

Finally Alive
by John Piper

*What Happens When
We Are Born Again*

Living Hope Baptist Church
Home-group Discussion Questions

Preface To These Discussion Questions

The book used for this discussion guide is:

John Piper, *Finally Alive*, The Desiring God Foundation, Christian Focus, 2009. ISBN: 978-1-84550-421-2

Where can I get the book?

You should be able to purchase it from almost any Christian bookstore. It is also available online at http://cdn.desiringgod.org/pdf/books_bfa/books_bfa.pdf [as of 5 February, 2019]

What if I cannot get the book?

Although reading the relevant chapter in the book is highly encouraged, these questions are formulated in such a way that the reading of the book is not required to complete the questions and benefit from the discussions with the other saints.

What if I do not get the right answer?

These questions are not simply to be completed by finding the right answer. Instead they are written in a variety of ways to stimulate not only an increase in Biblical knowledge, but also in Biblical thinking, and thereby more Biblical living. Seek therefore not only the appropriate answer, especially those questions that are related to interpreting the Scriptures, but also examine your heart and seek to understand and grow.

Introduction

Have a serious look at the Table of Content in *Finally Alive*. Note not only the chapter headings, but also the main groups of chapters. What stands out to you from the big picture of the new birth from the questions and answers of the section and chapter headings?

What is the all-so-important difference between how the world thinks about being born again and changed living and how the Scriptures speak of being born again and changed living (bottom of p14 and top of p15 of PDF)?

What does the term “regenerate” say about the changing effect of the new birth?

Under the section of “Desecrating the Term *Born Again*”, Piper mentions many things that the term *born again* does not refer to. What are some of those things that are not the meaning of *born again*?

Chapter 1 The Supernatural Creation of Spiritual Life

What is the danger of not being born again (John 3:3), and what can *you* do to ensure that you are born again (John 1:13; 1 Peter 1:3)?

It is unsettling that we cannot produce our own new birth, but what brings stability to our fears about being, or not being, born again (Ephesians 2:4-5)?

Read 1 John 3:1-3. What was all commendable about Nicodemus' religion? Why was it not enough to enter the Kingdom of God?

What happens at the new birth is not merely affirming the supernatural in Jesus, but experiencing the supernatural in yourself. —p.30

What do the following verses affirm about receiving spiritual life?

- John 14:6
- John 6:35
- John 20:31

Chapter 2 You Are Still You, But New

What does the "flesh" and the "spirit" in John 3:6 refer to?

In the new birth, the Holy Spirit supernaturally gives us new spiritual life by connecting us with Jesus Christ through faith. —p.37

What does "water and spirit" in John 3:5 refer to?

What does "flesh" refer to in Ezekiel 36:26?

What are the many implications of the "water and spirit" new birth according to Ezekiel 36:25-27?

v. 25

v. 26

v.27

Chapter 3 We Are Spiritually Dead

***Refer back to the Table of Contents to see that this the start of a new section.*

Who alone truly knows our own hearts (Jeremiah 17:9-10; Psalm 19:12)?

What does Ephesians 2:1 and 5 say about why we need to be born again?

What is the remedy for our spiritual life (Ephesians 2:5)?

What are the descriptions of being spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1-3)?

What does "were by nature children of wrath" mean?

What is the solution to spiritual deadness (Ephesians 2:4-5)?

Chapter 4 We Are Willing Slaves to Sin and Satan

According to Romans 6:17, why did we need to be born again, and what is the change that took place when born again?

We were once so in love with sin that we could not leave it or kill it. p.56

Until God awakens us from spiritual death and gives us the life that find joy in killing sin and being holy, we are slaves and cannot get free. p.57

According to 2 Timothy 2:24-26, who is the oppressor and dictator of our wills before we are born again?

How does Romans 7:18a correct the thinking of the world that there is 'inherent good' in mankind?

How should we think about the 'good' things that we did before being born again?

Chapter 5 Faith, Justification, Adoption, Purification, Glorification

What character quality of God made the birth into God's family a reality (1 John 3:1; Ephesians 2:4-5)?

How does John 3:3 and 1 John 3:2 connect our present situation with our future situation?

How is faith and the rebirth connected (1 John 5:1)?

How is glorification and sanctification connected to the rebirth (1 John 3:2-3)?

Is 1 John 3:4-5 talking about justification or sanctification (cf. 1 John 4:10; 2:1)?

The perfection we did not have, Jesus provided.

The judgement we do not want, Jesus bore. p74

Chapter 6 Ransomed, Raised, and Called

**As we enter Part 3 of the book, please look again at the Table of Contents to understand the big picture of this book.

How does the physical giving of life to a dead man help us understand the spiritual giving of life to spiritually dead people (John 11:43-44; Eph 2:1-4)?

What are the two ways in which God regenerates us according to 1 Peter 3:3 and 23?

What is the significance of being ransomed as 1 Peter 3:18-19 mentions?

What is the significance of the resurrection of Jesus in our rebirth (! Peter 1:3)?

