

### BIBLICAL BAPTISM

#### Sharing

1. Have you ever wished you could start life over again? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No
  - Explain: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Tell of an experience in your life that, if you could rewind time, you'd avoid.
  - Share: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Did you know that the Bible teaches that baptism permits us to begin our lives again? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No
4. Have you ever been baptized? If so, when and where? How type of baptism did you experience?
  - Share: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Many believe that it is not the *method* but the *spirit* of the baptismal ordinance that pleases God.
  - Do you agree or disagree? \_\_\_\_\_

#### Studying

6. Baptism is a lot like a marriage. A marriage ceremony symbolizes the commitment that a man and woman make to end their single life and join together as a couple. Similarly, a baptismal ceremony symbolizes the commitment that a person makes to end their spiritually single life and join in union with Jesus Christ.
7. So, the celebration and symbol of our commitment to Jesus is called baptism. When a man and woman marry, their loyalty and allegiance are pledged to each other for the rest of their lives. The same is true of baptism. When we are baptized our loyalty and allegiance are pledged to Jesus Christ for the rest of our lives.
8. Baptism is mentioned many times in the Bible. The Greek word is 'baptizo' which means "to dip" or to plunge underwater, or to immerse. The Holy Spirit inspired the words of Scripture and therefore used the word that best described God's plan for baptism. Yet, in many Christian churches there seems to be many deviations from the Holy Spirit's 'baptizo.' Some sprinkle, some pour water over the head and some even sprinkle with rose petals, avoiding water altogether. Which method does the Bible indicate is correct?
9. Since Jesus is our example in all things, let's ask, 'What did Jesus do?' From the Bible we know that when Jesus began His public ministry He came to John, at the Jordan River, to be baptized (Matthew 3:13) by immersion. John recognized Jesus as the Messiah and he was hesitant to baptize one so holy, but Jesus insisted.
  - Read Matthew 3:15 "But Jesus answered and said to him, "permit it to be so \_\_\_\_\_, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."
  - Read Matthew 3:16 "When He had been baptized, Jesus came \_\_\_\_\_ immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him."
10. Had Jesus desired another method of baptism, there would have been no need to travel to the Jordan River where there was much water.
  - John 3:23 "Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim because there was much \_\_\_\_\_ there."

10. Not surprisingly, since Jesus was following the leading of the Holy Spirit, God the Father approved of Jesus' baptism by immersion. We know this by the visible and audible manifestations of approval given by God when Jesus came up out of the water.
  - Read Matthew 3:16,17 "And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and lo a voice from heaven saying, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well \_\_\_\_\_."
11. It would seem that God not only approved of His Son's baptism, but, on another occasion, recorded in Acts 8:26, He sent His angel to Philip instructing him to arise and go baptize an Ethiopian eunuch of great authority as he traveled home from Jerusalem.
  - Read Acts 8:29 "Then the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go near and overtake this chariot. So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, 'Do you understand what you are reading?'" In Acts 8:34, Philip explained the Scriptures to him.
  - After Philip explained the scriptures to the eunuch, the eunuch said, Acts 8:36,37 "See, here is \_\_\_\_\_. "What hinders me from being baptized?" Then Philip said, 'if you believe with all your heart you may."
  - Read Acts 8:38,39 "So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came \_\_\_\_\_out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing."
  - If immersion into the water wasn't ordained by God, why would Jesus have been baptized by that method, why would God have so visibly and audibly approved of Jesus' baptism and why would God have sent His servant, Philip, to go and baptize an Ethiopian eunuch by immersion?
12. Many Christians speak of being 'born again.' Our physical life begins the day we are born. Our spiritual life begins the day we are 'born again.' This concept of being born again came from Jesus Christ, Himself, as He spoke to a Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews, named Nicodemus.
  - Read John 2:3 "Jesus answered and said to him, Most assuredly I say to you, unless one is born \_\_\_\_\_he cannot see the kingdom of God."
  - A Christian life begins with an experience in the heart of an individual that Jesus calls being 'born again.'
  - When we were born of our mother we were 'buried' in her womb until we came forth to a new life. Baptism is symbolic of that experience. In baptism we are 'buried' under the water, where we experience a death to our former sinful life. We then come up out of the water to a new glorious life in Jesus Christ.
  - The baptismal act is tied to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. Each person baptized is saying to all watching: "I am placing my faith in a Savior who went down into death for me, as I go down into the water; Who was buried and rose again on my behalf even as I am buried under the water and am then raised up to life in Him."
  - Read Romans 6:4 "Therefore we were \_\_\_\_\_with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
  - We had no say in our first birth! However, it is our decision to accept Christ's offer to be 'born again'.

