

Applying It In My LifeGroup time - 25 minutes

1. Because of his background, Nicodemus could not understand Jesus' message. What cultural barriers exist today that prevent family, friends, and neighbors from understanding Jesus' message? Why do so many people think that being "godly" means doing spiritual things on the outside? How is this different from a God-initiated transformation from the inside out?
2. How was John the Baptist able to find joy and fulfillment in Jesus' success? Do you find joy in the success of others who might be seen as competing with your ministry in our church or community? Why do you think some people or churches seem to compete with each other? What can we do to embrace and support the success of others in the community of faith?
3. What aspects of a person's life demonstrate that he or she has been transformed by a "new birth?" To what extent does change happen all at once? To what extent does it take place over time? How has "new birth" transformed your life? In what areas of your life do you still desire to be transformed by the Spirit of God?

Prayer TimeGroup time - 15 minutes

Thank God for loving the world (and you specifically) so much that He offered up His Son on the cross. Thank God for the forgiveness and love offered through Christ. Ask Him to help you experience daily, through His Spirit, the new life that He offers to each of us.

Finish your prayer time by praying for the needs of those in your *Growth Group*. Take a few minutes to share prayer requests. Ask someone in the group to record your prayers so you that in future weeks you can see where God is answering your prayers.

BELIEVE *We Must Be Born Again*

Nicodemus Comes To Jesus

John 3:1-4

- The Pharisee could not write Jesus off, yet they were AFRAID to follow Him.
- Nicodemus' question was - How can we have ASSURANCE?

Jesus' Explanation

John 3:5-16

- There is an INTERNAL spiritual birth that connects each one of us to God.
- Jesus is God! We must BELIEVE!
- Nicodemus and Joseph decided they could not HIDE any longer.
- He is the Savior, make Him YOUR Savior today.

GROWTH GROUP HOMEWORK

Week of February 9-14, 2015

Getting StartedGroup time - 15 minutes

1. What details do you know about your own birth? When and where were you born? What was your birth like for your parents and family? Was there a humorous story involved in your birth? When was the last time you were at the place of your physical birth?

FOR GROWTH GROUP TIME

Getting Into God's WordGroup time - 35 minutes

Read John 3:1-21 (In preparation to answer questions)

1. What do we know about Nicodemus' background and his motives? What conclusions about Jesus had he already reached? Why was it so difficult for Nicodemus to believe Jesus' words? What were the barriers that prevented Nicodemus, a Pharisee, from accepting Jesus as the Messiah?

2. What aspects of the "new birth" did Jesus identify here? What role does the "Spirit" play in new birth? Why did the subject of physical birth enter the discussion? How did Jesus compare and contrast physical birth with spiritual birth?

3. What does Jesus teach in these verses about the nature of the Kingdom of God? What does "entering the Kingdom" have to do with being "born anew"? What do you think is the best translation here: "born again," "born anew," or "born from above"?

4. Why is John 3:16 such a famous verse? What does it teach us about God? What does it teach us about salvation? What does this verse teach us about our eternal destiny? How would you describe the love of God from this passage?

5. Read John 3: 22-36. What problem did John the Baptist's disciples have with Jesus? What emotions do you sense are coming from the followers of John the Baptist? John, the author, reflects on the superiority of Jesus. What statements about Jesus' superiority stand out to you?