How does 1 Corinthians 1:22-24 help us understand the general call of the Gospel and the call of the Word of God that produces the rebirth?

The call creates what it commands. p.84

Chapter 7 Through the Washing of Regeneration

How does the 'regeneration' of the physical Creation help us understand the realities of spiritual regeneration (Romans 8:20-23)?

Why is complete renewal and regeneration necessary according to Titus 3:3?

What is the contrast highlighted by the "but God" in Titus 3:4 and Ephesians 2:4?

What are the two actions in Titus 3:5 that explain how God saves us?

Paul says that God's heart inclines to do humanity good. He is in the highest sense a philanthropist. So Paul is saying, if you are born again, it happened because of God's inclination to bless humanity. p.94

Chapter 8 Through Faith in Jesus Christ

What does "obedience to the Truth" refer to in 1 Peter (cf. 1:22-23; 2:8; 3:1; 4:17)?

What is the cause and effect order in 1 Peter 1:22-23 between love, a pure heart, and being born again? What does this teach about obedience to God's command to love, faith in our hearts, and being born again?

What does it say about our rebirth if there is no purity of heart or no love for others?

The new birth does not take the place of faith; the new birth involves faith.

The new birth is the birth of faith. p.107

Chapter 9 Through Intelligible Good News

What are all the actual events in history mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15:1-5 that form part of the Gospel message, and how does this differ to the concept of a 'mantra'?

The Gospel is news about events and their significance. p.113 emphasis added

How does John 1:14 help us remember that John 1:1 is not just a spiritual saying, but an actual reality?

John 1:11-13 mentions our believing and God's work of giving us the new birth. According to those verses, which happened first - God's work of the new birth, or our believing?

Food for thought: What is the danger of giving unbelievers specific words to pray or say in order to be saved?

Our present, continuing activity of believing is the result, and therefore, the evidence, of our past experience of new birth by which we became and remain God's children. p118 quoting John Stott

Chapter 10 It Overcomes the World

**Revisit the table of contents to understand the transition taking place in this chapter.

Summarise in your own words the reasons why God gave us 1 John?

- 1:4
- 2:1
- 2:12-13
- 2:21
- 2:26
- 5:13

How does 1 John 1:8-10 keep us from thinking born again people are sinless?

How does 1 John 2:19 keep us from thinking that born again people can lose their salvation if they don't meet the tests in this letter?

Chain for assurance of the new birth:

Gospel > New Birth > Faith > Obedience with Joy

Chapter 11 Regeneration, Faith, Love—In That Order

What is the prerequisite for obeying God without it being a burden (1 John 5:3)?

How does 1 John 5:2 challenge our definition of love?

Comparing 1 John 5:3-4 and 1 John 2:15-17, what are the forces of the world that are overcome in our love for others when we are born again?

What is the grand cause of us overcoming the world (1 John 5:4)?

How does 1 John 3:19-20 help us deal with doubt?

Chapter 12 Freedom from the Practise of Sinning

Remind yourself of the purpose of 1 John as revealed in 1 John 5:13.

According to 1 John 1:8, what do those who have the truth confess about their own sinfulness?

How does 1 John 2:1 balance the presence of sin with the command not to sin?

What practical guides do 1 John 1:9 and 1 John 2:1 give us when our sin makes us doubt our salvation?

Chapter 13 Loving Others with the Love of God

What makes it possible for God's love to be perfected in us (1 John 4:7, 12)?

The love that you have as a born-again person is no mere imitation of the divine love. It is an experience of the divine love and an extension of that love to others.

p.154

What does 1 John 4:10 teach us about the origin of love?

What is significant of "ought" in 1 John 4:11?

God's nature is in us. God's love is being perfected in us. p.156

What are some of the ways to show God's love in a perfect way to others?

Chapter 14 Tell People the Good News of Jesus Christ

**This is Part 5 of the book. Revisit the table of contents to see the progression.

What are to be the two descriptions of all our interactions with unbelievers according to 2 Corinthians 4:5?

Write a short summary of the Gospel events that need to be shared with others for them to have that Word produce the new birth in them?

What is the practical significance of Acts 8:4?

Chapter 15 I Am Sending You to Open Their Eyes

What is the most accurate description from 2 Corinthians 4:4 as to why unbelievers are still unbelievers?

How is the rebirth described in 2 Corinthians 4:6?

What, according to 2 Corinthians 4:5 is our role in God's plan to bring the new birth to unbelievers?

How can you personalise Acts 26:15-18 to tell of your own conversion and commission to tell the Gospel to others?

How does 2 Corinthians 4:7 help us overcome the feeling of inability?

Conclusion: The New Birth and the New World

John Piper runs through a fairly comprehensive Gospel presentation in his conclusion. Looking at some of the verses he cites, as well as perhaps adding some of your own, write out your own short Gospel presentation. Divide it into three or four paragraphs each with their own key point. Be prepared to discuss, or ask, what to include or exclude in your personal retelling of the Gospel message.