviction = Holy Spirit leading you to forgiveness and closer to Jesus
- 9.** How can you tell the difference in your own life? Share an example if you're comfortable.
- 10. Jesus told Nicodemus, "You cannot understand spiritual truth with natural reasoning." What are some spiritual truths that our culture tries to explain away with natural reasoning?**

Application (15 minutes)

- 10. The sermon challenged: "Stop consuming so much information and content. Pick up your Bible and get in the presence of Jesus."**
- How much time do you spend consuming Christian content versus actually being with Jesus?
 - What's one practical step you can take this week to prioritize encounter over information?
- 11. Nicodemus' journey:** He came at night (hiding), then defended Jesus among his peers, then publicly honored Jesus at his burial with 70 pounds of spices fit for a king.
- Where are you in your journey with Jesus?
 - What's holding you back from the next step?
- 12. The pastor asked: "What are you looking at today?"** When trials come, do you look at everything but Jesus, or do you look to Him first?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose one of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: Mirror Exercise

- Each morning when you look in the mirror, declare: "I am a miracle. Jesus has transformed my life."
- Journal about how this changes your mindset throughout the day.

Option 2: Examination of Heart

- Set aside 30 minutes this week for honest self-examination
- Ask yourself: "Have I truly experienced new birth in Jesus, or am I relying on religious activity, family heritage, or moral living?"
- If you've never truly surrendered to Jesus, talk to your small group leader or pastor.

Option 3: Location/Language Audit

- Identify one place you still go or one way you still speak that doesn't reflect your new birth
- Make a concrete plan to change it this week
- Share your plan with one accountability partner from the group

Option 4: From Darkness to Light

- Like Nicodemus moved from hiding to public declaration, identify one area where you're hiding your faith
- Take one step this week to move from darkness (hiding) to light (public witness)

Reflection Questions for the Week

Journal or meditate on these questions daily:

- **Monday:** What does it mean that I'm spiritually dead without Jesus?
- **Tuesday:** How has new birth changed my desires and worldview?
- **Wednesday:** Am I seeking Jesus for what He can give me or for who He is?
- **Thursday:** What does it mean to "entrust my full weight" to Jesus today?
- **Friday:** Where am I looking for life outside of Jesus?
- **Saturday:** How can I be a living testimony of new birth to others?
- **Sunday:** What does victory over sin and death look like in my daily life?

Memory Verse

John 3:16-17 "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Prayer Focus:

- Thank God for the miracle of new birth available to all who believe
- Pray for group members who may be questioning whether they've truly experienced new birth
- Ask for courage to live as transformed people who reflect Jesus
- Pray for specific needs shared during discussion

Leader Notes

- **Be sensitive:** Some group members may realize they've never truly experienced new birth. Be prepared to pray with them and guide them to salvation.
- **Create safety:** The question "Have you experienced new birth?" can be uncomfortable. Create a safe space for honest answers.
- **Watch the clock:** This is a lot of content. Feel free to select the questions most relevant to your group.
- **Follow up:** Check in with group members during the week about their practical applications.
- **Resources:** Have information ready about baptism, church membership, or next steps for new believers.

5-Day Devotional: The Miracle of New Birth

Day 1: The Necessity of New Birth

Reading: John 3:1-8

Devotional: Nicodemus came to Jesus with credentials, education, and religious authority, yet Jesus immediately addressed his greatest need: new birth. Like Nicodemus, we often approach God seeking information, improvement, or signs, when what we truly need is transformation. Our problem is not lack of knowledge or morality but spiritual death. We cannot reason our way into the kingdom or earn our way through good works. Jesus makes it clear: you must be born again. This is not a suggestion but a divine necessity. Today, examine your heart honestly. Are you trusting in your own righteousness, religious background, or good deeds? Or have you surrendered to the reality that only Jesus can give you the new life you desperately need?

Day 2: The Promise of Transformation

Reading: Ezekiel 36:25-27

Devotional: God's promise of new birth is not a New Testament innovation but woven throughout Scripture. Through Ezekiel, God promised to sprinkle clean water, give a new heart, and place His Spirit within His people. This is the miraculous work Jesus offers: complete internal transformation. You are not called to self-improvement but to divine renovation. When you encounter Jesus, He cleanses you from sin, transforms your desires, and empowers you to walk in His ways. The promise is not that you will never struggle, but that you will have a new nature that loves God and pursues holiness. Stop striving in your own strength. Embrace the promise that God Himself will change you from the inside out, making you truly alive.

Day 3: God's Extravagant Love

Reading: John 3:16-17

Devotional: God did not wait for humanity to clean up before demonstrating His love. While we were still rebellious, lost, and spiritually dead, He gave His only Son. This is the foundation of new birth: not our worthiness but God's overwhelming love. Jesus came not to condemn but to save, offering eternal life to whoever believes. Many wait to "get their life together" before coming to Jesus, but this misses the gospel entirely. You cannot fix yourself; that is why Jesus came. His love is not earned by your performance but freely given to the broken and desperate. Today, stop trying to make yourself acceptable to God. Come as you are, receive His love, and let that love transform you into who He created you to be.

Day 4: From Darkness to Light

Reading: John 3:19-21

Devotional: The human heart naturally loves darkness because it hides our sin. We prefer shadows to exposure, comfort to conviction. Yet Jesus is the light who reveals both our brokenness and God's remedy. Nicodemus came to Jesus at night, hiding in darkness, but eventually stepped into the light publicly, risking everything to honor Jesus. New birth moves us from hiding to transparency, from shame to freedom, from death to life. The question is not whether you have made mistakes but whether you are willing to come to the light. Will you continue hiding in patterns that destroy you, or will you step into the truth that sets you free? Coming to the light means acknowledging your need and embracing the transformation only Jesus provides.

Day 5: Living as a Miracle

Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:17

Devotional: If you have experienced new birth in Jesus, you are a walking miracle. The old has passed away; the new has come. This is not just theological truth but daily reality. When you look in the mirror, you should see evidence of divine intervention—a dead heart made alive, a rebellious spirit made surrendered, a hopeless soul filled with purpose. Your language changes, your desires shift, your relationships transform. You walk with authority because you carry the presence of the living God. Do not minimize what Jesus has done in you. You are not defined by your past failures but by His finished work. Today, live in the confidence of your new identity. You are a child of God, a miracle of grace, and a testimony of His transforming power.