

Baptism: helping a new Believer obey Jesus

Baptism is our first step of obedience, following Jesus and beginning the life of a Disciple. How do we show others we've died to an independent life and begun a life dependent on Jesus? We get baptized. Believers need help to understand this step. A DiscipleMaker takes whatever time is necessary to clarify baptism and encourage them to do it.

Discussion from Scripture: (read the verses and discuss; give personal experiences)

The decisive reason for baptism is simply, Jesus commands it. ... *go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit...* (Matt. 28.19 NLT). If he's our Lord, we'll obey him.

Jesus models baptism: *One day Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and John baptized him in the Jordan River.* (Mark 1.9 NLT). Because we're becoming apprentices of Jesus, we want to imitate him.

Believers in the Bible got baptized quickly: *Paul and Silas shared the word of the Lord with the jailer and with all who lived in his household. Even at that hour of the night, the jailer cared for them and washed their wounds. Then he and everyone in his household were immediately baptized.* (Acts 16.32,33 NLT). We should too.

FYI: a Believer often has questions about baptism. Some Q&A:

Does baptism make me a Christian? No, repentance (a U-turn back to God) and faith in Jesus saves you. Baptism is like a wedding ring. It's an outward symbol of an inner reality, showing that you've said Yes to Jesus' love.

Who should get baptized? Anyone old enough to decide. You become Believers by repenting of sin and depending on Jesus. The next step is baptism. *Those who believed what Peter said were baptized...* (Acts 2.41a NLT)

Why immersion? It's what *baptism* means (*to immerse, submerge*) and what Jesus did: *After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water...* (Matt. 3.16a NLT). Case closed.

When should I be baptized? As soon as you understand. Like this man's story in the Bible: *...they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "Look! There's some water! Why*

can't I be baptized?" He ordered the carriage to stop, and they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. (Acts 8.36-38 NLT). Don't wait until it feels right. It's better to act your way into a feeling than to feel your way into acting.

Must I say something? No, not necessarily. Baptism is like a pantomime, communicating your heart without words. However, telling your story can be very encouraging to others. Consider using the **P•L•A•N** app to structure your thoughts.

Practical matters: discuss who should do the baptism, what to wear, who to invite, when to get baptized. This discussion depends on the culture of your church or fellowship. Take time to discuss them.

Final question, *when should you get baptized, this week or next?*

Small things done in great love will change the world, one person at a time...

Disciple