

# ELEMENTS

## New Life in Christ

A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

1  
LESSON



### Talk about what you think...

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE STEP YOU TOOK TO BEGIN A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THROUGH JESUS?

[Blank space for writing]

WHAT DID IT FEEL LIKE FOR YOU TO MAKE THAT DECISION? IN WHAT WAYS DO YOU FEEL CLOSER TO GOD?

[Blank space for writing]

WHAT KIND OF CHANGES HAVE YOU OBSERVED IN YOUR LIFE NOW THAT YOU HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD?

[Blank space for writing]

### Engage with the Bible... Study



READ THE STORY BELOW ABOUT JESUS AND HIS CONVERSATION WITH A JEWISH RELIGIOUS LEADER NAMED NICODEMUS:

#### JOHN 3:1-7,16-21

<sup>1</sup> Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. <sup>2</sup> He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him." <sup>3</sup> In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." <sup>4</sup> "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" <sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. <sup>7</sup> You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'.....<sup>16</sup> "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. <sup>18</sup> Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. <sup>19</sup> This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. <sup>20</sup> Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. <sup>21</sup> But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."

This story is one of the greatest told in the Bible. In it Jesus explains to Nicodemus about what it means to have a relationship with God. Some of his statements leave Nicodemus confused, because he thinks he already knows God, but finds out that he might still be in darkness. Jesus goes on to describe the path from death to life. Since those who don't take this path are "condemned", Nicodemus was very motivated to understand exactly what he meant.

1

## Discovering the key themes

### What does Jesus say about starting a relationship with God?

Jesus says we must be “born again” to participate in God’s kingdom – to live in relationship with Him. Nicodemus didn’t understand this. Do you?

- What do you think he means by the words “born again”?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What part of you was born again when you put your faith in Jesus?  
\_\_\_\_\_

A good way of explaining “born again” is “new life.” Jesus says you are made new. The old way of living has gone away. You are now living a new life in relationship with God. This way of life is very different from your old one – your desires, choices and emotions are all now connected to God through this new relationship you have with Him.

2

### How does Jesus describe sin and its impact?

Each of us sins. When we sin it separates us from relationship with God, who does not sin. Because God is perfect he cannot be in a relationship with sin. My sin creates a barrier between me and God.

Now that you believe in Jesus and have a relationship with God, will you still sin? Yes! But because of Jesus, those sins are forgiven and the barrier removed. This changes my reaction to sin.

- Using John 3:17-21, describe how people usually respond when they sin?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Now that you have “new life,” how will you respond to sin in your life?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sin is basically missing the mark of perfection. God is perfect and we are not. As we pursue life and meaning for ourselves apart from him we are missing the mark. Another way to describe sin is self-centeredness or selfishness. We are living for ourselves on our own agenda instead of on God’s agenda.

3

### What is the role of faith?

John 3:16 says that everyone who believes in God’s son, Jesus, has eternal life. Another word for belief would be faith.

- What or who do you have faith in? Why? According to verse 16, who do we have to put our faith in to have a relationship with God?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How does knowing that “God so loved the world” help you put your faith in Jesus?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Death is the penalty for sin. Because God loves us and wants a relationship with us, He sent Jesus to die in order to take the penalty instead of us. Now we can have an eternal relationship with Him. Our faith in Jesus is similar to the faith it takes to jump off of a burning building into a net held by firemen. We have to believe that the net will hold and they won’t drop us to the ground. Our faith must be active – only when we jump off the building will we experience the safety of the net.

4

### What is the result of Christ’s death?

Jesus makes a point in telling us in John 3:16 that we can have eternal life because of His sacrifice and death.

- What is eternal life?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How did the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross allow us to have eternal life?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How does having eternal life with Jesus affect the way you are living now?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Our life on this Earth is temporary. Jesus teaches in John 3:16 that if we believe in him we will have eternal life. Eternal life means that we have a relationship with God forever. Jesus promises us forgiveness of sins and a new relationship with God when we put our faith in Him.

In summary, as we can see from this talk with Nicodemus, Jesus promises us forgiveness of sins and a new life with him if we choose to believe in him. Likewise, when we take this step of faith to begin our relationship with him, we are promised eternal life.

# Skills

## Applying it, experiencing it, practicing it

FOLLOWING JESUS MEANS THAT NOW WE HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. WE ARE NOW ON AN INCREDIBLE JOURNEY THAT WILL TAKE US DOWN A PATH THAT WILL ALLOW US TO EXPERIENCE LIFE LIKE WE NEVER HAVE BEFORE.

HERE ARE SOME PRACTICAL QUESTIONS TO HELP US APPLY THIS TO OUR LIFE:



How do you know that you have eternal life? On what basis do you have a relationship with God?



How do you think your friends will respond to you now that you have a relationship with God? How about your family? How would you answer their questions?

How would you respond if you had doubts? How would you respond if someone told you this is not real or you began to think this is too extreme?



### Skills Summary

OVER THE NEXT WEEK TAKE SOME TIME TO OUTWARDLY EXPRESS YOUR INWARD FAITH IN CHRIST

- Before the next meeting, tell at least two other people about your new relationship with God.
- Before the next meeting, decide how you can commemorate this relationship for the coming years by...

- finding, making or buying some object that will symbolize your decision.
- writing a special letter, song or poem that you can save.
- marking the date on your calendar so every year you can remember and reflect on what you did.

## Real Stories from Central and Eastern Europe



New Life in Christ | Tomáš



New Life in Christ | Jitka

## How does this work out in you this week?

SUMMARY VERSE AND MEMORY VERSE FOR THE WEEK:



### JOHN 3:16

*“For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life.”*

EXPERIENCING IT DURING THE WEEK:

Theme	Passage	Questions
1 <sup>st</sup> Day – God’s plan for the world	Genesis 1	What did God’s original plan look like? How do you feel about God’s original plan?
2 <sup>nd</sup> Day – Sin / Man’s situation	Genesis 3	What happened to God’s original plan? How does Adam and Eve’s sin impact our world today?
3 <sup>rd</sup> Day – Jesus – why he came	Matthew 3	What evidence do you find in these sentences about Jesus’ purpose here on earth? What would you say is your purpose now that you know God?
4 <sup>th</sup> Day – Crucifixion/Resurrection	Mark 15 -16	What part of this whole story means the most to you personally? Why?
5 <sup>th</sup> Day - Salvation	Acts 16:16-40	What was required for this jailer to receive salvation? What was needed for you to receive salvation?
6 <sup>th</sup> Day – Eternal Life	John 3 (esp. 36)	According to this chapter, what areas do you think you will need to grown in as a Christian? What do you think eternal life will be like for you?
7 <sup>th</sup> Day – Growing as a new Christian	1 Peter 2	From this chapter, what areas do you think you will need to grow in as a Christian?



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