

Walking with God

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Breen, M. (2016) *Building a Discipling Culture*, 3rd edition, Pawleys Island: 3DM Publishing.

Chapter 6 - Baptism and Telling Your Story

At the beginning of this study we learnt that for a person to be saved and to grow in their relationship with God he/she needs to repent (turn away from their sins) and believe (have faith in Jesus as Lord). Baptism is an outward sign of this inner change.

There are numerous verses in the New Testament that refer to baptism. The common practice of baptism usually refers to being immersed in water. Baptism in water is a symbolic representation of dying to an old life and having your sins washed away, and then rising to a new life in Jesus.

1. What does Jesus say about baptism in Mark 16: 15-16 and Matthew 28: 19?

3. What are the implications of this for us?

4. What does Paul remind the early Christians of in Romans 6: 3-4?

Acts 2 tells the story of the day of Pentecost when the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and Peter stood up in front of a crowd and told the people the good news about Jesus.

Read what happened next in Acts 2: 37-41.

5. How did the crowd respond?

6. How did Peter respond?

7. What was the promise?

The Book of Acts records several occasions of individuals and families turning to Christ and being baptized. Read the verses below and then answer the following questions:

Acts 8: 12

Acts 16: 33-34

Acts 18: 8

Acts 22: 16

8. Does anyone ever get baptized apart from believing in Jesus?

9. When does baptism take place? Is it before or after someone believes?

10. How much time elapses between belief in Jesus and baptism?

According to Matthew 28: 19 baptism is not an option for believers; it is one of Jesus' commands.

Discuss with your study partners

- a) if you have watched somebody being baptized*
- b) if you have been baptized yourself since your conversion to Christ*
- c) If you haven't been baptized, would you be ready to get baptized now?*

If we are to follow Jesus' command to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit" then it is important that we are able to tell the story (or testimony) of what God has done in our lives to people who don't yet know Him, as well as those who come to watch our baptism.

Have a look at Acts 22 for an example of a testimony. Paul's story falls into 3 parts:

v. 1-5 Paul's life before he became a believer

v. 6-11 Paul's explanation of how he became a believer

v.12-21 Paul's explanation of how becoming a believer changed his life

Use the three prompts below to write out your testimony. It is helpful to:

- keep the language informal - write the way you speak
- keep it short (no longer than 3 minutes)
- make sure that God is the hero of your story, not you!

A. This is how I lived and what I thought before I came to Christ

B. This is when, why and how I made the decision to become a follower of Christ

C. These are the changes I have seen since committing my life to Jesus

Share your testimony with your study partners.