

Understanding Being Born Again

A 5-Day Devotional Journey through John 3:5

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A New Beginning with God

Have you ever felt like something in your heart is stirring—like there's more to life with God than what you've known? That's exactly how Nicodemus felt when he came to Jesus under the cover of night. He was curious, thoughtful, and hungry for truth. And Jesus didn't give him a religious checklist—He gave him an invitation: *“You must be born again.”*

Those words might sound mysterious, even overwhelming. But they're actually filled with hope. Being born again isn't about getting everything right or being perfect—it's about starting fresh. It's about God doing something brand new in you, from the inside out, through His Spirit.

This 5-day devotional is an invitation to explore what it means to be truly born again—washed clean, made new, and filled with the Holy Spirit. Whether you're just beginning your journey with Jesus or longing for a deeper connection with Him, this is a space for reflection, healing, and renewal.

Maybe your experience was like mine—my very first Bible was a King James Version, a gift from Sunday School. I remember opening it up and feeling completely lost. The language was beautiful, but honestly, it felt more like Shakespeare than anything I could easily understand or apply to my life. (And let's be real—Shakespeare isn't exactly light reading!)

If you're thinking about getting a new Bible but feel overwhelmed by all the different versions and formats out there, you're definitely not alone. I've been there too.

These days, I really enjoy *Every Man's Bible*—it's down-to-earth and practical. My wife loves her *NIV Study Bible* for the same reasons. And if you're exploring online options, I highly recommend the YouVersion Bible app and BibleGateway.com—they're both fantastic tools to help you dig in and find what speaks to you.

So grab your Bible, a journal, and a willing heart. Let's take this journey together—one day at a time.

Day 1

Being “Born Again”

Scripture:

John 3:1–8 (NLT)

“I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God... I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit... The wind blows wherever it wants... so you can’t explain how people are born of the Spirit.”

Nicodemus wasn’t just any guy off the street—he was a respected religious leader, a Pharisee, and someone who seriously knew the Scriptures. You could say he was the kind of person others would go to for spiritual answers. And yet, when he came to Jesus one night with honest curiosity, Jesus said something that completely threw him: *“You must be born again.”*

Imagine being told everything you thought you understood about faith and God wasn’t enough—you needed to start over. That’s what Nicodemus felt. He was thinking in physical terms: “How can I be born again? That doesn’t make sense!” But Jesus was talking about something deeper, something spiritual. Nicodemus struggled because he was used to rules, religion, and tradition—but Jesus was inviting him into a brand-new relationship, one that starts not with knowledge or effort, but with a new heart. Sound familiar? Sometimes we wrestle with this too.

But Jesus patiently meets us right where we are—just like He did with Nicodemus.

Tim Tebow

If you've followed football—or even just scrolled through social media—you've probably heard of Tim Tebow. Long before he won the Heisman Trophy or etched “*John 3:16*” in his eye black, Tim had a moment that forever shaped who he is.

When Tim was six years old, he started worrying about eternity. The idea of heaven, hell, and where he stood with God kept tugging at his little heart. So, he went to the person he trusted most—his dad, a missionary and pastor. His father asked a few probing questions (maybe more than a six-year-old expected!) to be sure Tim understood the gospel. Feeling a bit overwhelmed, Tim ran to his mom and said, “*I want to ask Jesus to come into my heart. I'm ready to be saved.*” Mother and son knelt together, and Tim surrendered his life to Jesus—simple, childlike faith that marked the beginning of his “born-again” journey. To celebrate, the family headed to Epcot for ice cream and fireworks—proof that new life can start with both tears and sprinkle.

From that day forward, Tim's life has been an open letter about spiritual rebirth. Whether he's kneeling in prayer on the 50-yard line or speaking at prisons and schools, he keeps pointing people back to the moment a child's prayer invited the Holy Spirit to give him new life. His story reminds us that being born again isn't about age, status, or dramatic circumstances—it's about a sincere heart saying, “*Jesus, I need You.*”

Maybe your story won't involve stadium lights or TV cameras—but the same Spirit who met Tim at six years old is ready to breathe new life into anyone who turns to Him today

Reflection Questions:

- What surprised Nicodemus most in Jesus' words?
- Why does Nicodemus struggle to grasp being "born again"?
- What does it mean to you personally to be "born again"?

Day 2

Born of Water – Cleansing & Baptism

Scripture:

John 3:5 (NLT)

“I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit.”

