

What Does It Mean to Be Born Again?

When Jesus was approached by a sympathetic Jewish teacher named Nicodemus, He said that no one would ever see the kingdom of God unless they were “born again” (see John 3:3). In other words, neither being born Jewish nor conversion to Judaism was sufficient for eternal life. This unequivocal declaration transcended any biblical understanding Nicodemus then had, so Jesus further explained, “flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit” (John 3:6). This means that human beings can only reproduce human beings, but the Holy Spirit can give birth to a new spirit within us.

I was born into a Christian family and raised attending church. When I was 12 years old, I completed our church’s “confirmation class” and was given a certificate saying I had publicly expressed faith in Jesus and was now a member of God’s church family. Actually, I had joined the church as a new member, but my spirit wasn’t yet regenerated.

Being born again involves much more than taking a class, joining a church or responding favorably to a message about Jesus. It’s not simply about following the tenets of a church or identification with Christianity in general. The knowledge of God and intellectual acceptance of biblical truth isn’t enough. Even living a devout Christian lifestyle isn’t enough.

Only the Holy Spirit can give new birth to our spirit. This is a supernatural new birth that can only be experienced by putting our faith in Jesus. Through saving faith in Jesus, our natural human spirit experiences regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and we are born again. The Holy Spirit places the seed of God in us, and we become a new creation in Christ. That’s what Paul meant when he wrote, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new

is here!" (2 Cor. 5:17).

A human spirit is born to live and function on earth. To become citizens of God's eternal realm, our spirit must literally be born again. That's what Jesus meant when he said that no one would ever see the kingdom of God unless they were born again.

Maybe you're wondering if you've ever been born again? If it's simply a matter of me talking you into saying you're a Christian, someone else can come along and talk you out of it. But if the Holy Spirit comes over you and regenerates a new spirit within you, you can personally know the reality of God.

God loves you, and your regenerated spirit can be with Him forever. Pray from your heart and ask Him to save you now. Receive the new birth found only in Jesus and tell somebody that you were born again today. Once you are born of the Spirit, your citizenship in eternity is assured, and you can truly begin to love God with all of your heart, mind, soul and strength.

For more on this topic, listen to this episode of *The Whole Word* podcast on Charisma Podcast Network. {eoa}

Pitts and Mary Evans met at the University of South Carolina and have been married since 1981. They have three adult children, a daughter in-law, a son in-law and eight grandchildren. Pitts first attended Whole Word Fellowship with his parents in the late 1960s and early 1970s. He was later called to full-time ministry and currently serves as the senior pastor of WWF and the Northern Virginia House of Prayer. He is the voice of our weekday The Whole Word Podcast. Pastor Pitts also directs our international ministry, overseeing humanitarian efforts, combating human trafficking, ministering in pastor's conferences, Bible schools and seminaries in other nations. His primary calling is for recruiting and equipping the bride of Christ through Bible

teaching and preaching. His new book, The Wife of God, is available from Amazon.

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