

# **DMJ 101 – Lesson 2: Born Again—New Life Through the Cross**

## **Small Group Bible Discussion Guide (SALT Method)**

**Objective:** To help participants understand that being born again is God's work of giving new spiritual life through faith in Jesus Christ and His finished work on the Cross.

**Main Scripture:** John 3:1–16

**Key Truth:** Being born again is not merely becoming religious; it is receiving new spiritual life through faith in the crucified and risen Jesus Christ.

## **S — START**

### **Icebreaker**

Ask the group: "If you were given a chance to start over in one area of your life, what would it be and why?"

Allow participants to share briefly.

### **Introduction**

Many people wish they could have a fresh start—to undo mistakes, repair broken relationships, or make better choices. Deep inside, people long for a new beginning.

In John 3, a respected religious leader named Nicodemus came to Jesus seeking answers. Although he was highly educated in Scripture and deeply religious, he discovered that religiosity alone was not enough. Jesus told him something surprising: "You must be born again." (John 3:3)

### **Opening Discussion**

Ask:

1. What comes to mind when you hear the phrase "born again"?
2. Why do some people misunderstand this term?
3. Can a person be religious and still not know God personally?

## **A — ALIGN**

### **1. Religion Cannot Give Us New Life**

**Read:** John 3:1-3

Nicodemus was:

- A Pharisee
- A teacher of Scripture
- A member of the Jewish ruling council (Sanhedrin)

Yet Jesus told him:

"Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Why do you think Jesus said this to Nicodemus?
2. What are some modern-day examples of depending on religion instead of a relationship with God?
3. Why can't good works save us?

**Core Principle:** Religious knowledge, good works, and church involvement cannot save us. We must receive the new life that only Jesus can give.

### **2. God Gives Us New Life Through His Spirit**

**Read:** John 3:4-8

Jesus explained that there are two births:

- Physical birth (birth of the flesh)
- Spiritual birth (birth of the Spirit)

Just as we cannot see the wind but can see its effects, we may not physically see the Holy Spirit, but His work becomes evident in a transformed life.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What are some signs that God is changing a person's life?
2. How is spiritual growth different from simply becoming more religious?
3. What fruit of the Spirit have you observed in someone whose life was transformed?

**Core Principle:** Being born again is the work of the Holy Spirit, who changes our hearts and enables us to begin a new life with Christ.

### **3. God's Love Led Jesus to the Cross**

**Read:** Numbers 21:4-9

The Israelites were bitten by venomous snakes because of their rebellion. God instructed Moses to place a bronze serpent on a pole. Those who looked at it in faith were healed.

Jesus used this story to explain His mission.

**Read:** John 3:14-16

Just as the Israelites looked to God's provision, we must look to Christ, who was lifted up on the cross for our salvation.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Why do people often prefer their own solutions instead of God's?
2. What does the bronze serpent teach us about faith?
3. How does this story point to Jesus?

**Core Principle:** Just as the Israelites looked at the bronze serpent and lived, sinners who look to Jesus and trust in His sacrifice on the Cross receive forgiveness and eternal life.

## **L — LIVE**

### **Illustration: The Antidote**

Imagine a person bitten by a deadly snake.

The doctor offers the only antidote available. The medicine is free and immediately accessible, but the person refuses to take it because he wants another option.

Would the antidote save him if he never accepted it? Of course not.

The problem is not the availability of the cure; it is the refusal to receive it.

In the same way, Jesus is God's remedy for the deadly poison of sin. Salvation becomes effective when we personally trust Him.

### **Life Reflection**

Ask:

1. Have you ever depended on your own goodness to feel accepted by God?
2. What are some "modern antidotes" people trust instead of Jesus?
  - Good works
  - Religion
  - Success
  - Wealth
  - Education
  - Self-improvement
3. In what ways does pride prevent people from placing their faith in Christ?

4. What areas of your life need spiritual renewal today?

### **Observing Transformation**

Nicodemus gradually changed after meeting Jesus.

**Read:** John 7:45-52

He defended Jesus publicly.

**Read:** John 19:38-39

He helped bury Jesus and publicly identified himself with Christ despite the personal risks.

### **Reflection Question**

If someone looked at your life today, what evidence would show that Christ is changing you?

## **T — TRANSFER**

### **Personal Application**

Ask participants:

1. What truth about being born again impacted you the most today?
2. Have you personally placed your faith in Jesus Christ?
3. What area of your life needs God's transforming work?
4. What step of obedience is God asking you to take this week?

### **Faith Response**

Read John 3:16 together.

Discuss:

- God's love is available to everyone.
- Salvation is God's gift.
- Eternal life is received through faith in Jesus Christ.

Invite participants to respond personally to Christ in prayer if they have not yet done so.

### **Weekly Challenge**

This week:

- ✓ Read John chapters 3–5.
- ✓ Thank God daily for His gift of salvation.
- ✓ Identify one area where God is transforming your character.
- ✓ Share your testimony or one truth from this lesson with at least one person.
- ✓ Pray for someone who needs to know Jesus personally.

### **Accountability Question for Next Meeting**

Ask: "How did you see God at work in your life this week, and who did you share God's truth with?"

### **Wrap-Up Summary**

#### **Four Truths About Being Born Again**

1. **Being religious is not enough.**
2. **Being born again is a spiritual birth.**
3. **Jesus is God's solution for the poison of sin.**
4. **Faith in Christ results in a transformed life.**

### **Memory Verses:**

**Romans 6:23**

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

**1 John 5:11-12**

"And the witness is this, that 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."

**Big Idea:**

*Being born again is not turning over a new leaf or joining a religion—it is receiving new life through faith in Jesus Christ, resulting in a transformed heart and an eternal relationship with God.*