Jesus says, “No one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit.” This can sound mysterious, but let’s break it down together.

First, “born of water” has a couple of possible meanings. It might refer to natural birth—like the physical, watery beginning of life in the womb. But it also points to baptism, which symbolizes cleansing, repentance, and the beginning of a new life with God. When we turn toward God with a heart that’s ready to change, water represents that fresh start. Baptism begins within us with our change of heart. Baptism as practiced in many churches today is an outward sign to those gathered around us of our inward change when we accepted Christ.

Then there’s “born of the Spirit”—that’s the true transformation. It’s when God’s Spirit breathes new life into you. You’re not just trying harder—you’re actually made new from the inside out. It’s like your heart starts beating differently, for the things of God.

And what's the Kingdom of God? It's not just a place far away in the clouds. It's God's rule and reign in your heart and life right now—a life of love, peace, joy, and purpose as you follow Jesus. You don't have to wait for heaven to begin living in the Kingdom. The moment you're born again, you enter into it.

Franklin Graham

You might assume that growing up in Billy Graham's household would automatically make someone a strong Christian. But Franklin Graham would be the first to tell you: that's not how it works.

In his book *Rebel With a Cause*, Franklin opens up about how, despite being raised in a loving, Christ-centered home, he rejected his parents' faith for many years. He describes his younger self as prideful, reckless, and rebellious. He partied, got into trouble, and lived for himself—even while the world saw him as the son of a famous preacher.

“Just because I was born in a Christian home doesn't make me a Christian,” Franklin wrote. *“Being the son of Billy Graham didn't make me right with God.”*

Everything began to shift in his early 20s. Franklin came to a moment of deep conviction. He realized that he couldn't ride on the coattails of his father's faith—he needed his own relationship with Jesus.

One night, alone in a hotel room while working with Samaritan's Purse, Franklin finally surrendered. He prayed a simple but life-changing prayer, inviting Jesus to forgive him, fill him, and lead his life.

That was the beginning of his rebirth—not as a preacher’s kid, but as a new man in Christ. “That night, I was born again,” he later said. “God changed my heart. I was made new from the inside out.”

Since then, Franklin has dedicated his life to sharing the gospel and serving others around the world—often in war zones, disaster areas, and places most people would avoid. His boldness, passion, and compassion didn’t come from a life of comfort—it came from being personally transformed by the Holy Spirit.

Franklin’s story reminds us that no one inherits salvation. You can grow up surrounded by truth and still need to come to a place where you say, “*Jesus, I need You for myself.*” When you do, the Spirit doesn’t just clean you up—He gives you a new heart and a new mission.

Reflection Questions:

- How does “water” symbolize cleansing in your faith journey?
- What is the spiritual significance behind this imagery and what does it mean to you?
- Where is the Kingdom of God?

Day 3

Born of the Spirit – Inner Renewal

Scripture:

John 3:6–8 (NLT)

“Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life... The wind blows wherever it wants... so you can’t explain how people are born of the Spirit.”

Jesus says something incredibly honest and beautiful in these verses. Let’s talk about that.

We all know what human life looks like. It’s physical. It’s visible. It’s shaped by our upbringing, education, and experiences. But spiritual life? That’s something only God’s Spirit can create. It’s not about being a better person or trying harder. It’s about becoming a new person—from the inside out.

And here’s the wild part: Jesus compares this rebirth to the wind. You can feel it, see its effects, but you can’t control it or fully explain it. That’s the Spirit’s work. It’s mysterious, powerful, and personal. One person might feel a quiet stirring in their heart. Another might have a sudden realization that they need Jesus. For someone else, it could be a slow, steady awakening.

But however, it happens—when the Holy Spirit breathes life into you, you’ll know. Your heart softens. Your eyes open. You begin to want different things. It’s not just belief—it’s a new kind of life pulsing in your soul.

Phil Robertson

Before *Duck Dynasty* and long before he became a household name, Phil Robertson's life was spiraling. He ran a bar, drank heavily, cheated on his wife, and pushed away anyone who tried to reach him—including his own family. By his own words, he was wild, angry, and lost.

"I was living like the devil himself," Phil recalls. "I didn't care who I hurt. I just wanted to do what I wanted to do."

But his wife, Kay, didn't give up. She had become a Christian and began praying desperately for Phil to change. Eventually, she convinced him to meet with a preacher. At first, Phil resisted. But something about the message of Jesus—that He could forgive even him—broke through his hard heart.

