

Born Again, What It Really Means

There is a great deal more to being born again than a simple salvation prayer.

In the simplest terms, born again means to be spiritually born into the family of God. We are all physically born into this world but when we repent and believe in Jesus He sends His Spirit into our life and in this way we are born spiritually and become children of God. When God becomes our Father, we must turn our back on the ways of the devil because *"Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord MUST turn away from wickedness"* (2 Tim. 2:19). This is done when we *"put off our old self ... and put on the new self"* (Eph. 4:22-24). Old habits die hard. How exactly do we become a new person and please God?

One thing is certain, our sinful nature will not allow us to obey God's commands (Rom. 8:7). We cannot become a new creation unless God helps us and that is exactly what He does. John 1:12 says *"to all who received him he gave the right ['power' in KJV] to become children of God"*. This power is the Holy Spirit who comes to live in all who believe (Eph. 1:13). 2 Pet. 1:3-4 sum up the work of the Spirit where it says, *"His divine power [the Holy Spirit] has given us everything we need for life and godliness so that you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires"*. So, it is through the Spirit that we get the power to resist evil, to put off our old sinful ways and to become a new creation. How is this done in real terms?

As already noted, the moment someone repents, Jesus sends the Holy Spirit into their life and John 16:8 gives the reason - *"When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment"*. Whenever we sin, the Spirit convicts our conscience causing us to lose our peace and feel guilty. This is the Spirit's witness to us to repent and 1 John 1:9 tells us, *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness"*. It is through this process of conviction and confession that a child of God is forgiven and God's promise is that, as we continue in this process, He will *"purify us from ALL unrighteousness"*. In this manner a new nature is born in us; we become new creations, resisting our sinful ways and made able to walk in love and holiness. It is a simple process to understand but a very painful ordeal to endure as our Father wants to cleanse us of things we find very hard to repent of. Things like lust, hate, anger, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfishness, drunkenness, witchcraft, idolatry etc. As we listen to the Spirit He reveals these things ... we may resist, but we will not know God's peace until we repent.

For an analogy of how God changes us, think of a mechanic fixing a car. He gets inside the car and changes things until it runs well. In the same way, God gets into our life and *"works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose"* (Phil. 2:13). Through this process, called sanctification, we are transformed into the likeness of our Lord. Repentance is lifelong, not a once off "Thank you Jesus"; it starts with a change of heart toward sin and MUST, through the power of the Spirit, lead to the forsaking of habitual sin otherwise it is a mere pretense because, *"No one who is born of God will continue to sin"* (1 John 3:9). That is, no child of God will deliberately, knowingly and habitually practice sin (AMP).

So, being born again is a second birth in which we receive God's Spirit, empowering us to walk in holiness. We then either choose to obey the Spirit's witness (i.e. repent) and reap eternal life or ignore it and risk losing our salvation (Rom. 8:12-13). Our salvation depends on our response to the Holy Spirit as we are told that we are *"saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth"* (2 Thess. 2:13). An old time preacher's dying words were, "Be sanctified or be damned!" and the power in his words deeply shook those gathered around his death bed. Slowly read Gal. 5:19-21 and note that these words are a second warning to believers. Do you see these sins in others? More to the point, do others see them in you?

"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Cor. 5:17).

Jesus said, *"If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned"* (John 15:6).

Seek the Lord while He may be found as "without holiness no one will see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14).

For my video Born Again, What It Really Means, go to
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zS4qv3J8ilw>

The following are some other YouTube videos I have made on the issue of salvation -

Once Saved Always Saved

Grieving The Spirit

Christian Perfection

Sinless Perfection

Paul The Sinner?

The Calvary Road, by Roy Hession, is a wonderful little book which shows the way to an intimate walk with Jesus.

It is free to download from <http://www.christianissues.biz/revival.html>

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