

Study Series: The God Who Is There

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Lesson Title: “The God Who Grants New Birth” (pp. 106-119)

Session 8

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The main point of this lesson is: God provides the opportunity and means for new birth—life transformation.

Focus on this goal: To help adults receive new birth by looking on the One who has been lifted up

Key Bible Passage: John 3:1-15

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

Invite adults to share interesting events regarding their own birth, or the births of babies in their families. Ask: What are some of the craziest birth stories you’ve ever heard? State many people love a good birth story.

Note the Bible is a book of birth stories. Invite volunteers to recall birth stories from the Old Testament. Point out the New Testament opens with Jesus’s birth story. Declare: As we continue navigating through Scripture we see that the Bible can contain everyone’s birth story, because the God who is there is the God who grants new birth.

Read the main point of this lesson statement (p. 117).

Step 2. Introduction to the New Birth

Ask if adults can recall the myth that relates the birth of evils in this world (Pandora’s box). Determine what really caused all the evil in the world. Review why and how God set out to restore large numbers of rebellious people in the Old Testament.

Urge adults to identify from Day One the three needs revealed by the Bible’s storyline (p. 107). Explore why these are so desperately needed. State God came as Jesus to confront these needs.

Discuss Day One, activity 2 (p. 107). Ask: Do we receive these benefits by trying really hard? By making a decision to follow Jesus? Explain. Declare these great needs are met when God grants us new birth.

Explore how the physical birth of a baby logically proves that new birth isn’t something we can work up on our own. Ask how society would understand the term “born again.” State to truly understand a born-again theology, it’s wise to examine what Jesus meant when He said, “You must be born again.”

Step 3. What Jesus Actually Said (John 3:1-10), Part 1

Ask a volunteer to read John 3:1-10. Determine details we can know about Nicodemus (see first paragraph of Day Two, pp. 108-109). Ask: When John said Nicodemus came at night to see Jesus, do you think he was referring more to the time of day or the condition of Nicodemus’s soul? What leads you to that conclusion?

Discuss Day Two, activity 2 (p. 110). Analyze what attitudes Nicodemus displayed when he came to Jesus. Consider how we can be encouraged by the fact that Nicodemus “did not even know how to approach Jesus properly” (p. 109).

Step 4. What Jesus Actually Said (John 3:1-10), Part 2

Read John 3:2-3. Ask if adults feel there’s a disconnect between Nicodemus’s statement and Jesus’s response and why. Encourage adults to silently read the second paragraph of Day Three (pp. 110-111) and state their own understanding of the connection between verses 2 and 3.

Discuss Day Three, activity 1 (p. 111).

Ask adults if they think they would have responded the same or differently than Nicodemus did in verse 4 and why. Invite volunteers to share their responses to Day Three, activity 2 (p. 111).

Ask if Jesus was saying something different in verse 5 or restating the truth of verse 3. Use the author’s remarks about parallelism (pp. 111-112) to add to that discussion.

Step 5. What Jesus Actually Said (John 3:1-10), Part 3

Ask: Do you feel like Jesus is being a little harsh with Nicodemus? Explain your reasoning. Why did Jesus expect Nicodemus to not be surprised at His references to being born of the water and the Spirit? (See second paragraph of Day Four, p. 112).

Discuss Day Four, activity 1 (p. 113). Evaluate what we can know about new birth from this Old Testament promise.

Ask: What logical reason from nature did Jesus give for saying Nicodemus shouldn’t be surprised that He told him he must be born again? Analyze what Jesus is stating about new birth with His analogy of the wind and the Spirit.

Request a volunteer read the Day Four paragraph (p. 113) beginning with “We may not be able to explain . . . .” Discuss Day Four, activity 2 (p. 114). Draw attention to the Day Four Note (p. 114).

Step 6. New Birth Accomplished

Invite a volunteer to read John 3:11-13. Ask: Do you think Jesus was enjoying this dialogue with Nicodemus? What leads you to that conclusion? How was He affirming the initial statement Nicodemus made to Him in verse 2? What gave Him the right to make such radical statements about a new birth?

Read and discuss the Day Five paragraph (p. 115) that begins with “To understand Christianity . . . .”

Invite someone to read John 3:14-15. Discuss Day Five, activity 1 (pp. 115-116). Evaluate what we can learn from this Old Testament account about how to be born again and have eternal life.

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

Ask: How can the new birth described by Jesus in John 3 be our birth story? Why is this birth story one you love to recount to others?

Urge adults to complete Day Five, activity 2 (p. 116) if they have not already done so and to talk with you after the session with questions or concerns.

Close in prayer.

