



CREW LIFE DISCIPLESHIP

LESSON 2

THE NEW BIRTH

Entering the Kingdom of God



GROW



FISH



REPEAT

CREW LIFE — LESSON 2



Introduction

In Lesson 1, we learned that Jesus declared, “I will build my church” — (Matthew 16:18). His Church is not defined by a building, denomination, or organization, but by people whose lives have been transformed through a relationship with Him. Jesus is still building His Church today, one life at a time.

This raises an important question: [How does someone become part of the Church Jesus is building?](#)

The answer is found in a remarkable conversation between Jesus and a man named Nicodemus. Although Nicodemus was respected, educated, and deeply committed to his faith, Jesus immediately addressed something that no amount of religion could accomplish. Before speaking about service, leadership, or spiritual knowledge, Jesus spoke about life. He declared that every person must be [BORN AGAIN](#).

Jesus was not introducing a new religious practice. He was revealing His plan for entering His Kingdom. The New Birth is not reserved for a select few, nor is it an experience only for those with troubled pasts. It is God’s invitation to every person who desires a new beginning through Jesus Christ.

Throughout this lesson, we will discover what Jesus meant by being born again, how the apostles faithfully proclaimed His message after His resurrection, and why the New Birth is the starting point of a lifelong journey of discipleship.

Welcome to [Crew Life Lesson 2 - The New Birth — Entering the Kingdom of God](#).

Lesson Objective

To understand Jesus’ teaching on the New Birth, discover how His message was fulfilled through the apostles, and recognize that being born again is the beginning of a lifelong journey of following Jesus Christ.

Big Idea

The New Birth is God’s plan for every person to enter His Kingdom. Through repentance, water baptism in Jesus’ name, and the infilling of the Holy Ghost, we receive new life in Christ and begin our journey as His disciples

Focus Scriptures

- *John 3:1–8
 - Acts 2:37–39
 - Titus 3:5
 - Romans 6:3–5
 - 2 Corinthians 5:17
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Lesson 2 - The New Birth — Entering the Kingdom of God

Humanity's Greatest Need

Every generation searches for answers to the problems of the human heart. Some place their hope in education, believing that greater knowledge will create a better world. Others trust in wealth, technology, politics, or personal achievement. While these things can improve many areas of life, none of them can solve humanity's deepest problem.

The Bible identifies our greatest need as sin. Sin separates us from God and leaves every person in need of a Savior. Because of sin, no one can earn a relationship with God through good works or religious effort alone.

Paul writes, — [“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”](#)
— [Romans 3:23 \(KJV\)](#)

Notice the word all. Every person has fallen short of God's perfect standard. Regardless of our background, morality, or religious experience, we all stand in need of God's grace.

Nicodemus illustrates this truth perfectly. He was a Pharisee, a teacher of Israel, and a member of the Sanhedrin, the highest religious council in the nation. He studied the Scriptures, faithfully observed the Law, and was respected by those around him. From an outward perspective, Nicodemus appeared to have everything a person would need to be close to God.

Yet when Jesus met him, He did not praise his accomplishments or encourage him to become even more religious. Instead, Jesus revealed that Nicodemus still lacked the one thing that mattered most. He needed [NEW LIFE](#).

This reminds us that religion and relationship are not the same. Religion may teach us about God, but only Jesus can transform the human heart. We can attend church faithfully, know the stories of Scripture, and strive to live moral lives, yet still miss the life that Jesus came to give.

Jesus did not come merely to improve people. He came to save them. He did not come simply to make bad people behave better; He came to give spiritually dead people new life.

That is why the gospel is called good news. God did not leave humanity trapped in sin. Through Jesus Christ, He provided a way for every person to experience forgiveness, restoration, and a completely new beginning.

The New Birth is God's answer to humanity's greatest need. It is not based on what we can do for God, but on what God has done for us through Jesus Christ.

If humanity's greatest need is new life, then the next question is obvious: How does that new life begin? Jesus answered that question in His conversation with Nicodemus.

Jesus Introduces the New Birth

John 3 records one of the most important conversations in all of Scripture. It took place at night when Nicodemus came privately to speak with Jesus. While the Bible does not tell us exactly why he came after dark, it is clear that he recognized there was something different about Jesus.

Nicodemus began by saying, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."

