

Lesson 6

God Makes a New Creation: Regeneration

Rani Chowdhury felt such hunger and need in her heart! *It must be that I do not have the right religion*, she thought. So she changed from Hinduism to another system of religion. That wasn't it, either, so she went shopping for a religion as a woman might look for bargains in the bazaar. Nothing brought her peace. Then she heard of the Christian religion. *I will repent of my sins*, she said, *I will have this baptism I have heard of and that will wash away my sins*. But even though she was baptized and tried very hard to live a good life, she knew that something was still lacking. She realized that she had changed one religious system for another. She was like a person in a soiled garment going from one room to another. She was still in the soiled garment. Changing rooms had not made her clean. The problem was that she had never experienced the new birth. She had accepted Christianity, but not the *Christ* of Christianity.

Because she was sincerely seeking truth, the Holy Spirit opened her understanding. She saw herself now, not simply as a person who needed a religion, but as a lost sinner who needed a Savior. She responded to the Spirit's call, put her trust in Jesus, committed her life completely to Him, and owned Him as her Savior and Lord. In that hour she knew Christ personally. She was *born again*; not only converted, but also *regenerated*. She received a new nature, and her life was truly changed.

In this lesson we consider this aspect of salvation, regeneration: the divine act that imparts *spiritual life* to the repentant sinner as he or she is joined in personal union with Christ.



lesson outline

Definition of Regeneration
Need for Regeneration
Experience of Regeneration

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- Explain regeneration as it is presented in the Bible.
- Cite Scriptures that show that the need for regeneration is universal.
- Discuss the experience of regeneration.

learning activities

1. Read John 3 through carefully several times; note especially the development of Jesus' teaching on the new birth, verses 1-21.
2. Look up the meanings of any key words you do not understand.
3. Work through the lesson development as usual. As you do the study questions, be sure to write your own responses before looking ahead to the answers we have given. Take the self-test when you have finished and check your answers.

key words

consuming	passive
corruption	quicken
crisis	re-creation
destined	sacraments
implantation	symbolize
motivation	unregenerate

lesson development

DEFINITION OF REGENERATION

In Unit 1 we considered the response of people to the gospel call in repentance, faith, and conversion. These elements are the active response from each sinner. Now we consider the activity of God in salvation, and we shall see that people are at this point primarily passive. For it is God alone who can ignite the spark of spiritual life in the hearts of those who are spiritually dead because of their disobedience (Ephesians 2:5).

Our highest destiny is to live with God forever; but human nature in its present condition does not possess the capacities for living in a heavenly kingdom. For this reason heavenly life must come down from above to transform human nature for membership in that kingdom.

Characteristics of Regeneration

Objective 1. *Identify statements that give the characteristics of biblical regeneration.*

Regeneration is the act of God that imparts spiritual life to the repentant sinner as he or she receives the Lord Jesus Christ (Titus 3:5). It is a supernatural act that takes place the instant the sinner receives Christ. Not only does the repentant one receive divine life, but the person also receives a new nature (2 Peter 1:4). Thus he or she becomes a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Notice that in regeneration it is the Holy Spirit who *quickens* those who are spiritually dead (John 6:63; Romans 8:1-10; Ephesians 2:1). John Wesley said that regeneration is "that great change which God works in the soul when He brings it into life; when He raises it from the death of sin to the life of righteousness." In this act, then, God quickens spiritually dead people by the Holy Spirit and plants spiritual life in them. These people experience spiritual renewal, restoration, and re-creation. The Holy Spirit has regenerated them.

- 1 Circle the letter of each TRUE statement.
- a The experience of regeneration is primarily natural and gradual.
 - b Regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit in the soul of the one who receives Christ.
 - c Spiritual rebirth is a divine activity and it occurs when one receives Christ.
 - d Regeneration brings about a new nature in the one who receives Christ; he becomes a new creation.

