

YOUR NEXT STEP:
BAPTISM!



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“3 Questions of Faith” study guide

PLUS: tons of scripture passages!

YOUR NEXT STEP: **BAPTISM!**

Baptism is the next step after becoming a follower of Jesus. In Jesus' "parting words" to his disciples, he told them:

Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

And that's exactly what they did. Over and over again, as the Jesus movement swept the world, the very first thing people did after they said yes to Christ's forgiveness and leadership, was to be baptized. Check out these examples:

Peter replied, "Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." ... Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all. (Acts 2:38,41)

...So beginning with this same Scripture, Philip told him the Good News about Jesus. As they rode along, 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 8:35-38)

The jailer called for lights and ran to the dungeon and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, along with everyone in your household." And they shared the word of the Lord with him 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 16:29-33)

Q: WHAT DOES BAPTISM MEAN?

Baptism is a “rite of passage” (for lack of a better term) that marks a person has having left their old life and old self that was separated from God, and entered into a new life, becoming their new self, connected to and relating to God. It’s kinda’ like a wedding in that way—like how a wedding marks a person leaving their “old life” of singleness and entering into a new life of joined oneness to another person.

Baptism is symbolic of two core truths:

1: What Jesus did for you: *“Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day.”* (1Corinthians 15:3-4)

2: What has now happened to you spiritually: *“Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.”* (Romans 6:3-4)

For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead. (Colossians 2:12)

When you’re baptized, we put you all the way under the water. And it’s like you’re dying with Christ. Your old self is dying and getting buried. But then, just like the tomb couldn’t hold onto Jesus, just as the power of the His Father raised him to new life, that’s what happens to you. As we bring you out of the water, it’s like you’re being raised to new life with Jesus. Cool, huh?!

Q: HOW DO I PREPARE FOR MY BAPTISM?

1) The very first thing is to respond to the love, forgiveness, and leadership of Christ by saying “Yes!” to him right now. Maybe you’ve already done that. You’ve prayed (prayer is just conversation, and conversation is how relationships start!) and said:

God, I want to be adopted as your daughter / son. I know I don’t deserve it. But I ask you to forgive me completely, wash my past clean, come into my life and make me who you created to me to be. I accept your forgiveness that’s possible through the sacrifice of your Son Jesus for me. And I embrace Christ as the lord of my life. I

surrender fully to you today and want to live the rest of my life with you and for you. Amen.

That's where it starts. If you haven't done that, you can — right now! You are now choosing to be a follower of Jesus. And in that simple act of saying "Yes!" to God from the bottom of your heart, everything begins to change. God forgives you, adopts you, enters your life, begins to lead you and transform you and empower you as you learn to respond moment-by-moment to him.

2) Next comes baptism. RSVP for our next baptism date by checking the baptism box on your Connect Card during a weekend gathering, filling out the online form, or emailing us at info@ourterranova.com.

3) Invite a bunch of friends! Baptism is public for a reason—it's a celebration! Don't miss this opportunity to influence people you care about who may or may not have said "Yes!" to Jesus themselves.

Q: WHAT DO I WEAR TO MY BAPTISM?

Come ready to get totally wet! You'll go all the way under the water. So come in shorts and a t-shirt, or maybe an appropriate swimsuit. Bring a towel. And if you want, have a change of clothes and a plastic bag for your wet clothes.

Q: WHAT WILL HAPPEN AT MY BAPTISM?

Arrive early enough to change (if you need to) and leave enough time to meet together with others being baptized about 15 minutes before the public celebration. During this brief meeting, we'll explain baptism one more time (we want you to fully appreciate this beautiful thing that's happening!) and then walk you through exactly what will happen in the water, so there are no surprises!

The public celebration will begin with a brief explanation of baptism to everyone who's gathered, and prayer. Then one-by-one we'll invite everyone being baptized down into the water.

In the water you will be asked to tell everyone why you want to be baptized. This could just be one sentence, like: "I want to let everyone here know that I'm a follower of Jesus now!" or "I want my old self to be buried with Christ, and I want to be raised to a new life!" OR, you might want to take this time and tell a bit of your story, and how

you've accepted Christ's forgiveness and salvation and leadership. That could be a great thing for your friends and family who are watching to see! God might use your story to influence them. You think about it, and decide.

After you respond, you'll be asked 3 specific questions*:

- 1) Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God?
- 2) Have you trust him, and him alone, for the forgiveness of your sins?
- 3) Do you now commit to live your life in obedience to Jesus?

**To understand these 3 questions better, take a few minutes to read through the "3 Questions of Faith" Study Guide. Just a brief description of each question and a few verses to check out. You'll want to be able to answer "Yes!" to these questions, and to say "Yes" honestly and meaningfully!*

Then you'll be briefly lowered down into the water and raised back up again. The crowd (and I!) will yell and cheer and clap ('cuz it's amazing!). Then you'll come up out of the water and towel off. But don't go anywhere yet! Stay and watch others get baptized. Finally, at the very end, we'll gather everyone who's been baptized together once more and pray together for everyone.

Q: WHAT HAPPENS AFTER BAPTISM?

Baptism is a very important experience in the life of a follower of Christ. You are publicly declaring your faith and your devotion to Jesus Christ. And because of that, there are a few things you can expect:

- God's Spirit is in you. Listen to Him and follow His leadership.
- Satan isn't happy. Expect him to oppose you!
- You may begin to have questions, even doubts about your relationship with God. ("Am I really saved?" "Am I worthy?" "Am I truly forgiven?" "Is God really in me?")
- Normal "trials" in life (an argument at work, financial struggles, a fight with your kid or spouse) take on a higher level of inner conflict for you.

So it's really important that you don't stall out. Keep moving forward in your relationship with God. Here are a few suggestions:

1) Read John's story of Jesus' life in the Bible.

After you've read through this brochure and you're ready to be baptized, we recommend you read The Book of John in the Bible. It's one of four stories of Jesus' life found in the Bible, and it's written by one of Jesus' closest followers. If you don't have a Bible you find easy to read, grab one of our FREE yellow Bibles off the information table. The Book of John starts on page 809.

2) Begin interacting with God ("praying") about everything all the time.

You now have a relationship with God. The Creator of the Universe now calls himself your Father. And he's with you — better than that, in you — 24/7. The Christian life is a life of moment-by-moment connection with Christ, allowing him to guide you and fuel you for everything you face. (Read John 15, where Jesus uses the metaphor of a vine and it's branches, for more about that!)

Are you up for a challenge? See how often you can connect with God throughout the day. Use something (a watch, post-it notes, etc) to trigger your memory. And every time you "remember" to talk with God, thank Him for being there, and ask Him if there's anything He wants you to do or to know right now. Then just listen.

3) Join the "CORE" LIFEgroup.

You need to connect with a few people who are with you on this journey. Life with God is designed to be done "together." Sign up for our CORE LIFEgroup that meets on Sundays during the 9:30am service during LIFEgroup seasons. It's led by Tom Ulrich, and Tom is absolutely great at helping you lay a solid spiritual foundation to build on. For the next LIFEgroup season, check out our website under "Small Groups and Studies."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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