— John 3:2 (KJV)

Nicodemus acknowledged that Jesus had been sent from God, but before he could ask his questions, Jesus addressed the issue that mattered most. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

— John 3:3 (KJV)

Jesus immediately shifted the conversation from religion to transformation. Entrance into God's Kingdom is not based on heritage, education, position, or religious knowledge. It requires a spiritual birth.

Confused, Nicodemus interpreted Jesus' words literally. "How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?"

— John 3:4 (KJV)

Jesus patiently explained that He was not speaking about a second physical birth, but about a spiritual one. “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” — John 3:5 (KJV)

Here Jesus revealed God’s plan for the [WATER](#) and [SPIRIT](#) birth. Just as every person experiences a physical birth into this world, every believer must experience a spiritual birth to enter God’s Kingdom. Jesus continued, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” — John 3:6 (KJV)

Our first birth gives us physical life. The New Birth gives us spiritual life. It is not something we can achieve through personal effort or religious performance. It is the work of God transforming a repentant heart.

To help Nicodemus understand, Jesus used an illustration everyone could recognize. “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” — John 3:8 (KJV)

Although we cannot see the wind itself, we know it is present because we can hear it and observe its effects. In the same way, the work of God’s Spirit produces visible evidence of a transformed life. The New Birth is not merely an inward feeling or an intellectual decision; it is a real encounter with the Spirit of God that changes a person’s life from the inside out.

Jesus did not leave Nicodemus wondering what this experience would look like. While the full understanding of His words would not be revealed until after His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension, Jesus was laying the foundation for what would soon be fulfilled.

Everything Jesus taught in John 3 would later be preached by His apostles on the Day of Pentecost. They did not create a new message of salvation. They faithfully proclaimed the message Jesus had already given.

The question Nicodemus asked was, “[How can these things be?](#)” The answer would soon be proclaimed publicly through the preaching of the apostles.

The Apostles Fulfill Jesus' Teaching

After Jesus' death, burial, resurrection, and ascension, His disciples waited in Jerusalem just as He had commanded. They were not waiting for a new message, but for the promise Jesus had already spoken about. On the Day of Pentecost, God poured out His Spirit upon the believers, marking the beginning of the New Testament Church.

When the crowd witnessed what had happened, Peter stood and preached Jesus Christ as both Lord and Messiah. As he proclaimed the gospel, the people were convicted in their hearts and realized they needed to respond. [“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” — Acts 2:37 \(KJV\)](#)

Their question echoed the heart of Nicodemus. Both were searching for the same answer: How do we enter God's Kingdom?

Peter's response was clear and direct. [“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” — Acts 2:38 \(KJV\)](#)

Peter did not invent a new plan of salvation. He faithfully proclaimed what Jesus had already taught in John 3. Jesus spoke of being born of water and Spirit, and Peter explained how that promise was to be experienced.

The first step is [REPENTANCE](#). Repentance is more than feeling sorry for sin. It is a sincere turning away from sin and turning toward God. It is a change of heart that leads to a change of direction.

The second step is [BAPTISM](#) in the name of Jesus Christ. Water baptism is not simply a public ceremony; it is an act of obedience in which we identify with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Paul later wrote, [“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead... even so we also should walk in newness of life.” — Romans 6:4 \(KJV\)](#)

The third step is receiving the [HOLY GHOST](#). Just as Jesus promised, God fills believers with His Spirit, giving them new spiritual life and empowering them to live as His disciples.

Peter concluded with a promise that still applies today. [“For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” — Acts 2:39 \(KJV\)](#)

The promise of the New Birth was never intended for one generation alone. It is God's invitation to every person in every nation who responds to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

That day, about three thousand people gladly received Peter's message, were baptized, and were added to the Church ([Acts 2:41](#)). The same Church Jesus promised to build in Matthew 16 had begun, and it continues to grow today as people respond to the gospel in faith and obedience.

The New Birth is not simply a doctrine to believe. It is an experience to receive. It is the moment when God forgives our sins, fills us with His Spirit, and welcomes us into His family.

Receiving the New Birth is not the end of the journey — it is the beginning of a brand-new life with Jesus Christ.

[The New Birth Is the Beginning](#)

One of the greatest misconceptions about salvation is believing that the New Birth is the finish line. In reality, it is the starting line. Just as physical birth marks the beginning of life, the New Birth marks the beginning of a lifelong relationship with Jesus Christ.

Paul wrote, "[Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.](#)" — 2 Corinthians 5:17 (KJV)

When we are born again, God does more than forgive our sins. He gives us a new identity. We become part of His family, members of His Church, and disciples who are learning to follow Him every day.

