



## Session 5

### What to expect after baptism

Now that you're baptized, what's next? That's what this *First Steps* session is about.

First, a story. Carol, a university student, came home for Christmas break. During a visit with her pastor, she talked about baptism. Carol reminisced about life as a young Christian. It was easy for her to believe in high school, easy to get baptized. Trouble was, she got stuck after baptism. She didn't grow as a Christian in university.

Baptism seemed like a **destination**, Carol said. Once she got baptized, she was done. She didn't know there was much more. It's like a bear hibernating, another student described it, life after baptism.

The pastor could sympathize He was baptized at age 14 but experiencing no growth till after high school. What a waste of those years! Let's make sure this isn't your experience, getting stuck after baptism.

Baptism shouldn't be a destination. It should be a **doorway** – that was Carol's insight. A doorway into a daily relationship with God. A starting point towards God's Dream for your life.



This diagram show the growth stages of a Christian's life. The third stage is



Disciple. That's when a Christian's chooses – an important word – to *do life together* with Jesus every day.

Carol and the pastor discussed what was needed to start this stage. **Humility**, for

sure. Ever noticed how willing a child is to ask for help? We need that childlike humility.

In basketball, it takes humility to work under a trainer and coach. You admit you don't know it all. You're willing to learn from someone who does. Same with you as a Christian. You tell Jesus you want to learn from him, get trained by him. Jesus put it this way,



*Students aren't greater than their teacher. But the student who is fully trained will become like the teacher. Luke 6.40*

You need humility and a willing spirit to get trained by Jesus.

You must desire to be **pure** too. A Disciple must get rid of whatever stops them from being the best ever disciple. It's good to stop right now and ask God for help. You want love what he loves and hate what he hates.

While you're praying, ask God for the heart of a child, teachable now that you're baptized. Whatever God wants to teach you, you want to learn. Tell him that too.



And ask him to flood your life with his light as well. You want all the darkness out. The lies, pride and self-absorbed way you used to live. You want to be full of light – his truth, that is – so Jesus will shine through you more. You want to be magnetic, attracting people to God. (Interesting thought, to be like a magnet, right!)

A heads-up: Carol and her pastor discussed something else. After Jesus got baptized, he was plunged into a tough time of temptation. (Read about it in Luke 4.1-13). You should expect this too.

*To ponder: if there's temptation ahead, what can I do now to prepare for it?*

Think sports again. After joining a basketball team, you'd get into shape doing scrimmages – practice games with others on your team. It's hard work, but fun.

At some point, you have to play an opposition team. It's not fun anymore; it's not friendly on the court. The other team opposes you any way they can. They elbow and trip. They'll even injure you if they can get away with it. They want you on the bench, no longer able to play.



Same thing when you become a follower of Jesus. At your baptism you stood up for him before family and friends. The evil one was watching too – did you know? He hates God, so of course he hates you. You declared you changed sides. You're on God's side now. God's team. Expect a reaction from the devil! He longs to harm you, even knock you out of God's game. He's a nasty, cunning enemy!

The evil one will try to slow you down and cripple you. Maybe he'll attack your mind, playing on your fears and worries. He'll whisper, enticing you to rebel against God. He may tempt you to go back to living independent from God. Or make you feel guilty when you fail God. *You did that and you call yourself a Christian?* He'll probe for a weak area of your life where you're vulnerable to attack. We all face this.

Perhaps he'll pressure you, using the culture to dominate or allure you. He might work through someone to bully or shame you for following Jesus.

Here's another scheme evil one practices: tempting you through those close to you. Your friends may persuade you to act in ways you know isn't like Jesus. Someone may entice you away from God's love, encouraging you to follow them, not Jesus.

**Make sense, these attacks from Satan? How can you fight back?**

The evil one's cunning and we're weak. That's why you must on our "game-attitude" like an athlete who gets zoned in for the game. You pray for God's strength for yourself and your spiritual team, the church.

Don't get scared! Face temptation with confidence. God's uses them to toughen you up and help you mature. The struggle with temptation makes you strong.



Imagine a butterfly emerging from the cocoon. The struggle strengthens the wings so it can fly. Same with you. Your struggle against temptation actually help you fight back. You get your spiritual "wings" as a result. Make sense? Hope so.

Still, it's no fun going through trials and temptations. That's why Jesus taught us to pray, *lead us not into temptation (Matthew 6.13)*

What to do? Ask others to pray for you, to be your cheerleader as you become a disciple. Make your church friends proud! (Actually, make Jesus proud, right!).

Here's an assignment:

Read the story of Jesus' temptation, Luke 4.1-13.

Ponder the temptations he faced,

*give up on God, give in to pride, give over to Satan.* Have you faced these?

Write down three things you learn about Jesus resisting temptation.

What in Jesus' story encourages and helps you?

Hope this helps you start movie forward after baptism. Remember, it's a doorway, not a destination. Don't get stuck, get moving.