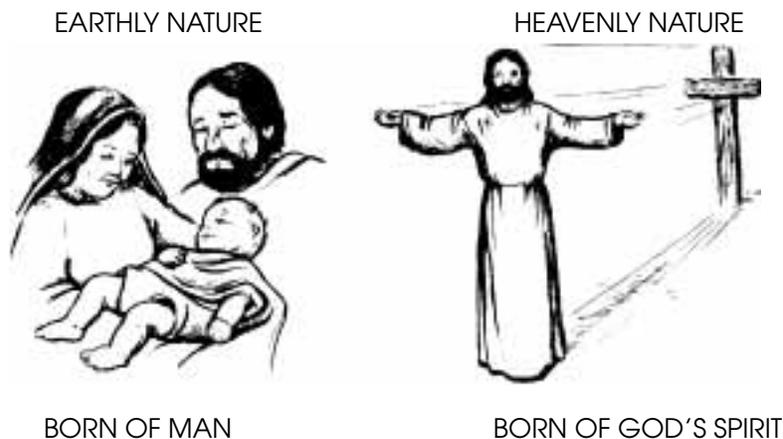
Biblical Terms for Regeneration

Objective 2. Give a definition of regeneration based on Scripture references.

In Lesson 1 we discussed the fall of Adam and the sin which he passed on to the human race. We learned that all people bear the marks of the Fall, among which is a corrupted nature. Because of the Fall, people lost their communion with God. But through the work of Christ on Calvary, the results of the Fall were modified. As people repent, believe on the Lord Jesus, receive Him as their Savior, and are converted, their spiritual life or communion with God is restored. Regeneration is thus the restoration of spiritual life. It is the instant supernatural change brought about by the Holy Spirit in the life of one who has repented and believed.

The most common term used to define regeneration is that of being “born again” or “born from above.” And while the word *regeneration* appears in the King James Version only in Matthew 19:28 and Titus 3:5, the experience which it speaks about, being reborn or born of God, is quite common in Scripture. Apart from birth there can be no life. Natural life begins when one enters the world through birth, and one must enter the Spiritual realm in the same way.

Jesus said to Nicodemus, “A person is born physically of human parents, but he is born spiritually of the Spirit. Do not be surprised because I tell you that you must all be born again” (John 3:6,7, TEV). Our parents gave us natural birth; but God gives us spiritual birth. And spiritual birth makes God our Father (John 1:13; 1 John 3:9). Paul speaks of the regeneration experience as one of re-creation, “When anyone is joined to Christ, he is a new being; the old is gone, the new has come” (2 Corinthians 5:17).



The old unregenerate nature is like a seed on the surface of the earth. As long as it remains thus, it will never begin to grow, blossom, and bear fruit. It has the potential for life, but it needs something else so that it can live and produce. It needs to be *quickened*. And as we have noted above, regeneration is the act of God by which spiritually dead people are quickened by the Holy Spirit so that the germ of divine life implanted in them can begin to grow, blossom, and bear fruit.

2 Look up each of the following Scriptures and note first on the left the specific words used to describe regeneration. Then on the right give the specific reason (if any), for being regenerated. The first one has been done for you.

Words Used to Describe Regeneration	Reason for Being Regenerated
a John 1:13 <i>Born of God</i>	<i>Will of God</i>
b John 3:3
c John 3:5
d John 3:7
e John 3:8
f 1 Peter 1:3
g 1 Peter 1:23
h 1 John 2:29
i 1 John 3:9
j 1 John 4:7
k 1 John 5:1
l 1 John 5:18

In the exercise above, the column *Reasons for Being Regenerated* suggests some principles concerning regeneration. Let's list them here:

1. From eternity God willed (desired) our regeneration (Ephesians 1:4).
2. The new birth enables us to live with hope, love, and purity.
3. Our new life will take us into eternity, into God's kingdom.

3 Other words are also used in Scripture to describe regeneration. Look up the following references and write the description of regeneration given in each. The first one has been done for you.

- a John 5:24 *Crossed over from death to life.*
- b 2 Corinthians 5:17
- c Galatians 6:15
- d Ephesians 2:10
- e Ephesians 4:24
- f Titus 3:5

4 Based on these Scriptures, regeneration may be defined as the experience of being spiritually, of becoming a in Christ by the power of the

Nature of Regeneration

Objective 3. *Identify words that describe the nature of regeneration.*

A Passive Experience

As we have mentioned previously, in regeneration people are relatively passive. People's responsibility in regeneration may be compared to the relationship that exists between a doctor and a patient. The doctor cannot proceed with an operation until he or she has the consent of the patient. However, once this is given, the doctor assumes complete control. Nevertheless, no patient is ever *completely passive*, because the doctor does not begin to act until the patient is in agreement. In salvation we face the same situation. God does not act until we are in agreement. What a source of joy it is that we can trust our souls with all their sicknesses, hurts, and sorrows to the Great Physician.

