

# Lesson 5: Regeneration & Conversion

## A. A QUICK REVIEW

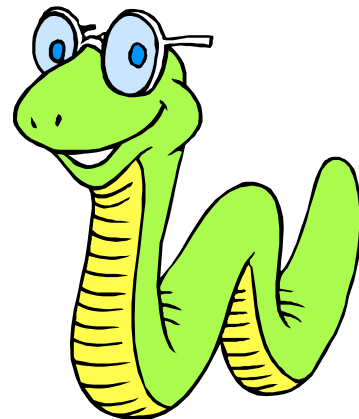
We are studying how the Holy Spirit applies to us the redemption purchased by Jesus. But before we go any further, let's review God's work in redemption. Use the words on the right to fill in the blanks. Each word will be used only once!

We believe that God is in \_\_\_\_\_ of all things; God preserves and governs all things by his \_\_\_\_\_. In fact, God planned our \_\_\_\_\_ from the beginning of time. When Adam sinned in the Garden, God had a plan in place to \_\_\_\_\_ his people. Although Adam's choice would mean that the whole human race would be born in sin, the penalty of which is \_\_\_\_\_, God provided a \_\_\_\_\_ for us. Jesus lived a \_\_\_\_\_ life and died as a \_\_\_\_\_ for sin. Because of Jesus' work on the Cross, God gives us Jesus' \_\_\_\_\_, which means we have been \_\_\_\_\_. We receive this gift by \_\_\_\_\_ through the work of the Holy \_\_\_\_\_.

REDEEM  
DEATH  
FAITH  
REDEMPTION  
PERFECT  
SPIRIT  
PROVIDENCE  
RIGHTEOUSNESS  
CONTROL  
SACRIFICE  
REDEEMER  
JUSTIFIED

## B. BORN TWICE?

If you've heard the word *regeneration* it might have been in science class. There are lots of simple animals that can regenerate lost body parts. Some worms can regenerate if you cut them in parts; each part grows into a new worm! There are even some weird animals, like the sea cucumber, that can regenerate their whole set of internal organs!



The Bible talks about regeneration too, but instead of talking about body parts, it refers to the human soul. This is done by the Holy Spirit. In our last lesson we learned that the Holy Spirit begins to apply the redemption purchased for us by Jesus by effectually calling us to life.

1) Look at SC #31. By showing us our sin, making us understand who Jesus is, and causing us to want to believe in Jesus, what does the Holy Spirit persuade and make us able to do? \_\_\_\_\_

The Holy Spirit working in us this way causes our *regeneration*. Look at that word.

**Generate** means to give life and **re** means again.

So regenerate means to \_\_\_\_\_.

When the Holy Spirit regenerates us, we come from death (caused by sin) to life.

2) In John 3, Jesus discusses regeneration. Regeneration is another word for being *born again*.

Fill in the blanks:

a. One night, a man who was a very important religious leader came to Jesus. His name was (v. 1) \_\_\_\_\_

b. Because it was not enough to be religious, Jesus said to him (v. 3), “Unless one is \_\_\_\_\_ he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

c. Later in v. 7 he said, “Do not be surprised that I say to you, you must be \_\_\_\_\_.”

d. In explaining what He meant in v. 5, Jesus said he had to be born of \_\_\_\_\_ and of the \_\_\_\_\_.

Water probably meant baptism by John the Baptist in repentance for sin. It could also refer to human birth. But even repenting of sin is not enough. We must be changed by the Holy Spirit: we must be born of the Spirit.

3) Look up John 1:12-13. Who did God make His sons? Those who \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus and who were born \_\_\_\_\_.

### Memory Verse:

“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”

- 2 Corinthians 5:17



Because the Holy Spirit calls and regenerates us, we are now able and willing to “receive Jesus Christ who is freely offered to us in the Gospel.” This decision to follow Jesus is called *conversion*. Here’s a word that you’ve probably heard in math class. When you convert something, you change it, like converting numbers in yards to numbers in meters. But conversion means more than just changing the name of something (it’s not just changing the way you describe it, like using a different set of numbers). It means its *nature* is changed; there’s no going back! It’s more like turning coal into a diamond. Everything about the coal is different now!

Conversion has two parts--faith and repentance. Faith means turning to Jesus to be our Master and Savior and repentance means turning from our sin.

- 4) What are the two parts of conversion? \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.  
Faith means turning *to* \_\_\_\_\_.  
Repentance means turning *from* \_\_\_\_\_.

If you think about it, these are really two sides of the same coin. Suppose you leave your front door to walk towards your mailbox. What are you doing as you walk; are you walking *away* from the door or *towards* the mailbox? BOTH, at the same time! When you turn to Jesus, you are turning from your sin, at the same time. The two happen together.