13. **Is baptism really necessary?** The Bible says that it is:

- Read Mark 16:16 “Whoever believes and is baptized will be \_\_\_\_\_.”
- Read John 3:5 “Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly I say to you, unless one is born of \_\_\_\_\_ and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’”

**What about those who cannot be baptized because they are sick, injured, crippled or, like the thief on the cross, dying.**

- The baptism of Jesus Christ—our perfect substitute—fulfilled the baptism requirement for those people. That is what Jesus meant in Matthew 3:15 when Jesus said to John that “it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness” (See #9, page 1).

14. **How can a Christian prepare for baptism?**

- **LEARN:** According to the great commission given by Jesus, his disciples are to be taught all that is commanded in Scripture. Read Matthew 28:19, 20 “Go. . . teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you, . . .”
- **BELIEVE:** Remember what Philip said to the Ethiopian in Acts 8:38 “...If you believe with all your heart, you may [be baptized].”
- **REPENT:** Acts 3:19 “Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out . . . .”  
Acts 2:38 “ . . . Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...”  
2 Cor. 7:10 “For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.”

15. **The proper age for baptism:** The individual being baptized must be old enough to make a choice—of their own free will—to follow Jesus Christ for the rest of their lives. That level of maturity differs between individuals.

16. **Rebaptism:** There are times when a person should be rebaptized.

- Read Acts 19:1-5 Discuss Paul’s experience at Ephesus. When believers learned additional truth there was a need for rebaptism. Another time that rebaptism might be necessary is when a Christian completely walks away from God for a period of time, then repents and comes back. Rebaptism would signify a desire to become a member of God’s family once more.

17. **Being baptized doesn’t mean that we will never again sin!**

- Read Jude 24 “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you \_\_\_\_\_ before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy!”

18. **What if I feel too unworthy to be baptized?**

- Read Hebrews 9:13,14 “For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”

19. The Bible says that when we accept Christ we are adopted into the family. Just as we are born into a human family at our physical birth, when we are born again, we are born into the family of God, into a church family.

- Read John 1:12 “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.”

## Applying this lesson

20. I have learned that a baptismal ceremony symbolizes the commitment that a person makes to end their spiritually single life and join in union with Jesus Christ—for the rest of their life!
  - I understand that when I am baptized I pledge my allegiance and loyalty to Jesus Christ for the rest of my life.
  - \_\_\_\_A check mark at left indicates that at my baptism I will pledge my loyalty to God.
21. This lesson explains the relationship between baptism and being born again by the water and the Spirit.
  - I understand that my baptism signifies that I am placing my faith in a Savior who went down into death for me, as I go down into the water of baptism; That Jesus was buried and rose again on my behalf even as I am buried under the water and am raised up to a new life in Him.
  - \_\_\_\_A check mark at left indicates my decision to accept Christ's offer to be born again.
22. Through this lesson I have learned that, without baptism, I cannot enter the kingdom of God. However, if there are extenuating circumstances that preclude me from being baptized, the baptism of Jesus Christ covers me.
  - I understand that extenuating circumstances that preclude baptism are rare.
  - \_\_\_\_A check mark at left indicates that if I have an extenuating circumstance that precludes baptism I will discuss it with a pastor.
23. When we are baptized we are always baptized into a family of believers, the church of God on earth.
  - I understand that being baptized into a family of believers means that I will be baptized into church membership with all the rights and privileges that go with that membership. I also understand that I take upon myself the obligation to participate in the life of the church family by contributing my time, talents and resources.
  - \_\_\_\_A check mark at left indicates that I will become a participating member of the church at my baptism.
24. This lesson has helped me understand the meaning, importance, privileges and obligations of Biblical baptism.
  - I understand the full and profound meaning of the sacred ceremony of baptism by immersion.
  - \_\_\_\_A check mark at left indicates that I would like to follow Jesus all the way in Biblical baptism.