A Sudden Experience

The experience in which new life is divinely imparted to the souls of people takes place *suddenly*. Birth is always a crisis, and spiritual birth is no exception to the rule. Each of us can point to a specific day as our birthday. We came into the world suddenly, at a certain moment. And in the same way the new birth is a crisis experience. It may take a while for us to get to the point of crisis, but when it happens, it happens suddenly. Consider it in this way: Someone offers you a gift; there is a moment of time when you don't yet have the gift; the next moment you receive it. The gift was offered and taken suddenly. Spiritual life is like this. One moment you don't have it, the next moment you receive it. The new birth is a definite and decisive experience. New life from above is received *suddenly*.

OUR PART



REPENTANCE

GOD'S PART



REGENERATION

A Mysterious Experience

New spiritual life also appears *mysteriously*. Jesus did not attempt to explain the *how* of the new birth, but He did explain the *why*: “Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit” (John 3:6). The physical and the spiritual belong to two different realms, and one cannot produce the other: the human nature can reproduce the human nature, but only the Holy Spirit can produce the spiritual nature.

Christianity is not merely a system of ethics or a moral code; it is the giving of new life: the life of God is implanted in the heart of individuals by the operation of the Holy Spirit. In His sovereign way the Holy Spirit suddenly and mysteriously moves upon our inner nature and brings life and light where once there was darkness, death, and barrenness. In this mysterious operation of the Spirit a new creature is born. And it is only when people have been born of the Spirit that they receive a new nature. This new nature makes people suitable for heaven, and that is why Jesus stated the unchangeable principle, “You must be born again!” (John 3:7). If a person is to enter heaven, that person must have a new nature suitable for heaven.

A Developing Experience

Finally, though new spiritual life comes suddenly, it develops progressively. As we shall see in detail later, all who receive Christ are separated unto God. With this separation unto Him comes the responsibility to live daily for Him. Each new believer is called to maintain a personal dedication to God and develop into the likeness of His Son (Romans 8:29).

5 Identify words that describe the nature of regeneration by placing the number of each word (right) in front of its proper description (left).

- | | | |
|---------------|--|---------------|
| a | Describes the quality of new spiritual life which develops into the image of Christ. | 1) Passive |
| b | People give their assent, and then the Great Physician implants new spiritual life. | 2) Sudden |
| c | Birth by the Spirit is like the wind: we see the effect but not the cause. | 3) Mysterious |
| d | New birth is a crisis experience. | 4) Developing |

Wrong Ideas About Regeneration

Objective 4. *Explain what is wrong about erroneous ideas concerning regeneration.*

There are some very common wrong ideas concerning regeneration. And while we cannot deal with these in great depth, we should be aware of them. Then as you read and study in days to come, you will be able to explore these matters more fully.

The most common wrong idea is that people experience regeneration when they are baptized. Those who hold this view believe that all the effects of the Fall are removed by water baptism, and one's sins after baptism are dealt with through the sacraments of the church, such as communion (the Lord's Supper). These people believe that baptism is the means of salvation. Let us examine the Scriptures for evidence of the purpose and place of baptism in the life of the one who receives Christ.

You will remember that John the Baptist came preaching and baptizing. His message was, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near" (Matthew 3:2), and his hearers confessed their sins and were baptized by him (see Matthew 3:6; Mark 1:4,5; Luke 3:3,7,8). Jesus also began His ministry gaining and baptizing believers, "although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples" (see John 4:1,2). Just before He returned to heaven, Jesus commanded His disciples to "go and make disciples of all nations," after which they were to baptize them (Matthew 28:19). The apostles' obedience followed their Lord's command, and they baptized believers as an essential part of their ministry. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter declared "Repent and be baptized" (Acts 2:38). It is clear that baptism was instituted by the Lord, and preached by the early church. It is also clear that new believers were baptized *following* repentance of sins and belief in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In John 3:5 Jesus uses water as a symbol of the cleansing one receives through His atoning work. In the Old Testament, water symbolized the washing processes that took place in the temple ritual. The orthodox Jew would interpret water in a religious context as that which cleanses. Thus when Jesus spoke to Nicodemus, He was saying he could enter the Kingdom only if he were cleansed from sin and given new life by the Holy Spirit. In Titus 3:5, when Paul says that God "saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit," he refers to the cleansing from sin that takes place in us. For at the moment of regeneration "the old has gone," cleansed by a supernatural act, and "the new has come" (2 Corinthians 5:17). At this point the new believer is commanded to follow the regeneration experience with water baptism.



