

## THE SPIRIT RENEWS

I'm sure everyone has witnessed a birth, be it real and in person or via some form of video media. The mental milestones are the same. The child's first gasp of air to fill its lungs; then the piercing cry and finally everyone in the delivery room smiles. That cry was the sign of life.

What thoughts and feelings do you associate with natural birth?

What about Christian rebirth? It happens when a person hears the message of Christ, and believes. At that moment that person is born into a whole new spiritual realm. The Holy Spirit was intimately involved in that new birth. Someone delivers the message of the gospel and someone receives it with faith. But the Holy Spirit brings the new life.

What thoughts and feelings do you associate with Christian birth?

John 3:1-8

<sup>1</sup> Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. <sup>2</sup> He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him." <sup>3</sup> In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." <sup>4</sup> "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" <sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. <sup>7</sup> You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' <sup>8</sup> The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going." So it is with everyone born of the Spirit

### *John 3:1-8 DISCUSSION*

1. How would you describe Nicodemus to your friends?
2. Summarize his view of who Jesus was (v.2). What was positive and what was lacking?
3. How would you explain Nicodemus's initial understanding of being "born again" (v. 4)?
4. Jesus talks about two births—the first a birth of the flesh, the second a birth of the spirit. Describe each birth in your own words.
5. What role does the Holy Spirit play in the new birth?
6. In what ways is the Spirit's work of bringing people to new birth like the blowing of the wind (v. 8)?
7. How can your understanding of the Spirit's work affect how you talk to others about Jesus?
8. Have you experienced the new birth Jesus talks about in this passage? Tell how the spirit worked in your life to bring you to Christ.
9. There are obvious signs that a person has physical life. What are the signs that a person has the spiritual life Jesus describes in this passage?

Take these thoughts with you.

In reference to discussion point 9, which of these signs of new life is most obvious in your life? Which is least obvious, and what would it take to change that?

Is there a Nicodemus in your life—someone who has expressed an interest in Jesus but who has not yet believed in him? Plan to communicate more about Jesus with that person this week. Ask the members of your group or a Christian friend to pray with you for the right opportunity.