



Devotions for Nov 23-30, 2024

"New Birth"

'Close' Series, Week 8

Scripture: John 3:1-21

Nicodemus

Nicodemus was a Pharisee and ruler of the Jews—a highly respected teacher of Israel who knew the Scriptures inside and out. If anyone was expected to be close to God, it was him. Yet, something within him felt incomplete. Despite his status and knowledge, Nicodemus realized he was missing something essential. What if his whole life, built on religious achievement and strict adherence to the law, had been slightly off the mark?

In humility and curiosity, Nicodemus sought out Jesus, admitting that he didn't have all the answers. However, he came under the cover of night, likely out of fear of what others might think. His reputation as a leader and teacher of the law could have been jeopardized if others knew he was visiting Jesus. Still, he came. His hunger for truth outweighed his fear of judgment.

Reflection Questions

- 1. Have you ever felt like your life—or stretches of it—even if built on good things, felt incomplete or as though something essential was missing?**
- 2. What things—status, the opinions of others, pride, misplaced priorities, or unresolved trauma/pain—might keep you from going to see Jesus?**
- 3. What are you building your life on?** Are you pursuing the things of this world or seeking closeness to God through Jesus?
- 4. Nicodemus wasn't sure about Jesus and had barriers,** but still, he came to visit Him. What might it look like for you to have the humility and curiosity to come to Jesus in new and deeper ways?

Jesus

Jesus didn't reject Nicodemus for coming in secret or for his incomplete understanding. Instead, Jesus revealed a life-altering truth: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Nicodemus, confused, questioned how someone could be born a second time. Jesus explained that new birth isn't physical—it's spiritual. It's a transformation brought about by the Holy Spirit, moving us from death in sin to life in Christ.

Jesus calls us to live as new creations. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away;

behold, the new has come" (2 Corinthians 5:17). This means embracing the life He offers us, free from the weight of sin and shame, and walking in the freedom of who He has made us to be.

Reflection Questions

- 1. Do you believe Jesus will welcome you, even in your uncertainty or fear?** Even if you come to Him under the cover of darkness, He still wants to meet with you. Why might we sometimes struggle to fully embrace this truth?
- 2. How would you explain the difference** between physical birth and spiritual rebirth to someone else?
- 3. Reflect on how your life has changed since coming to faith in Jesus.** What areas have been transformed? Are there areas where you still feel stuck in the "old life"? Why?

Scripture Meditation

**Verse: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."
—2 Corinthians 5:17**

Step 1: Quiet Your Heart

Find a quiet place where you won't be distracted. Take a few deep breaths to settle your mind and body. Invite God into this moment by praying: "Lord, open my heart to Your Word. Help me to hear Your voice and experience Your truth in a fresh way."

Step 2: Read the Verse Slowly

Read the verse aloud, slowly and intentionally, several times.

Step 3: Reflect

- 1. What stands out** to you in this verse?
- 2. What does this verse reveal** about your identity in Christ?
- 3. Are there aspects of your old life**—past mistakes, regrets, or habits—you're still holding onto? What might it look like to fully embrace the new life Jesus has given you?

Step 4: Read the Verse Again

Read the verse aloud again, but this time personalize it. Insert your name and imagine Jesus speaking these words directly to you:

"Therefore, **(your name)**, you are in Christ, you are a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." —
2 Corinthians 5:17

Step 5: Pray

Lord, thank You for making me a new creation through Christ. I surrender the old—my mistakes, my doubts, and my fears—to You. Help me to fully embrace the new life You have given me. Teach me to live as Your child, walking in freedom, joy, and purpose. Amen.