BAPTISM:
AN OUTWARD
SYMBOL OF AN
INWARD CHANGE

Baptism is an outward witness to the world of the change of nature within. It symbolizes the death and burial of the sinful nature and the birth of the new nature (Romans 6:3-5). Peter says, moreover, that baptism is a symbol of obedience (1 Peter 3:21). In this verse he also declares that baptism has no value in washing away bodily dirt; and we might add that

baptism has no value in washing away and removing sin and the effects of the Fall. (See Hebrews 9:22, 26-28.) Thus, while baptism is the scriptural duty of every believer, it simply testifies to the reality of regeneration; it is a public expression of one's faith in Christ.

6 Circle the letter in front of each TRUE statement.

- a** Regeneration is the act by which one receives new spiritual life, while baptism is the symbolical act by which one gives outward expression of the inward work of regeneration.
- b** The order which we see in John the Baptist and Jesus' ministry was repent (turn away from your sins) and then be baptized.
- c** The experiences of the Philippian jailer (Acts 16:30-34) and those at the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:44-48; 11:17) show us that after having active faith in the Lord and their lives changed, then people qualify for baptism.

Another common but wrong idea is that regeneration makes a person perfect. I'm reminded of a saying that was coined to answer such an error: "Christians aren't perfect, they are just forgiven." Let us compare the new birth to natural birth. While a baby has within the possibility for maturity, he or she is still a baby. In the spiritual realm a new believer is a spiritual baby. He or she has the possibility for maturity, but the spiritual baby is just an infant. Regeneration does not produce a fully developed spiritual person; nevertheless, it does begin a spiritual relationship between Christ and the believer. "No one who lives in him keeps on sinning" (1 John 3:6). Instead, he or she begins the journey and progresses toward Christian maturity.

Some mistakenly believe that regeneration comes by living a good life, a life that is characterized by performing good works. They reason that since they are good, God will be fair and grant them salvation. However, the Bible says that all have sinned and need a Savior (1 John 1:10). Whoever has the Son of God has eternal life and whoever does not have the Son of God does not have spiritual life (1 John 5:11-12). God would never have provided so costly a sacrifice to save people if they had not been completely and hopelessly lost (John 3:16-18). It is only as we believe in Him and commit ourselves to Him that we can be changed and be made ready for heaven. Good works are the fruit of a changed life; they are not the root, the source of it.

Some other people wrongly believe that education will cure the problems of the world and regenerate people. In recent times people have had an almost limitless belief in themselves and their achievements. But in spite of the vast increase of knowledge, people's problems remain. Wars in this century continue and increase in extent, and the death of millions of innocent people testifies to the inability of education to change corrupt human nature, the source of problems. Education can enlighten the mind and expand one's outlook on life by correcting false ideas and practices, but it cannot apply a cure to the corrupt nature of people. Knowledge that is not consecrated to God merely fills a person with pride (1 Corinthians 8:1). It has no power to bring about the instant change in the nature of the one who seeks to be born again. Only the Holy Spirit can do this. If education brought regeneration only a few of the world's people could experience the new birth, but education is not the means of regeneration. God has made regeneration available to all people.

CHURCH
MEMBERSHIP



EDUCATION



RITUALS



CHRIST IS THE WAY

Still other people mistakenly believe that church membership equals regeneration. This appears to be reasonable, but church membership simply identifies us with an institution. It does not deal with the basic problems of Spiritual deadness and corrupt natures. It is a good thing to be enrolled in a church, but it is necessary to be born again first in order to be a member of the body of Christ.

And finally, still other people feel that by participating in ceremonial cleansing, rituals, observances, and prayers they will be regenerated and made acceptable to God. Yet the ones who do these things may know nothing of freedom from sin and a changed life. A person may perform all the duties that any religion requires and yet be spiritually dead.

7 Why is each one of the following ideas about regeneration wrong?

a Regeneration takes place when people are baptized.

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b Regeneration makes a person perfect.

