



05

JOHN 3:4-18

AN UNEXPECTED CONVERSATION

THIS WEEK'S **focus**

Last week's lesson was all about the birth of Jesus, and this week is all about the "birth" of Jesus's followers. Jesus used the metaphor of birth to challenge a religious leader to better understand what it really looks like to follow God. This leader knew God's law and lived a very moral life, yet Jesus was clear that those things aren't how a person enters the kingdom of heaven. The only way to enter is to be born of the Spirit. This week, we'll talk about what that means, and how becoming God's child isn't about doing a bunch of stuff. (A baby doesn't do anything to be born, right?) Rather, becoming God's child is about looking to God to do what only He can do.



CENTRAL **truth**

Jesus offers new life to all who believe in Him.



EXPLORE

scripture

JOHN 3:4-18

JOHN 3:4-8

4 “How can anyone be born when he is old?” Nicodemus asked him. “Can he enter his mother’s womb a second time and be born?” **5** Jesus answered, “Truly I tell you, unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. **6** Whatever is born of the flesh is

flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit. **7** Do not be amazed that I told you that you must be born again. **8** The wind blows where it pleases, and you hear its sound, but you don’t know where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”

JOHN 3:9-13

9 “How can these things be?” asked Nicodemus. **10** “Are you a teacher of Israel and don’t know these things?” Jesus replied. **11** “Truly I tell you, we speak what we know and we testify to what we have seen, but you do not accept our testimony.

12 If I have told you about earthly things and you don’t believe, how will you believe if I tell you about heavenly things?

13 No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven — the Son of Man.

JOHN 3:14-18

14 “Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, **15** so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. **16** For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will 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. **18** Anyone who believes in him is not condemned, but anyone who does not believe is already condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the one and only Son of God.”

DAILY devotions

MEMORIZE JOHN 3:16

7 ARROWS FOR BIBLE READING



What does this passage say?



What does this passage tell us about God?



What did this passage mean to its original audience?



How does this passage change the way I relate to people?



What does this passage tell us about humans?



How does this passage prompt me to pray?



What does this passage demand of me?

day 1

JOHN 3:1-8

DWELL

Nicodemus was the top religious guy of Jesus's day. In fact, in Greek, the text says he was *the* teacher of Israel.¹ He would have memorized large portions of Scripture and would have been skilled at teaching it to others. Yet he still sought to learn from Jesus and called Him "Rabbi," which means "teacher." This would be like a world-famous opera singer coming to your voice lesson and asking for tips! There was something in Nicodemus that deeply longed to understand more about Jesus.



Think about what you know about the culture in Nicodemus's day. Why might he have gone to Jesus at night?



How would you explain what it means to be "born of the Spirit" to a non-believer?

MEMORIZE

Write out John 3:16 on a piece of paper, "taking a picture" of it with your eyes. Then, read the verse aloud five times. Finally, cover it up with your hand and try to say it without looking. Do this one more time before you go to bed tonight.

PRAY

Praise God that we do not have to be Bible scholars in order to follow Him! Thank Him that you can always go to Him with your questions, like Nicodemus did.

¹ Matt Carter and Josh Wredberg, *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in John* (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 56.

day 2

JOHN 3:9-17

DWELL

Everyone knows John 3:16, but are you familiar with the verses around it? The text that sandwiches that famous verse gives us an even deeper understanding of God's love: it is a sacrificial love that motivated God Himself to descend from heaven and be lifted up on a cross. Amazingly, He did not come to condemn the world—though He had every right! Instead, He came to save.

↔ If you had to explain the scope of God's love to someone, what would you say?

→ How does it encourage you to know Jesus came not to condemn but to save? How might this change the way you live?

MEMORIZE

Write down the first letter of each word of John 3:16 on a note card. At least five times today, see if you can say the verse just by looking at the letters.

PRAY

Confess ways that you've viewed God as a condemner rather than a Savior. Ask Him to help you believe in Him as He actually is.

day 3

JOHN 3:18-21

DWELL

Verse 18 tells us that those who believe in Jesus are not condemned, just like those who looked to the bronze snake in Numbers 21 were rescued. Imagine you didn't believe God's word that the bronze snake offered healing. You probably wouldn't look and would be condemned to death! Similarly, what about those who won't look to Jesus to save? They are condemned. This text also digs into the intriguing overlap between what we believe and what we do. Those who look to Jesus will live differently than those who don't!

↓ What does this text help us understand about why people won't look to Jesus?

← Read verse 21. Does it seem like this person aligns their life with truth in order to earn God's love or in response to God's love?

MEMORIZE

Connect your memorization efforts to a common task, like brushing your teeth, washing your hair, or driving to school. As you complete that task each day, try to say John 3:16 from memory twice.

PRAY

Thank God for providing Jesus so that you could look to Him and be saved rather than condemned to death! Ask Him to show you how your belief should impact your actions today.

day 4

JOHN 3:22-30

DWELL

It's natural for us to be jealous of someone who is drawing more attention or having more success than us. But John the Baptist didn't respond with jealousy when it was clear that Jesus's disciples were baptizing more people. Instead, he compared himself to a groom's best man, who is genuinely thrilled for his friend's big day. John could have tried to hoard power and influence for himself, but he stayed true to God's calling on his life to point to Jesus. He offered this classic line: "He must increase, but I must decrease."



How do John's words represent a great motto for all Jesus followers, then and now?



In what ways do you need to decrease so that Christ in you might increase?

MEMORIZE

Have a friend or family member set a daily alarm. When the alarm goes off each day, ask them to reach out to you and ask you to recite as much of John 3:16 from memory as you can.

PRAY

Ask God to expose places in your life where you struggle with jealousy or where you want to hoard influence. Ask Him to give you genuine joy for the work of pointing to Jesus.

day 5

JOHN 3:31-36

DWELL

Today's text seems to recap some of the big ideas we've encountered so far in the Gospel of John. We are reminded that Jesus is God the Son (see v. 31), is God's message to the world (see vv. 32-33), and is loved by God the Father (see v. 35). Those who believe in Him receive God the Spirit (see v. 34) and are gifted eternal life (see v. 36). However, "the one who rejects the Son will not see life; instead, the wrath of God remains on him" (see v. 36). We also get a reminder of Jesus's authority (see v. 35), which we saw Him use in the cleansing of the temple.



Is there anything else this passage reveals about God?



Our beliefs impact our actions, so how should these truths impact how you live today?

MEMORIZE

Write out John 3:16 somewhere creative—maybe use a dry erase marker on your bathroom mirror or chalk on the driveway. You could even write it in the dust on the back windshield of a friend's dirty car.

PRAY

Thank God for who He is! Then, ask Him to seal those truths to your heart so that it shapes who you are.