Spiritual growth does not happen overnight. A newborn baby does not remain an infant forever; healthy life produces growth. In the same way, every believer is called to continue growing in Christ.

We grow by spending time in [GOD'S WORD](#). The Scriptures teach us God's character, reveal His will, and strengthen our faith. As we read and apply His Word, our lives are continually transformed.

We grow through [PRAYER](#). Prayer is more than presenting requests to God; it is developing a relationship with Him. As we spend time in His presence, we learn to trust His voice and follow His direction.

We also grow through worship, fellowship with other believers, and faithful participation in the local church. God never intended for His people to walk alone. He places us within His Church where we encourage one another, serve together, and mature together as the Body of Christ.

Jesus did not simply call people to make a decision. He called them to become disciples.

Before ascending to heaven, He said, — “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” — Matthew 28:19–20 (KJV)

The word teach carries the idea of making disciples. A disciple is someone who continually learns from Jesus and helps others do the same. This is why the New Birth is only the beginning. God desires that every believer continue growing in faith, character, and obedience throughout their life.

Nicodemus himself demonstrates this progression. The first time we meet him, he comes to Jesus under the cover of darkness with sincere questions. Later, in John 7, he courageously speaks in Jesus’ defense before the religious leaders, asking whether it is right to judge a man before hearing him. Finally, in John 19, after the crucifixion, Nicodemus publicly joins Joseph of Arimathea to prepare Jesus’ body for burial. The man who once sought Jesus privately now openly identifies himself with Christ.

His journey reminds us that discipleship is a process. Faith grows as we continue walking with Jesus.

The New Birth is not graduation — it is [THE BEGINNING](#) of a life devoted to knowing Christ, becoming more like Him, and helping others experience the same transforming grace.

[What Can We Learn from Nicodemus?](#)

- God welcomes honest questions from those who sincerely seek Him.
- Spiritual growth happens one step at a time.
- Following Jesus requires both faith and courage.
- A genuine encounter with Jesus changes the direction of a person’s life.
- Every disciple begins somewhere, but no disciple is meant to stay where they started.

Key Takeaway

Nicodemus reminds us that discipleship is a journey, not a single moment. The New Birth is where that journey begins, and every step of obedience brings us closer to becoming the person God created us to be. As we continue following Jesus, He continues transforming us into His likeness.

Crew Discussion

1. Why do you think Jesus told Nicodemus he must be born again instead of simply becoming more religious?
2. What is the difference between knowing about Jesus and experiencing the New Birth?
3. How does Acts 2:38 help us understand what Jesus meant by being born of water and of the Spirit?
4. Why is it important to remember that the New Birth is the beginning of discipleship rather than the end?
5. Looking at the life of Nicodemus, what encourages you most about your own journey of following Jesus?

Crew Notes

Fill in the blanks as you review today's lesson.

1. Jesus said every person must be _____.
2. Nicodemus needed _____, not simply more religion.
3. Jesus taught that we must be born of _____.
4. Jesus also taught that we must be born of the _____.
5. The first response to the gospel is _____.
6. We are baptized in the _____ of Jesus Christ.
7. We receive the gift of the _____.
8. We grow spiritually through God's _____.
9. A healthy relationship with God grows through _____.
10. The New Birth is the _____ of our journey as a disciple.

Crew Life Culture

At Angler Church, we believe discipleship is more than completing a lesson or attending a class. It is a lifelong commitment to following Jesus Christ. Every disciple begins the journey through the New Birth, but no disciple is meant to stop there.

Healthy disciples continue growing. They spend time in God's Word, develop a consistent prayer life, worship faithfully, and build meaningful relationships within the local church. They are teachable, obedient, and willing to let God shape every area of their lives.

Just as Nicodemus grew from a curious seeker into a courageous follower of Jesus, God desires to continue growing each of us. Wherever you are in your walk with Christ, take your next step. Spiritual maturity happens as we faithfully follow Jesus one day at a time.

Living the Culture

This week, spend time reading John chapters 3, 7, and 19. As you read, notice how Nicodemus' faith grows through each encounter.

Ask yourself these questions:

- What is Jesus teaching me about the New Birth?
- What is my next step in following Him?
- How can I continue growing as His disciple this week?

Remember, the goal is not simply to gain more knowledge. The goal is to become more like Jesus every day.

Memory Verse

“Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” — John 3:5 (KJV)