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c Regeneration is the result of leading a good life.

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d People are regenerated as they become more educated and enlightened.

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e Church membership equals regeneration.

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f Regeneration is brought about by observing religious rituals, ceremonies, and prayers.

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NEED FOR REGENERATION

Objective 5. *Select a statement that explains why regeneration is necessary.*

Regeneration is necessary for two basic reasons: because of the nature of humans and the nature of God. Jesus pointed out that the deepest and most universal need of all people is a complete change of their whole nature and character. People have been affected—damaged—by sin as a result of the Fall, and this damage is reflected in their behavior and their various relationships. They sin because they are sinners, and their actions reflect what they are: “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23); “There is no one righteous, not even one” (Romans 3:10); “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned” (Romans 5:12).

Have you ever wondered why people act as they do? Why do they sin? They sin because of what they are! If you are in Adam, you will do what he did. If you are in Christ, you will do what He does. I am a Duncan, because I was born into the Duncan family. I look like my father. I walk as he did. I don’t consciously do this because I want to imitate him, but because I am his son and bear the Duncan traits. I was born into the family. In the same way, we bear the traits of our fallen human family.

Our human nature is to sin, and until we receive a new nature we will continue to sin. Our old nature will reveal itself. It cannot be otherwise. In our spiritually dead condition our actions are characterized by anger, passion, hateful feelings, insults, and obscene talk—the deeds of the old self or nature (Colossians 3:8,9). In this condition we cannot have fellowship with God, for there is nothing in us to make us worthy. We are slaves to sin (Romans 7:14), and the ability to do good is not in us, even though the desire to do good may be in us (v.18). Spiritually dead people follow the world’s evil way. And they obey the enemy of God, Satan, the spirit who now controls the people who disobey God. They live according to natural desires, doing what suits the wishes of their own bodies and minds. They are destined for God’s anger (Ephesians 2:1-3).

- 8 Circle the letters of the TRUE statements.
- a People need to be regenerated because they are spiritually dead, and in this condition they are unfit to have fellowship with God.
- b People commit sin because of their bad environment and the bad influence of their families, and not because of personal sin.
- c Sin is the result of the corrupt sinful nature that we inherited from Adam.

Sin has completely corrupted people in spirit, soul, and body. In addition to being *spiritually* dead, people’s *intellects* were also affected by the Fall. In spite of the achievements of modern society, people are dead to the things of God (1 Corinthians 2:14), and the most intelligent people who have not been regenerated “are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts” (Ephesians 4:18). But even in their fallen condition, people are the crown of God’s creation. They still bear the image of God, and although they lack understanding of God, their intelligence in other areas is remarkable. In the Fall they did not lose the ability to know, to understand. However, lacking the spiritual dimension, they have incomplete knowledge. They have the facts, but they don’t know how to interpret these facts. Therefore, they develop their own philosophy of life; generally it does not include God. Or, their

concept of God is seriously in error and does not represent correctly the nature of God nor the way He should be worshipped.

9 Read Romans 1:18-32 and answer the following questions.

a How do people know about God?

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b What can people learn about God from the natural world?

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c What leads to people's downfall?

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.....

d What statement is repeated three times?

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Our discussion of the need for regeneration may seem to indicate that only very wicked people need to be born again. But the Scriptures declare that *all people* are guilty before God and need to be made spiritually alive.

10 Look up the following Scriptures and identify in each case who it was that was seeking salvation and was in need of regeneration.

a Luke 18:18-25

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b John 3:1-21

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c Acts 10:1-48

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d Acts 8:26-40

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e Acts 16:13-15

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In each of the cases above we have seen that the individuals were good, upright people, but they needed to receive spiritual life. Sometimes people, such as the Jewish leader of Luke 18, feel that they don't need a Savior. We've heard a saying about people like this: "Those who think lightly of the disease will linger on the way to the physician." Most religions outside of Christianity believe that people are struggling up a mountainside by many different paths, but that all paths lead to the same place. In their teaching we almost hear the serpent's hiss, "You will be like God" (Genesis 3: 5). They seem to feel that they are saved by their own efforts, and they will eventually become gods through their own striving.