In a small church in Louisiana, Phil repented, was baptized, and gave his life to Christ. That moment marked a dramatic shift in his life. He stopped drinking. He closed his bar. He asked for forgiveness—from his wife, his children, and God.

"The old Phil died," he says. "And the new Phil was born."

What's incredible is how the Holy Spirit began to transform not just Phil's behavior but his entire heart. His rough edges didn't disappear overnight, but the man who once tore his family apart became a loving husband, father, and eventually a bold witness for Jesus on national television.

Phil used his platform to share the gospel with raw honesty. He shared with everyone who would listen: "*Jesus changes people. If He changed me, He can change anyone.*"

Phil's story reminds us that being born again isn't about cleaning up your life first—it's about surrendering it to the One who can. You don't have to be famous or perfect or religious. You just must be willing to say, "*Jesus, I need You. I can't do this on my own.*"

Reflection Questions:

- What does it look like to be “born of the Spirit” in daily life?
- How is spiritual rebirth like the wind Jesus described?
- Where would you like the Holy Spirit to give you greater power that you have within yourself today?

Day 4

Living the Double Birth – Water and Spirit

Scriptures:

Titus 3:5 (NLT)

“He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit.”

Ezekiel 36:25–27 (NLT)

“Then I will sprinkle clean water on you... I will give you a new heart... I will put my Spirit in you...”

Sometimes, we just long for a do-over. A clean slate. A fresh start. The beautiful truth is that this is exactly what God offers us through Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Look at this verse from Titus:

“He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit.”

—Titus 3:5 (NLT)

That’s the heart of it. When you say yes to Jesus, your past doesn’t get to define you anymore. You’re not just forgiven—you’re reborn. Washed. Renewed. Filled with His Spirit. This isn’t about religion—it’s about real relationship. And it’s not something you have to earn. It’s a gift—freely given because of His love.

You may still remember your old mistakes. But God? He sees new life in you. The Holy Spirit breathes His presence into your very being, guiding you, comforting you, and empowering you to live differently.

God Promised This Long Ago—A New Heart, A New Spirit

This next passage comes from the book of Ezekiel—a prophecy spoken hundreds of years before Jesus came, yet it points directly to the kind of spiritual transformation He brings:

“Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. Your filth will be washed away, and you will no longer worship idols. And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations.”

—Ezekiel 36:25–27 (NLT)

Isn't that incredible? God doesn't just want to clean us up on the outside—He wants to change us from the inside out.

Maybe you've had seasons where your heart felt hard... or numb... or resistant. God understands that. And He doesn't shame us for it. Instead, He offers a tender exchange: “Give Me your stubborn, weary heart, and I'll give you one that's soft, open, and full of My Spirit.”

This is what it means to be born again. It's not about being perfect. It's about receiving a new heart that wants to walk with God.

Brian “Head” Welch

Brian Welch, co-founder and lead guitarist of the Grammy-winning metal band Korn, was living the rock star life—fame, money, fans, and a severe addiction to drugs. But in the early 2000s, he reached a breaking point. He was a single father, addicted to methamphetamines, and completely consumed by a lifestyle that was destroying him.

Despite his outward success, Brian was deeply broken inside. He tried everything to escape the emptiness, but nothing worked—until someone invited him to church.

“I didn’t understand everything, but I felt something real,” Brian said. “I heard that Jesus died for my sins, and that I could be clean. I wanted that.”

In a desperate moment of surrender, Brian went home, opened his Bible, and cried out to God. He asked Jesus to forgive him and take over his life. He threw away his drugs and walked away from Korn at the peak of their fame.

“I was instantly changed. The high I got from the Holy Spirit was more powerful than anything I had ever experienced.”

Brian experienced what it truly means to be born again—his sins washed away, his identity remade, and his purpose redirected. He later rejoined Korn but with a new mission: to share his testimony of Jesus with people who feel far from God.

“God didn’t just clean me up. He gave me a new life—a better one than I ever imagined.”

Brian's story is proof that no one is beyond redemption. No matter how deep the addiction or how far you've gone, Jesus is ready to meet you, forgive you, and make you new—completely washed and transformed by His grace.

Reflection Questions:

- Have you ever felt like you needed a fresh start in your faith or your life?
- What would it look like for you to receive a new heart—a heart that's tender and responsive to God?
- Can you believe that God really wants to put His Spirit in *you*?