- 5) So, can there be true faith without repentance? \_\_\_\_\_ Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 6) Can there be true repentance if there is no faith? \_\_\_\_\_ Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Repentance goes hand-in-hand with any saving faith. Here's another example, sort of like the first one: standing anywhere on our planet, we are faced with the decision of facing towards the North or the South Pole. The two are absolutely opposed and it is impossible to face toward both at the same time. They are literally 'polar opposites.' To turn towards one, we necessarily turn away from the other.

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are as diametrically opposed as North and South. To turn *to* God inevitably means to turn *away from* sin. They both happen simultaneously as a person comes to faith in Christ.

One more thing: people can confess that they have done wrong and yet make a conscious decision to continue in that path; this is confession without repentance. Confession and repentance are not the same thing; confession is agreeing with God that we have done wrong, but we can do this with no intention of turning from that sin.

And it is also important to understand that repentance is not a change of action; it is a heart issue that *results* in a changed action. Repentance is not the \_\_\_\_\_; it is the \_\_\_\_\_ to change. Sometimes we question our salvation because we still struggle with things, and don't always turn from sin. Christians don't change their *behavior* overnight (we'll talk about this next week), but when they are born again, their *nature* is changed completely!

7) Look up SC #85. What does God require of us to escape His wrath and curse which we deserve?

\_\_\_\_\_ in Jesus Christ and \_\_\_\_\_ unto life.

8) But what is faith in Jesus Christ? First, let's look at SC #86.

Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving \_\_\_\_\_ by which we \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ on Him \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ as he is offered to us in the \_\_\_\_\_.

Faith is not just sincerity. People throughout history have had sincere faith in things that proved to be sincerely wrong. It is not the *amount* of faith that matters, but the *object* of one's faith. It could be said that there are three aspects of faith; the early church used some Latin terminology to describe those three aspects:

**Noticia** (\_\_\_\_\_): This is an understanding of the facts regarding the person and work of Jesus Christ. It is not enough because facts alone do not produce a relationship. We can say, for instance, that we know a lot of things about Abraham Lincoln's life; this does not mean, however, that we are putting our faith in Abraham Lincoln.

**Assensus** (\_\_\_\_\_): This is not just an understanding of the facts, but a basic belief that these facts are true and hold some bearing on a person's life. Assent is not enough either, however. In fact, James 2:19 reminds us that even the demons believe these things--and shudder. That's a scary verse; it means that we can believe all the right stuff and still not be redeemed. This stage of assent describes many churchgoers today; the basic Christian message makes sense, and they feel like they need to acknowledge God somehow, but a crucial thing is lacking.

**Fiducia** (\_\_\_\_\_): Trust involves not only a knowledge and basic assent to the facts of the person and work of Christ; it involves a personal *trust* in these facts. It is the difference between head knowledge and heart knowledge, and it involves a personal walk with Jesus, living for Him and with Him in life's journey.



9) Write down one example from everyday life of how we put complete faith in something to support us. \_\_\_\_\_

10) How does Hebrews 11:1 define faith?

The other requirement in SC #85, the other half of the coin, is repentance unto life. What is it?

**11) Look at SC #87.**

Repentance unto life is a saving grace by which a sinner, being truly aware of his \_\_\_\_\_, understands the \_\_\_\_\_ of God in Christ, \_\_\_\_\_ for and \_\_\_\_\_ his sin, and \_\_\_\_\_ from them to \_\_\_\_\_, fully intending and striving for a new \_\_\_\_\_.

12) True or False?

- \_\_\_\_\_ It is enough to be sorry for sin without turning away from it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A person can be sure of God's forgiveness through Christ if he truly repents.

13) But how do you think a person can be sure he is truly repenting? \_\_\_\_\_

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Some people have very exciting conversions (like the Apostle Paul) and can remember exactly when and how they were converted. Other people truly believe in Jesus and follow Him, but do not remember just when they were converted. What is important for all people is that they *follow* Jesus and trust only in Him for salvation. If they are, they can say they have been converted.

14) Suppose you have a friend in whom the Holy Spirit is working. He or she really wants to pray to God, to repent and believe in Jesus, and be saved. He or she asks you to write a prayer that would say the right things to God so they could become a child of God. Write out the prayer you would give your friend to pray.

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15) Have you accepted Jesus as your Savior? Explain your answer. If you want to be but aren't sure how, write down your questions. It is important to answer this carefully. Take some time to think about it!

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## *Talk to God About It!*

Saving faith is trusting in Jesus Christ for eternal life. There's a hymn that goes 'Jesus, Jesus, how I've loved him, how I've proved him o'er and o'er! Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus, O for grace to trust Him more!' No matter where you are in your relationship with Jesus, it's a good prayer that we can have the grace to trust Him more. We constantly need His help so we can trust Him as we should. Spend some time thanking Jesus for His faithfulness and trustworthiness.

Secondly, spend some time in repentance. This involves examining your heart, and thinking about the things you need to turn *from* as you turn *to* Jesus. Repentance isn't just done when you become a Christian; we exercise faith and repentance every day. Thank God that He hears, answers, and forgives!