But in Christianity we see the true picture. People are all in the desert of sin, seeking and thirsting for reality. The answer to their spiritual problems requires that they come to the oasis, to the source of life. Some see mirages or illusions and refuse to come to Christ, the oasis. Here the claim is not that Christ is one way among many; He is the only way. For in Jesus Christ, God comes down to people and reaches them in the depths of their corruption. He quickens them into spiritual life, raising them to a new life.

The new birth means a new nature and the ability to live a life that is pleasing to God. Only the new birth can produce the holy nature in people that makes fellowship with God possible. Holiness is an absolute requirement for people to be accepted with Him (Hebrews 12:14). Thus regeneration changes the nature of people, and then their new divine life is acceptable to a holy God.



CHRIST IS OUR OASIS

11 Circle the letter that indicates the best completion for this sentence. Regeneration is necessary because of the

- a) holiness of God which demands a complete change in the nature of people.
- b) need of God for fellowship with people.
- c) need of people to exercise their intellects as they seek the knowledge that saves.

EXPERIENCE OF REGENERATION

We have noted that while regeneration is a mysterious experience, it is nevertheless real. “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 3:8). We can see the results of regeneration even if we cannot fully explain all of the operation. But we can experience it! Our wonder at the marvel of the new birth experience bids us worship where we cannot fully comprehend.

Means of Regeneration

Objective 6. *Identify true statements concerning the means of regeneration.*

The work of regeneration has two aspects: the human and the divine. As we have seen, God alone regenerates. We are born of the Spirit. He alone imparts new life; nevertheless, unregenerate people have a responsibility in the matter: to respond to God’s invitation.

12 Read the Scripture references given here and state how regeneration is produced in each case.

- a John 3:6
- b 1 Corinthians 15:45
- c Titus 3:5
- d James 1:17,18
- e 1 Peter 1:23

In these Scriptures we see that all three Persons of the Trinity are involved in regeneration. In addition, we note the importance of the Word in regeneration. Let us now consider the means God uses to bring about regeneration.

John explains the value of believing God’s written Word for regeneration: “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life” (1 John 5:13). In believing the Word, one believes the testimony concerning Jesus and therefore trusts not only the Word but also the Lord Jesus whom the Word reveals (1 John 5:9,10). “And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life” (1 John 5:11,12).

Believing God’s testimony in His Word means more than simple intellectual agreement to what is written. As we saw in an earlier lesson, the kind of believing that truly regenerates must involve the total being: intellect, emotions, and will. Paul says:

If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved (Romans 10:9,10).

The preaching of the Word of truth is the means God uses to bring about the regeneration of people (James 1:18; 1 Corinthians 4:15). Thus His Word becomes an agent in the work of regeneration, “For you have been born again . . . through the living and enduring word of God” (1 Peter 1:23). The preaching of the Word, then, is the means God uses to bring people to salvation.

A person is *born again* by receiving Jesus Christ. This involves an *act of the will*. Christ does not forcibly enter the door; “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will go in and eat with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20). Receiving Jesus Christ involves an act of *faith*, “Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12). And of course the *act of the will* and the *assent of the heart* are based upon the *knowledge of God’s offer of salvation*, involving the total person in the experience of regeneration.

We see that regeneration comes immediately from God. The new birth is of God, for regenerated ones are “children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God” (John 1:13). This new birth is also known as being born of the Spirit (John 3:6). It is referred to as “washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5). And through the Spirit, Christ enters the door of the heart (Revelation 3:20). The Trinity is thus involved in producing regeneration.

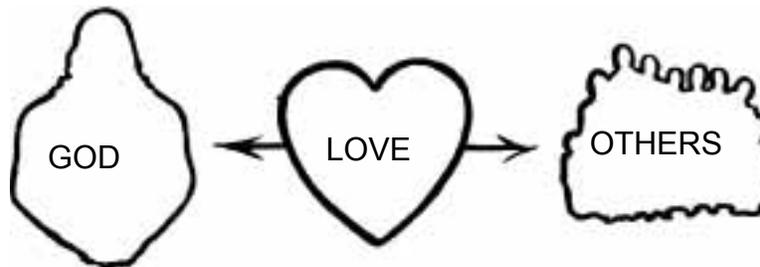
13 Circle the letter in front of TRUE statements.