Day 5

Bearing New-Birth Fruit

Scriptures:

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NLT)

“This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!”

1 Peter 1:23 (NLT)

“You have been born again... Your new life will last forever because it comes from the eternal, living word of God.”

Being born again isn’t just a moment—it’s a movement, a journey. It begins with salvation, but it continues daily as we live out this new life. The old “you”—full of shame, fear, selfishness, or striving—is gone. Not hidden. Not managed. Gone. And what replaces it is something brand new: you in Christ, reshaped by grace and powered by the Holy Spirit.

That’s what Paul meant when he said the old has passed and the new has begun. And Peter reminds us that this new life doesn’t fade or break down over time—it’s eternal. It’s rooted in God’s Word, alive in your spirit, and growing stronger each day as you walk with Jesus.

You won’t always feel new. You may still wrestle with old habits or thoughts. But the truth is this: you are not who you used to be.

You belong to Christ now, and His Spirit is producing fruit in your life—fruit that shows the world what God’s love looks like in real time.

Dallas Jenkins, creator and director of *The Chosen*, grew up as the son of bestselling Christian author Jerry Jenkins (*Left Behind* series). But in 2017, Dallas hit a career wall. A film he had poured years into flopped, and he thought his dreams were over.

In that broken moment, Dallas surrendered—not just his career, but his entire identity to Christ. He felt God whisper, “*I do impossible math.*”

That surrender led to *The Chosen*—now one of the most impactful, Spirit-filled portrayals of Jesus in history. Dallas often says that his greatest success came *after* the death of his own ambition—when he was truly born again into God’s purpose, not his own.

“Being born again doesn’t just save you—it redirects everything in your life for God’s glory.”

Reflection Questions:

- What new identity or lifestyle have you gained through spiritual rebirth?
- How is your life evidence of being made anew?

Closing Thought: An Invitation to New Life

Maybe as you've read through these five days, something stirred in your heart. Maybe you've realized that while you've known *about* Jesus, you haven't truly been *born again*. Or perhaps you once walked closely with Him, but life got complicated, and that closeness faded.

Friend, this is your moment.

Jesus isn't waiting for you to get everything figured out or to clean yourself up first. He's simply inviting you to be born anew cleansed by grace and filled with His Spirit. It's not about religion or rules; it's about a relationship. A fresh start. A new heart. A Spirit-led life that begins today and lasts forever.

If you're ready to commit—or recommit—your life to Jesus, don't wait. You can talk to Him right now, right where you are. He's listening.

A Prayer to Begin Again

Jesus, I need You.

I believe You died for me and rose again so I could have new life.

I admit that I've tried to live life on my own, and I've sinned. I ask You to forgive me.

Wash me clean. Fill me with Your Spirit.

I want to be born again—not just in word, but in truth.

Today I surrender. I choose to follow You as my Savior and Lord.

Lead me, guide me, and teach me how to walk with You every day.

Thank You for loving me.

In Your name, Jesus, I pray—Amen.

If you just prayed that prayer, welcome to new life in Christ! You're not alone—and this is only the beginning. Reach out to a trusted pastor, mentor, or church family. Let someone know about your decision. And keep seeking. The journey ahead is full of grace, truth, and purpose. You've been born of water and the Spirit—now live it out.

“Lord, I thank You for cleansing me through water and for renewing me by Your Spirit. Help me walk as a true new creation, reflecting Your life in every part of me. Amen.”

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About the Author

J. Jefferson Scott is a seasoned Christian leader, author, and teacher with over four decades of experience helping others grow in their relationship with God. He is the author of *Empowered For More* and *Now That You Believe*, as well as several devotionals including *Guided*, *Never Alone*, and *Growing Christ In You*. His writing is known for making spiritual truths accessible, practical, and personally meaningful.

Jeff is founder and co-author of the Discipleship Walk, a three-day spiritual experience that has impacted more than 18,000 participants, and the co-founder of Growth Seekers, a ministry dedicated to helping believers take intentional next steps in faith and relational wholeness.

His work centers on guiding people beyond religion into a Spirit-empowered life of purpose, peace, and authentic relationship with God. Drawing from a lifetime of leadership and ministry, Jeff continues to equip Christians to walk daily with the Holy Spirit in real and transformative ways.

He and his wife, Sue, have been married for over fifty years and enjoy mentoring others, spending time outdoors, and exploring God's creation together. More resources and information can be found at jjeffersonscott.com.

