

REGENERATION

Titus 3:5

As we open to Titus 3, we are looking at the miracle of our salvation called spiritual regeneration.

The gift of salvation has seven key elements, and we have examined forgiveness and justification. We now come to regeneration. Regeneration is a word that is much wider than the Bible, or theology, it is a part of the everyday world around us.

re·gen·er·a·tion (rĭ-jĕn'ə-rā'shən) *n.*

1. The act or process of regenerating or the state of being regenerated.
2. *Biology.* Regrowth of lost or destroyed parts or organs.
3. *Theology.* Spiritual or moral revival or rebirth.

God must love regeneration because we see it throughout His creation.

One of the most amazing facets of life is that cells are constantly being regenerated as a part of the wondrously complex system built in by our Creator.

REGENERATION IS ALL AROUND US

From the cycle of the seasons, to the water cycle, to the claws of crustaceans that grow back after loss. God is a God that loves to offer a way for life to begin again.

Regeneration is the process by which an animal restores a lost part of its body. Broadly defined, the term can include wound healing, tissue repair, and many kinds of restorative activities.

*The best-known and most widely studied examples of regeneration are those involving **epimorphosis**, in which the lost structure is reproduced directly by a combination of cell proliferation and re-differentiation of new tissue.*

For example, if part of the liver is cut away, the remaining portions increase in size to compensate for the missing tissue and to restore the normal functional capacity of the organ.

*Of all vertebrates, **amphibians** have the most highly developed capacity for regeneration. Certain species have the ability to regenerate not only limbs and tails but also parts of the eye, lower jaw, intestine, and heart.*

*Most **annelids**, such as the earthworm, can readily regenerate segments after their removal: some species can regenerate whole organisms from any fragment.*

*The ability of certain **echinoderms**, such as starfish, to regenerate missing arms is well known. Cutting such an animal into several pieces results in each piece forming a new organism¹.*

All living things are made up of cells. But nowhere is regeneration in the physical world more important than in our aging bodies.

In the space of area that would be inside of the letter **o** on the page of your Bible in front of you, about 40,000 cells could fit.² There are a nearly uncountable number of cells in our bodies estimated to be between 30 and 100 trillions cells of 200 different types.³

The Wonder of Regeneration

Each day our body replaces cells, regenerating us physically by a continuous stream of nutrients; and on a system written into our genome, nearly every cell in our bodies gets replaced. That is the regenerating power of the human body.

Every day humans will lose and replace 200 billion red blood cells. Remarkably, our bodies can manufacture 2 million replacement cells in a split second. A single red blood cell will make an incredible journey, traveling 100 miles through a vast network of 60,000 miles of veins, capillaries, and arteries.

But the regenerating is much bigger than just blood cells, consider the immensity of this:

- Your stomach and small intestinal lining is replaced weekly;
- Your skin replaces itself monthly;
- Your liver replaces itself every six weeks; and
- Your skeleton replaces itself about every seven years.

It's pretty amazing. Whether you are 7 or 77, your body replaces billions of cells every day. The sad news is that at a certain age this amazing renewing process begins to slow and finally ends, the older we get, and death looms before us.

¹ Online at: <http://www.answers.com/regeneration&r=67>

² John Phillips, Exploring Philipppians, p. 152-153.

³ Online at: http://www.sciencenetlinks.com/sci_update.cfm?DocID=117

Even more tragic is the truth that spiritually, we have no natural regeneration system. Our only hope is a supernatural regeneration offered by God through Jesus Christ. We were born dead and only come to life by the miraculous intervention of God.

As we stand to read Titus 3:5, we begin to see the wonders of spiritual regeneration.

*Titus 3:5 "...not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, **through the washing of regeneration** and renewing of the Holy Spirit."*

The Results of Salvation's Mighty Work

Through seven divine works of God, guilty sinners are made ready for dwelling in the Presence of God forever; and their bodies formerly slaves to sin instantly become the very dwelling place, and temple of God.

How does God do all that? He does it through the seven elements that make up the Gift of Salvation. Remember with me what God does in each of us who believe:

This morning—do you know that you have received the gifts only God can give?

THE GIFT OF FORGIVENESS— CRITICAL NEED #1

Because of our sin—we are all debtors to God's Righteousness; so we need forgiveness.

In FORGIVENESS: **God removes my debts.** Ephesians 1:7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the **forgiveness of sins**, according to the riches of His grace.

Have you **experienced the relief of knowing that all your sins, everyone of them—past, present, and future, are GONE?** Your sins are paid for, and your eternal life is purchased—and you have the receipt in your hand, written in the very blood of the One who paid the price. Christ's record of that payment is forever settled in this book the Bible!

THE GIFT OF JUSTIFICATION— CRITICAL NEED #2

Because of our sin—we are all guilty convicts in God's sight; so we need justification.

In JUSTIFICATION: **God changes my State.** Romans 5:1 Therefore, *having **been justified by faith, we have peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Have you experienced **the peace of justification, all guilt removed, all punishment forever taken away from God's sight?**

THE GIFT OF REGENERATION— CRITICAL NEED #3

Because of our sin—we are all dead in our trespasses and sin; so we need regeneration.