- a Regeneration is the result of living a good life and of producing good works.
- b The preaching of the Word of God brings about regeneration.
- c Education, which has raised the world from darkness into modern civilization, brings regeneration.
- d Membership in a church is one of the important means of regeneration.
- e Observance of religious ceremonies, rituals, and saying prayers makes possible the regeneration of people.
- f Regeneration comes directly from God, is called “birth by the Spirit,” and occurs as one opens his heart’s door to Christ.

Evidences of Regeneration

Objective 7. *Identify evidences of regeneration.*

When a person is born again, that person becomes aware of new life within. That individual has a new desire for living and a real purpose in living. He or she has a new set of values and a whole new outlook on life (2 Corinthians 5:17). God’s Spirit joins with our spirit to declare that we are His children (Romans 8:16; Galatians 4:6). The newborn person becomes aware of the prompting and leading of the Holy Spirit within, which is additional proof of the experience (Romans 8:14).



AN EVIDENCE OF NEW BIRTH

The regenerated person has a consuming love for God. The center of his or her interest is now God and no longer self. God’s love has been poured out into the person’s heart by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5); and he or she responds by loving (1 John 4:19). One who is truly born again loves not only the God who has given new life, but also others (1 John 4:21; 5:2). This love for one another is one of the great evidences that the old nature has died and the new one reigns. “We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers” (1 John 3:14).

14 Circle the letter that indicates the best ending for this sentence. The inward evidences of the new birth are

- a) a consciousness of one’s own self-sufficiency, the desire for greater self-understanding, and a new philosophy of life.
- b) the awareness that one is bound to a new set of rules and regulations, that disobeying these rules will lead to certain punishment and eternal death.
- c) an awareness of new life, a consciousness of belonging to God’s family and of His leading, keeping power.

The born-again person is delivered from the practice of sin. But if a person should sin he or she has Someone who pleads with the Father on his or her behalf—Jesus Christ the righteous one (1 John 2:1). Our sin is cleansed by the blood of Christ (1 John 1:7) and we find forgiveness and restoration; however, we must forsake sin as a habitual practice: “No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in him” (1 John 3:9).

By claiming the promises of God, regenerated people come to share in the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4), and they grow to be like their Savior (Romans 8:29). As they grow in spirit, they overcome the world with all its passions and desires (Galatians 5:24; 1 John 5:4). They *do* right now because they *are* right. Their old habits are replaced by new habits of righteousness (1 John 2:29). These evidences become proof to them and to others that they have been truly born again.

15 Identify evidences of regeneration by writing **1** in front of each description that is an evidence of regeneration and a **2** in front of those that are not.

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| a Awareness of new life, new desires and new values | 1) Evidence |
| b Consciousness of the Spirit’s presence in our lives making our experience real | 2) Not evidence |
| c The leading, prompting, and convicting of the Holy Spirit | |
| d Awareness of one’s sins, guilt, inability to cope with sin and to live above it | |
| e Love of God and of fellow people | |
| f Awareness that if one sins, God provides forgiveness and restoration | |
| g Growth in the knowledge of spiritual things and in the likeness of Christ, as one overcomes the world with all its sinful desires | |
| h Becoming a judge of others and their evidence of Christianity | |

Fulfillment of Regeneration

Objective 8. *Describe the fulfillment of regeneration.*

Regeneration begins spiritual life in us. The new birth experience, as we have seen, initiates a potential for development, which has as its goal Christlikeness (1 John 3:2). We have been chosen, set apart, to become like Jesus (Romans 8:29). Development of spiritual life will continue as long as each one of us lives and will not be completed until we are glorified. As we look forward to His glorious appearing, we maintain our lives in purity (1 John 3:3). Becoming like Jesus thus involves change as we endeavor to pattern our life after His (1 Peter 2:21). Even now as we dedicate ourselves to Him and His cause, we “are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:18).

16 What happens after we experience regeneration?

.....

.....

self-test

SHORT ANSWER. Complete the following sentences with the correct word or words.

- 1 The most common term used to define *regeneration* is
- 2 The Bible teaches us that the new birth is the means by which people are
- 3 In regeneration the sinner becomes a new creation in
- 4 According to John 3:16, who can be regenerated?
- 5 Two of the evidences of regeneration are

MULTIPLE CHOICE. There is only one correct answer for each question. Circle the letter of the correct answer.

