

# THE DOCTRINE OF REGENERATION AND WHY IT MATTERS

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

The term Regeneration comes from the New Testament idea of being “born again” found primarily in John 3:3-15. Jesus uses the picture of a second, new birth to describe the changes that must take place in order for someone to be saved.

## DO WE NEED TO BE BORN AGAIN?

In John 3, Jesus states that, “Unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” In order to be saved, you *must* be born again.

## BORN AGAIN OR FROM ABOVE?

John uses the Greek word *ἀνωθεν* (anōthen), which can mean both “again” and “from above”. John often uses phrases like this which can be taken multiple ways (called a double entendre) to emphasize or clarify a truth. In order to believe, we must be born *again*, but this new birth is not like our first birth - it is *from above*.

## WHY FROM ABOVE?

Regeneration is the work of God alone, through the Holy Spirit. Just as it is impossible for a man to “enter into his mother’s womb a second time”, it is impossible for man to be born again by his own effort. Ephesians 2 says that our heart - the core of our being, is dead because of sin. A dead being is unable to bring itself back to life, and our hearts are unable to be made alive on their own.

## SO REGENERATION IS...

The work of God alone, taking our hearts that are dead, and making them alive in Christ.

## EPHESIANS 2:4-5

“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ - by grace you have been saved.”

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOUNG LIFE LEADERS?

We cannot make our kids’ hearts new or alive. We can proclaim the Gospel at Club, teach through Scripture and the person of Christ at Campaigners and live our lives with kids in a way that models Christ - but that does not save them. Since it is God alone who saves - who makes our hearts alive, the greatest thing we can do for our kids is pray for God to work.

## Resources:

John 3:3-15  
Ephesians 2:1-10  
Finally Alive, John Piper

“Regeneration in the New Testament”, The ESV Study Bible  
Systematic Theology, Luis Berkhof. pp. 465-467  
Concise Theology, J.I. Packer. p. 157