

How To Treat Newborns in Christ

By Doug Hamilton

We are now at the end of our ten part series called the 2012 Camp Hill Evangelism Series. Our aim in this series has been an effort to generate a mindset that is friendly and fruitful for God in reaching out to those around us with the gospel of Jesus. Here is what we have covered thus far.

- 1) In the Conversion of Conversions we discussed the mindset that all people on earth have a soul and are in need of a Savior.
- 2) In the Mission of Missions we covered the mindset of the one true job description of the Christian, TO GLORIFY GOD.
- 3) In the Message of Salvation we turned our minds to the central theme of all evangelism, the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
- 4) In the Magnetism of Evangelism we set our minds on the concept that God is drawing all mankind toward Him through the goodness of Jesus Christ His Son.
- 5) In the Evangelistic Church Family we emphasized the importance of the quality of the church family as a powerful answer to those looking to leave the dysfunctional world.
- 6) In the Myths of the Unchurched we covered what in particular the searchers for Christ want in a church family.
- 7) In Becoming All Things For All Men we centered our thoughts on the flexibility of adjusting to the many different needs of the people around us.
- 8) In the Finer Details of the First Impression we focused on the more peripheral images of visitors to our services here at that the building.
- 9) In the Hope for the Hopeless we emphasized the great expectation of the Christian which is eternal life itself.
- 10) In this final lesson of the series we will focus on the crucial early stages of life following the conversion of a soul. "How to Treat Newborns in Christ"

If we do not do well in this area, then all is for not. If we blow it in the last lesson, then the first nine will end up meaning nothing and the outcome is actually worse than if they never converted in the first place. *2 Peter 2:21 For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them.*

The Bible uses a term that refers to new Christians called newborns. We learn of this concept from the Gospel of John early on in the ministry of Jesus.

- John 1:12–13 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

It is not through genealogical lineage that one is born into the kingdom of God. It is not through a one's personal will power that they are born into the kingdom. It is not even human originated, but of God Himself. He was the architect of this master plan through which we are born into His kingdom. Jesus would go on later to teach further about this "Born Again" process in John chapter 3.

- John 3:3–8 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." ⁴ Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be

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born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?"⁵ Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."⁶ "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."⁷ "Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'⁸ "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Jesus taught a Pharisee named Nicodemus that one must be born again. This birthing process has water and spiritual components, not water OR spiritual, but both. This is at the point of a believing baptism. When one takes the belief of a dead, buried and resurrected Jesus into the covenant of the same. There is both an inward and outward conversion that simultaneously takes place at the same time. This is exactly what Jesus taught concerning the Great Commission in *Mark 16:16* "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned." Baptizing a person that does not believe in the gospel is futile concerning salvation. In this way we enter the same family the same way for the same reason. *Galatians 3:26-27* For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.²⁷ For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

The Proper Care for Newborn Christians

1) Keep reminding them of their new lineage in Christ.

- 1 Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead..."

Notice that Peter is encouraging Christians by taking them back to the core of their faith. We must always be reminding newborns in Christ of what the basis of their hope in God. We need to always remind them that their foundation is in God.

- 1 Peter 1:23 "...for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and enduring word of God."

2) Feed them the proper diet.

Would you give a newborn a steak? Would you give them nachos and hot sauce? Of course not! You give them milk, for that is the only thing they are going to be able to digest properly. As time goes on you might add some rice cereal to the milk for a short time. Then you move to applesauce or pureed vegetables. It won't be long until the toddler is eating Cream of Wheat and Macaroni and Cheese. A little while longer and the young child moves to pizza and hamburgers. Not long after that they might have some steak. It is a process that nearly everyone on earth has gone through.

This is the same pattern that God uses concerning the nourishing of the newborn Christian, the process of moving from milk to meat. The primary difference is that the food is not of a caloric nature, but of a spiritual nature. It is the word of God.

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- 1 Peter 2:1-2 Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, ² like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, ³ if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

If the newborn is not fed properly with the simple foundation teachings, then they have great odds of reaching to maturity. If they are malnourished apart from the word, then stunted in their growth they will be.

- Hebrews 5:12–14 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. ¹³ For everyone who partakes *only* of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.
- 1 Corinthians 3:1–3 “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. ² I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able *to receive it*. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, ³ for you are still fleshly.”

3) Encourage them along the way.

Along the path from infant to maturity is great encouragement. Without the child will grow up cold and disconnected. They will less likely make it to maturity. We must encourage the newborns in Christ to reach a level of maturity.

- 1 Corinthians 14:20 Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature.
- Ephesians 4:14–15 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; ¹⁵ but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ,
- 1 Cor 13:11 When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things.”

Closing Story: Lynda Hamilton

On November 25th, 1950 a child named Lynda Hamilton was born. She had a very rough childhood, growing up in a dysfunctional home with an abusive father. At age ten she contracted polio that left her paralyzed from her chest up. She literally had no use of her arms from that day forward. This put an additional strain on her care and the relationship with her father.

Someone reached out to her with the gospel, she converted and grew in the faith. She had many in the church family that encouraged her on her way. Whenever the church doors were open, she was there to fellowship and learn the deeper things from God’s word. She developed a great faith in the Lord, one that would not allow self-pity and dependence, for she could do



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all things through Him who strengthens us. She continued in the faith, graduating Lubbock Christian and returning to the San Diego. Even though she did not have the use of her arms, she learned to paint with her mouth. She became so good at it that people began to buy her art. She was so loved in her congregation because she passed that encouragement onto the others. Often she would paint the faces of the kids for fun days and make people of the church beautiful paintings. She also learned to drive a car by using her mouth and would often drive to Lubbock or up the coast of California.



Lynda was a horseback rider in her later years because she lived life to its fullest. Her confidence in Christ caused her to always challenge her to be the best that she could be. She was so loved by the church because they had matured her as a newborn and she simply passed it on.

On November 16, 2011, Jana and I visited her congregation in San Diego. When we came into the auditorium, it was filled with weeping members of the church that found out only moments before that she had died at the age of 61. The entire class that evening was filled with songs and the many testimonies from the members that were so encouraged through the life she lived for Jesus. They were testifying to all the strength they drew from her and how she helped them grow in the faith. Having never met her, but hearing the stories, Jana and I were really encouraged. She had made the path from milk to meat, from discouraged to brave, from newborn to mature Christian.



We must make sure to take the time to mature our newborn in Christ so that they will be able to do the same for others in the future.

- 1) Keep reminding them of their lineage in Christ.
- 2) Feed them the proper diet of God's word.
- 3) Encourage them along the way.

