

*Go public!*

# Baptism

## so what is baptism?

*And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.*

*Mark 1:4*

The most important concept for us to understand is the link between baptism and repentance. Repentance in the Bible means simply turning away from life-as-I-want-it to life-as-GOD-wants-it. It is a word that means changed heart, changed mind, changed life. Baptism is the physical symbol of repentance.

Just like marriage is the outward, public expression of love two people have toward each other, baptism is the outward, public expression of commitment a person has toward God.

Just as people these days often live together without ever taking the step of publicly affirming their love through marriage, some Christians also live with God without ever taking the public step of affirming their faith through baptism.

However, neither practice fits within the teaching of the Bible.

Perhaps you are asking:

### **SHOULD I GET BAPTIZED?**

Here are two good reasons to be baptized:

1. You want to enter the family of God by turning your will over to God and being united with Christ's resurrection life.
2. You want to publicly affirm your prior act of repentance.

But the easiest way to determine if you should be baptized is to answer this question:

*Have I ever been baptized according to the pattern of Jesus and his followers as described in the NT?*

If your answer is "Yes" then you need feel no obligation to be baptized again (although some have chosen to do so to affirm a renewal of their faith).

If your answer is "No" then you need to ask yourself why not. Is there a spiritual struggle going on in your heart? Do you feel "unworthy" to be baptized? Do you feel embarrassed?

If your answer is "I don't know" then it's likely that you haven't been. Get in touch with a pastor or spiritual coach to talk it through.

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*...an ancient tradition  
with deep significance*

*"Baptism means different things to different people mostly because we have forgotten what the word should mean."*

— Pastor Jeff

*Go public with your faith!*

## what JESUS said

Baptism is one of the deeply important spiritual rituals instituted by Jesus himself, and when he instituted it he declared it the entry point of following him. Those who follow him are called "disciples" and Jesus' instructions for the development of new disciples is found in Matthew 28:19-20.

*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*

— Matthew 28:19-20

A disciple is one who has been both baptized and trained in obedience, and if making disciples means doing that for others, being a disciple (follower of Jesus) means we must be baptized and trained ourselves. Miss either one, and something's missing.



## a baptism self-study (you may need extra paper)

### Read Matthew 3:1-17

What was the purpose of John's baptism?

According to John, did Jesus need to be baptized? Why or why not?

Why did Jesus want to be baptized?

What happened to Jesus after he was baptized?

### Acts 2:1-47

What happened to the disciples of Jesus?

In verse 38, what does Peter tell the audience they need to do to receive forgiveness?

What promise does Peter say will result from repentance and baptism?

### Acts 8:27-40

How long should a person be a believer before getting baptized?

### Romans 6:1-4

What significance does Paul place on baptism?

### Summary thoughts:

Baptism always coincides with or follows repentance, therefore baptism of infants is not true baptism and should not be recognized as such.

Baptism symbolizes a union with Christ in his burial and resurrection, therefore, full immersion in water is the more accurate symbol and the preferred method for all who are physically able.

Baptism forms a deep union between believers, and is in fact the only biblically sanctioned entry point into the body of Christ. There is no ritual prayer, class to complete, or series of tests to endure. There is only the **repentance of the heart** and the public act of baptism.

### Final questions:

What is true baptism as you understand it?

Why do you want to be baptized? Write your story of repentance from sin, and what brings you to the point of wanting to be baptized.