

GOSPEL PEARLS

Negative influences

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Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. He came to Jesus at night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you are doing unless God is with him." Jesus answered and said to him, "Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." Nicodemus said to him, "How can a person once grown old be born again? Surely he cannot reenter his mother's womb and be born again, can he?" Jesus answered, "Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water

and Spirit. What is born of flesh is flesh and what is born of spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I told you, 'You must be born from above.' The wind blows where it wills, and you can hear the sound it makes, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes; so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." (John 3: 1-8)

Nicodemus, a Pharisee, goes to see Jesus at night. Evidently, Nicodemus has been fascinated by His teachings, yet he still fears being judged by his Jewish brothers as Jesus' friend. All of us are influenced, for better or for worse, by the mentality of our age. Jesus is the only one who is in no way influenced by trends or the judgments of others. Indeed it is Jesus who becomes a new model for all to follow. Let's reflect on these questions: Over the last few days, who I have allowed myself to be most influenced by? By Jesus or by other people's judgments? Have I sought Jesus in the dark like Nicodemus did or have I been ashamed of being Christian?