

## Members' Handout - Jesus and the Religious (John 3:1-21 )

Series: Encounters with Jesus



These CG Resources are meant to help our CGs facilitate a study of the Bible passage with a focus on applying God's truth to our lives together. Refer to the Summary, Fallen Condition and Good News sections at the beginning of the guide to keep the discussion focused. For a deeper dive into the passage, refer to the text notes on the passage.



### Interpretation

1. Based on what we see in the passage (and from 2:23-25), who is Nicodemus? What are his characteristics and why did he come to Jesus?
2. Read v3-8. How did Nicodemus misunderstand Jesus' statement of "being born again?"
3. What do being "born again" and "being born of water and the Spirit" actually mean? How does it differ from being "born of flesh"? (Also refer to Ezekiel 36:25-27)

### Fallen Condition Focus

4. Nicodemus trusted in his Jewish credentials and his religious performance to guarantee his place in God's Kingdom. Take some time to consider how we might be placing our trust in our religious performance or works:
  - a. Locating pride and superiority in ourselves
    - i. *Do we feel superior to others who are not "performing" according to the same standards? (e.g regular participation in church activity, theological knowledge, stewardship of resources and relationships, devotional life etc)*
    - ii. *Do we feel superior to others who are not believers?*
  - b. Locating despair and inferiority in ourselves
    - i. *Do we become despairing when particular sins or failures come to light? What are some hidden things that we are afraid of people finding out about us? How might we be placing our worth in performing well in these aspects?*

## Personal Renewal

5. Consider John 3:16-17. What did God send His Son into the world to do, and why? How does knowing that we are born again through the work of Jesus challenge our superiority or comfort us in our despair?

## Response

6. The gospel is ultimately not a philosophy but about the person of God who rescues and renews us. In the passage, all three Persons of the Trinity are seen working for our salvation. As we practice relating to God as a Person and not as a philosophy, consider choosing one or more questions below to respond:
  - How does the awareness of the Father's love, as expressed in John 3:16, influence your relationship with Him?
  - Reflect on areas of your life where you might be struggling with darkness or sin. How can the light of Christ illuminate and transform those areas?
  - Are there aspects of your spiritual life that feel stagnant or in need of renewal? How can you seek the Holy Spirit's work to bring about a fresh sense of spiritual rebirth?
7. Think about someone we know who might misunderstand the Christian faith as an impersonal religion, or as rules and commandments to keep, without a dynamic relationship with Jesus. How might we use this passage to share the gospel with them?