In REGENERATION: **God transforms my Heart.** *Ezekiel 36:26-27 I will give **you a new heart** and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.*

So Christ died to take dead and rotting spiritual corpses and make them vibrant, full of endless life and brand new—**that's regeneration!**

*Ephesians 2:1 And you **He made alive**, who were dead in trespasses and sins, NKJV*

*John 10:10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I **have come that they may have life**, and that they may have it more abundantly. NKJV*

*Hebrews 7:16b ...but according to the **power of an endless life**. NKJV;*

Have you **experienced the power of an endless life**, and every day partaking of the powerful presence within of the very Lord God Almighty?

Doctors have discovered that the amazing regenerative powers seen in nature, and also at work within our human bodies, have something in the programming that causes that amazing, life extending process to slow down and gradually cease. This has given rise to what is known as regenerative medicine.

The Mystery of Human Regeneration

The basis for cellular regeneration is captured in the mysteries of the human genome. One of the enduring⁴ mysteries of biology is that a variety of specialized cells collaborate in building a body, yet all have an identical genome. Somehow each of the 200 different kinds of cells in the human body — in the brain, liver, bone, heart and many other structures — must be reading off a different set of the hereditary instructions written into the DNA.

The DNA packaging system alone is an extraordinary technical feat. If the nucleus of a human cell were a hollow sphere the size of a tennis ball, the DNA of the genome would be a thin thread some 24 miles long. The thread must be packed into the sphere with no breakages, and in such a way that any region of it can be found immediately.

⁴ NYT Science Section, electronic edition, 2/25/09.

The system is something like a play in which all the actors have the same script but are assigned different parts and blocked from even seeing anyone else's lines. At the moment of conception we each possess the first copy of the script; as it divides repeatedly into the 10 trillion cells of our human body, the cells assign themselves to the different roles they will play throughout our lifetime.

How does this assignment process work? The answer, researchers are finding, is that a second layer of information is embedded in the special proteins that package the DNA of the genome. This second layer, known as the **epigenome**, controls access to the genes; allowing each cell type to activate its own special genes, but blocking off most of the rest.

There is much evidence that changes in the epigenome contribute to cancer and other diseases. The epigenome alters with age — identical twins often look and behave a little differently as they grow older because of accumulated changes to their epigenomes. Understanding such changes could help address or retard some of the symptoms of aging. And the epigenome may hold the key to the dream of regenerative medicine, that of deriving safe and efficient replacement tissues from a patient's own cells.

The ideal of regenerative medicine is to convert a patient's normal body cells first back into the embryonic state, and then into the specific cells lost to disease.

What those scientists don't realize is that sin has corrupted the very code of our genome and that death has passed upon all humans through Adam, and that life can only come when we receive Christ and He finally will rid us of this body of sin and death. So physical regeneration is amazing and beautiful, but that is only a small comparison to what God is really doing.

REGENERATION IS OUR GREATEST NEED

But why would we the greatest and highest and most wonderful of all earth's creatures—why would we need regeneration? Because a disaster each of us partakes of has rendered us uninhabitable by God. We are sinners.

The greatest regeneration is spiritual, when God makes us His very own home; when God makes a human His habitation in the greatest miracle of all—salvation.

The Gift of Salvation is about Jesus who died to take us who are dead in our sins, bring us to life and welcome us as family members, full of endless life and brand new—**that's regeneration!**

In Regeneration we go from spiritual deadness, and uninhabitable for God to life in His Spirit overflowing with His Presence.

God's regenerating us through salvation literally means we come alive with new life, a fresh start, renewal, and a new beginning. God has made this provision for us to be born again, regenerated through the new birth—in order to give us His life living within.

We need to experience what the Scriptures often declare—God Himself has regenerated us. That means that He has sought us out in our dead and decaying condition, breathed eternal life into us, and brought us into His family by the new birth. Then He comes to live within us so we are forever having an abundant and overflowing, eternal life.

Regeneration transforms us in so many ways. We instantly become a new creation in Christ. Here are just a few truths we celebrate as believers, saved by God's grace. Look down at your Bible, where we started in Titus 3:5.

- *Titus 3:5 "...not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit."*

Because Jesus regenerated me—***I am washed, given a fresh start, and new beginning.*** Say that aloud with me

The Results of Regeneration

Now join me in several other passages, where the new beginning truths of regeneration are opened to us by God.

- *John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name".*

Because Jesus regenerated me—***I am a Child of God.*** Say that aloud with me

- *Romans 8:2, 9 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. 9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.*

Because Jesus regenerated me—***I am a Free From All SLAVERY.*** Say that aloud with me

- *1 Corinthians 3:16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"*

Because Jesus regenerated me—***I am a Temple of God.*** Say that aloud with me

- *1 Corinthians 12:27 "Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually."*

Because Jesus regenerated me—***I am a member of Christ's Body.*** Say that aloud with me

Do you have the Gift of Regeneration?

Regeneration is when God makes us His very own home; when God makes a human His habitation in the greatest miracle of all—salvation.

The Gift of Salvation is about Jesus who died to take us who are dead in our sins, bring us to life and welcome us as family members, full of endless life and brand new—**that's regeneration!**

Have you **experienced the power of an endless life**, and every day partaking of the powerful presence within of the very Lord God Almighty?