- 6 One of the commonly wrong ideas of regeneration is that
 - a) it is the same as conversion.
 - b) a person is regenerated by baptism.
 - c) regeneration is purely a change of mind.
- 7 Regeneration is a necessity because of the
 - a) guilt feelings of people.
 - b) requirements of society.
 - c) holy nature of God.
- 8 The new birth is necessary because of the
 - a) corrupt nature of people.
 - b) requirements of the Law.
 - c) customs of mankind.
- 9 The experience of regeneration is one in which
 - a) the sinner moves in sincerity up the side of the mountain, and by his or her own efforts reaches the top with all other sincere people who have worked out their own salvation.
 - b) each sinner who is lost in the desert of sin comes to Christ, the oasis, and commits his or her life to Him, fully trusting Him to grant spiritual life and a new nature.
 - c) the sinful person attempts to be changed by education and confidently believes that any faults he or she may have will be cured by more knowledge and good intentions.
- 10 Which of the following statements is an accurate analysis of the experience of regeneration?
 - a) The work of regeneration is a complex operation in which God and people share equally in producing new character in the lives of individuals who truly seek after God.
 - b) Regeneration is essentially the establishment of new goals, ideals, and efforts by the people who seek to reform their pattern of life.
 - c) The work of regeneration occurs in a mysterious and sudden way, spiritually changing the one who repents, turns from sin, believes in Christ, and commits completely to God.

answers to study questions

- 9 a** In verse 20 we learn that one way God reveals himself is in Creation.
b They can clearly see His eternal power and His divine nature.
c They know God but they do not give Him the honor that belongs to Him, nor do they thank Him.
d God has given them over to their filthy desires, shameful passions, and corrupted minds.
- 1 a** False.
b True.
c True.
d True.
- 10 a** A certain ruler who had faithfully kept all the Jewish religious requirements.
b Nicodemus was a Jewish leader of the Pharisees; in fact, he was a great teacher.
c Cornelius was a captain in the Roman army. He was a religious man.
d The Ethiopian eunuch was a valuable official in the queen's court.
e Lydia was a woman who worshipped God.

2

	WORDS USED	REASONS FOR
a	Born of God.	Will of God.
b	Born again.	To see the Kingdom of God.
c	Born of water and the Spirit.	To enter the Kingdom.
d	Born again.	No reason given.
e	Born of the Spirit.	The will of the Spirit.
f	Begotten us again.	To have a living hope.
g	Being born again.	No reason given.
h	Born of Him (God).	To do right.
i	Born of God.	To avoid sin.
j	Born of God.	To love the brethren.
k	Begotten of Him (God).	To love the brethren.
l	Born of God.	To avoid sin.

- 11 a)** holiness of God which demands a complete change . . .
- 3 a** Crossed over from death to life.
b One is a new being.
c A new creature.
d Created in Christ Jesus.
e The new self.
f The Holy Spirit saved us and gave us new life by cleansing us.
- 12 a** The Holy Spirit produces spiritual birth.
b The "last Adam" (Christ) is the life-giving Spirit.
c The Holy Spirit gives us new birth.
d God gave us birth through the word of truth.
e Through the living and eternal Word of God we have been born again.
- 4** reborn, new creature, Holy Spirit.

- 13 a** False.
b True.
c False.
d False.
e False.
f True.
- 5 a** 4) Developing.
b 1) Passive.
c 3) Mysterious.
d 2) Sudden.
- 14 c)** an awareness of new life, a consciousness . . .
- 6 a** True.
b True.
c True.
- 15 a** 1) Evidence.
b 1) Evidence.
c 1) Evidence.
d 2) Not evidence.
e 1) Evidence.
f 1) Evidence.
g 1) Evidence.
h 2) Not evidence.
- 7 a** Baptism is only a symbol or witness of the change that has already taken place.
b Spiritual maturity is a gradual process which begins when a person is born again and continues as he or she becomes more and more like Jesus.
c Each of us has sinned and we need a Savior. If we receive Him as Lord of our life, we have eternal life; if not, we are lost.
d Education cannot deal with our corrupt, sinful nature, the source of our problems.
e Church membership does not deal with the sin problem and our spiritual deadness.
f None of these deals with a person's spiritual deadness and corrupt nature.
- 16** We progress in the process of being changed into our Lord's likeness as we keep our eyes fixed on Him. One day as He appears we shall be "like Him" for we shall see Him as He really is (1 John 3:2).
- 8 a** True.
b False.
c True.