

WEEK OF MARCH 8, 2026

**5-Day Devotional  
based on Sunday's message:**



**YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN**

*John 3:1-21*

Provided by



**AKRONGRACE**

**AKRON GRACE CHURCH**  
101 N. 7th Street, Akron PA  
[www.akrongrace.com](http://www.akrongrace.com)

**Listen to the full message on our YouTube channel:**  
[www.youtube.com/@akrongracechurch6363](http://www.youtube.com/@akrongracechurch6363)

## John 2:13-25

There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee. After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. “Rabbi,” he said, “we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you.” Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.” “What do you mean?” exclaimed Nicodemus. “How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?” Jesus replied, “I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. So don’t be surprised when I say, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can’t tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can’t explain how people are born of the Spirit.” “How are these things possible?” Nicodemus asked. Jesus replied, “You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don’t understand these things? I assure you, we tell you what we know and have seen, and yet you won’t believe our testimony. But if you don’t believe me when I tell you about earthly things, how can you possibly believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ever gone to heaven and returned. But the Son of Man has come down from heaven. And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life. “For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him. “There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God’s one and only Son. And the judgment is based on this fact: God’s light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants.”

# Day 1: Beyond Good Intentions

## Devotional

Have you ever tried to fix a broken flashlight by polishing its exterior? No matter how shiny you make it, without working batteries, it remains powerless. Many people approach their relationship with God the same way, believing that good behavior and religious effort will earn them a place in heaven. Research shows that 52% of American adults believe they can earn their way to heaven by being good people or doing enough good things. However, Jesus reveals a different truth. When Nicodemus, a respected religious leader who had dedicated his life to following God's laws, came to Jesus in the darkness, Jesus immediately addressed his deepest need which was spiritual transformation from within. Our problem isn't simply bad behavior that needs improvement, but the absence of God's life within us. No amount of external polish can create the internal power source we desperately need. Only God can place new life inside a person through spiritual rebirth.

## Bible Verse

Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God." - John 3:3

## Reflection Question

What areas of your life are you trying to 'polish' externally instead of allowing God to transform from within?

## Quote

The new birth is not something a person produces through religious effort. It's something God does within a person.

## Prayer

God, help me understand that salvation isn't about my efforts but about Your transforming power. Open my heart to receive the new life only You can give. Amen.

## Day 2: A Heart Transplant, Not a Makeover

### Devotional

When someone needs a heart transplant, doctors don't simply repair the old heart, they replace it entirely with a new one. This is exactly what God offers us through spiritual rebirth. The life Jesus offers isn't an improved version of what we already have; it's completely new life from within. Like Nicodemus, we might be confused about what this means, thinking in terms of physical or behavioral changes. However, Jesus was speaking about something far more profound, a spiritual transformation that only God's Spirit can accomplish. This new birth creates effects that become visible in our lives, just as a transplanted heart begins pumping life through the entire body. The change starts from the inside and works its way out, not the other way around. When God places His Spirit within us, we don't just act differently, we become different. This transformation isn't gradual improvement but radical renewal, like the difference between a dead battery and a fully charged one.

### Bible Verse

And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. - Ezekiel 36:26

### Reflection Question

How have you experienced God's transforming power working from the inside out in your life?

### Quote

The life Jesus offers is not an improved version of the life we already have. It's a new life from within, from God within us.

### Prayer

Lord, thank You for offering me a new heart, not just a repaired one. Continue Your transforming work within me each day. Amen.

# Day 3: Love That Sacrifices Everything

## Devotional

God's love isn't the sentimental feeling we often imagine. It's sacrificial action that defies human logic. When Jesus spoke to Nicodemus about God's love, He wasn't describing affection for a perfect world. Instead, He revealed love for a broken, rebellious world that had turned away from Him repeatedly. This love moved God to send His only Son, knowing the cost would be everything. Just as Moses lifted up a bronze serpent in the wilderness so that anyone who looked upon it in faith would live, Jesus would be lifted up on the cross so that everyone who believes in Him would have eternal life. This wasn't Plan B, but was always God's heart. He didn't love us because we were good enough. He loved us while we were still separated from Him by sin. His love bridges the gap that our best efforts never could. This sacrificial love becomes the foundation of our new birth, not our performance or religious achievements.

## Bible Verse

“For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.” - John 3:16

‘But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.’ - Romans 5:8

## Reflection Question

How does understanding God's sacrificial love change your perspective on your own worth and His grace?

## Quote

God did not love a perfect world, did He? He loved a broken world. He loved a rebellious world, a world that turned away from him time and time again.

## Prayer

Father, I'm amazed by Your sacrificial love for me even when I was far from You. Help me live in the security of this unchanging love.

## Day 4: Stepping Into the Light

### Devotional

Every person faces a choice when encountering Jesus, either step toward the light or retreat into familiar darkness. This isn't because the light is unclear, but because light exposes what darkness hides. Some people resist Christ not because they don't understand Him, but because they prefer to maintain control rather than surrender to God. Others stay in the shadows because they'd rather hide what God already sees anyway. The dividing line isn't intelligence, morality, or religious background, but it's what we do with Jesus Christ. Those who trust Him receive life. Those who refuse Him remain separated from God. Without God's life within us, our hearts naturally remain in darkness, which explains why people respond to Christ so differently. The darkness in the human heart isn't overcome by argument or persuasion, but only by the light of Christ. When we step toward His light, we discover that eternal life doesn't just last forever, but begins the moment we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

### Bible Verse

“There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God’s one and only Son. And the judgment is based on this fact: God’s light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants”  
- John 3:18-21

### Reflection Question

What areas of your life are you still keeping in the shadows instead of bringing them into Christ's light?

### Quote

There is a darkness in the human heart that is not overcome by argument, but only by the light of Christ.

### Prayer

Jesus, give me courage to step fully into Your light and stop hiding in the darkness. Help me trust You with every area of my life. Amen.

## Day 5: Recharged by Grace

### Devotional

A flashlight doesn't become brighter by polishing its exterior. A flashlight needs its batteries recharged. Similarly, when our spiritual light grows dim, the answer isn't trying harder or performing better. It's returning to our power source, the Holy Spirit. A person doesn't become a Christian by earning their way to God but by receiving the new life that God gives through faith in Jesus Christ. This assurance isn't rooted in our performance but grows from the new life God places within us. When we feel spiritually drained or distant from God, we don't need to work harder at being good Christians. We need to reconnect with the Holy Spirit who gives us life and power. Just as Nicodemus discovered that night, transformation comes from above, not from within ourselves. The Christian life isn't about maintaining our spiritual batteries through effort, but about staying connected to the unlimited power source of God's Spirit. This is how we keep running toward the light so others can see Christ's light shining through us.

### Bible Verse

My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. - Galatians 2:20

### Reflection Question

When you feel spiritually drained, do you try to 'polish your exterior' or do you turn to the Holy Spirit for renewal?

### Quote

If I want this light to shine brighter. If it's getting dim, I don't polish the outside of it. I don't rub dirt off of it. I recharge the batteries. For mankind's "spiritual batteries", this can only come from the Holy Spirit.

### Prayer

Holy Spirit, recharge my spiritual batteries when I feel weak or distant from God. Help me remember that my strength comes from You, not my efforts. Amen.