

# Core Study #3

## Can anyone be born a second time?

**Passage: John 3:1-21**

### **Background Information:**

The Jewish religious leaders of the first century were composed of two groups:

1. the Sanhedrin who made up the high court of the Jews composed of the chief priests, the elders, and teachers of the Law (approximately 71 people including the High Priest).
2. The Pharisees, also known as the party of the synagogue. They tried to reinterpret the Law of Moses in a changing world by building a 'hedge' around it in order to help Jews know how to live within it. Nicodemus was a Pharisee AND he was a member of the Jewish ruling council; a religious leader with significant power.

### **Leaders' Preparation:**

- Be sure to personally contact every person signed up for your Core to remind them of time and venue.

Using your UCM Leader's Guide (or you may want to refer to the outline below, **A SUMMARY OF HOW TO PREPARE A CORE STUDY**), read the passage over several times and ask yourself questions of the passage.

### **Possible Introductory Question:**

- The phrase 'born again Christian' has been associated with Christianity for a long time but has become popularized more recently through the media. Where do you think this phrase came from and what do you think it might mean to different people today?  
OR
- Have you ever had a conversation with someone you didn't know well and assumed you knew much more about a subject than they did, only to realize part way through the conversation that you didn't know nearly as much about the subject as the other person? Describe how you felt.

**Read JOHN 3: 1-21**

### **Discussion Questions (selection to choose from):**

- Why do you think Nicodemus came to see Jesus in the first place? He seemed to already know that Jesus was a teacher sent by God.
- Why do you think Jesus very quickly directed the conversation to the subject of people's need to be born again?

## Core Study #2

### Jesus the Author of Life

- What do you think Jesus means when he says in verse 6, ‘Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.’?
- What is Jesus referring to when he says in verses 14 & 15, ‘the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.’? <sup>1</sup>
- What do you think it means to ‘believe in him’ in the context of verse 15?<sup>2</sup>
- John 3:16 is one of the most well known passages in the Bible – and for good reason. This verse reflects our theme this year at UCM. Because God first loved us we are now able to love each other. However, many people are not familiar with the second part of John 3:16. What does ‘not perishing’ and ‘receiving eternal life’ mean to you?
- New birth suggests that people change in some way. What do you think are some of the changes that take place as a result of our putting our trust in Jesus?

#### **POSSIBLE APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

- As you reflect on your experiences with Jesus what changes have you seen in your own life ... or what changes do you hope to see in the months and years ahead?
- If someone were to ask you to explain what it means to be born again what might you say?

#### **✦ Announcements**

Make any announcements UCM as a whole may have

- Outreach Talk ‘Does It Really Matter What You Believe? All Religions Are Basically the Same’. Encouraged to bring pre-Christian friends.

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<sup>1</sup> To understand verse 14 you must be familiar with the Old Testament story in Numbers 21:4-9. Poisonous snakes were biting the Hebrews as they traveled through the desert. God instructed Moses to make a snake, put it on a pole and ask those who had been bitten to look to God and His provision for their healing. This was a foreshadow of everyone’s need to one day look to Jesus who would be lifted up onto the pole of a cross so that we might be healed of the effects of our sin.

<sup>2</sup> The word believe (pistuous) can also mean trust, have faith, and to entrust yourself, your whole life, to another.