

05 AN UNEXPECTED CONVERSATION

KEY TEXT: JOHN 3:4-18

CENTRAL truth

In a conversation with one of the top religious leaders of the day, Jesus used the metaphor of birth to challenge this leader to better understand what it really looks like to follow God. This man knew God’s law and lived a moral life, yet Jesus was clear: the only way to enter heaven is to be born of the Spirit. Becoming God’s child isn’t about doing a bunch of stuff but about looking to God to do what only He can do. **Jesus offers new life to all who believe in Him.**

key question

Why is Jesus’s answer surprising, even today? What do we often assume about the way to enter the kingdom of God?

We aren’t that different from Nicodemus. Even when we are really trying to understand the gospel, it’s hard for us to truly grasp that being with God is not about what we do—it’s about what *He* has done. Because of Jesus’s perfect life, punishing death, and new life, we can be reborn by the Spirit and brought into His family forever.

keep in mind

Birth can be a bit of a weird topic to delve into with teenagers, and yet it’s a common metaphor in Scripture. It’s okay to laugh about it a bit and admit that it’s awkward, but at the same time, you can remind students of the unusual place they occupy in history. At most other times, all ages have had more common interactions with birth. If we are unwilling to think about it, we may miss the depth of the metaphor Christ has offered.

Perfectionism and legalism can be pretty rampant among “good church kids.” Many may have armed themselves with religiosity, and this can keep them from grasping the beauty of the gospel. Look for ways to compassionately unburden them.

application

When are you tempted to believe Jesus came to condemn you? How can we remind ourselves that Jesus is for us and came to give us life?

the win

FOR THE STUDENT: Students have the opportunity to re-frame their perspective of Jesus and of themselves. He came to save us, not to condemn! We can’t get to God—so He came to us.

FOR THE LEADER: Look for what this story exposes in your students: Are they clinging to religiosity? Do they believe God is a killjoy? Invite them into a deeper understanding of the gospel.

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