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## A New, Different Life is Just a Prayer Away

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Together we have intensely studied together, "The Great Ten Commandments" God gave to the world through Moses.



Now I want to show you some of the emphatic words of Jesus that are believed by many to be God's further commandments to us.

To His followers Jesus said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations ... teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" – (Matthew 28:19,20).

What are the "all things" He has commanded us to do?

"You must be born again" is one of these commandments – (John 3:7b). What we might call the 11<sup>th</sup> commandment. (John 3:7b).

Let me give you an example of what this means. I'm a member of a Book Club that's reading the New York Times bestseller, "Amazing Grace" by Eric Metaxas.

It is about an Englishman, William Wilberforce, who lived several centuries ago and made a great impact on the world. He headed the heroic campaign to end slavery in England.

Three days before his death, July 29, 1833, the House of Commons passed the bill abolishing slavery in the British Empire. He heard the news before his death.

"Amazing Grace" describes how untold thousands of African

men from their coasts were picked up in boats, shackled together in twos and packed like sardines on ships. Many died before they were ever sold into slavery. Some were thrown overboard so the ship captain could receive insurance money for their lives.

Many of the British populace were not aware of these horrific activities of slave trade as it was kept quiet.

Why am I telling you this? Because Chapter five of the book is called, "Ye Must Be Born Again."

As a wealthy young man in England, Wilberforce spent much of his time eating, drinking, and partying. He had become close to the prime minister's son, named Pitt, and through their friendship had become a popular Member of Parliament.

Young William at age 26 was led to Christ through some spontaneous Greek New Testament studies with a Methodist scholar and friend, Isaac Milner. Milner was eventually able to answer all of Wilberforce's questions.

At this time, evangelist John Wesley was still alive and the fledgling Methodist denomination was Wilberforce's choice.

The book describes the young political orator's spiritual experience.

"He had lived so long for his own ambition that to live for God, as he now longed to do, was a foreign and strange proposition and would take time to sort out. Two changes manifested themselves right away: the first was a new attitude toward money, the second toward time.

Before "the Great Change," Wilberforce had reckoned his mon-

ey and time his own, to do with as he pleased, and had lived accordingly. But suddenly he knew that this could no longer be the case." (Metaxas, Eric, 2007. "Amazing Grace." New York: HarperCollins.)

Jesus said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

When Wilberforce's eyes were opened spiritually, he realized he had been wasting his life and time in meaningless pursuits. If he had not been "born again," which he also called "the Great Change," he would not have been given the commission, desire and strength from God to be the point man bringing about the abolition of slavery.

This changed life is a good example of what it is like to be "born again."

A year and two days after William Wilberforce's death, Sir Reginald Coupland describes it in his 1923 biography:

"At midnight on July 31, 1834, eight hundred thousand slaves became free." – (Ibid). This was the beginning of a great movement that not only changed African and British history, but changed the world.

One does not have to be a member of a particular group to have a life changing experience. The new birth is just a prayer away.

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