

## **Small Group Study: Baptism**

This small group study is designed to explore the understanding of baptism and discuss why a Christian should be baptized. To do so we will look at a few key verses in the Bible about baptism.

### **Opening Discussion:**

- Who in the group has been baptized? Tell us about your experience.
- What made you decide to be baptized?
- What would you say to someone thinking about being baptized?

❖ ***Read the story from Acts 8:26-39 about Phillip and the Ethiopian regarding his belief in Jesus and the baptism as an act of identification and obedience to God.***

1. From reading this story, why do you think the Ethiopian chose to be baptized?
2. From this story alone, what could you establish as the conditions for someone to be baptized?
3. What would you establish as the motive of the Ethiopian in asking to be baptized?

### **Biblical facts about Baptism:**

❖ ***Baptism is an act of obedience to God.***

- Jesus was baptized himself: Matthew 3:13-17
    - Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented. As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."
  - Jesus told us to be baptized: Matthew 28:19-20
    - Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
4. Based on these passages, would you agree that it is an act of obedience to God to be baptized? Why or why not?

❖ ***Baptism represents our new life in Jesus as a result of forgiveness of our sins and it symbolizes Jesus death, burial, and resurrection.***

- 1 Peter 3:21
  - This water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- Colossians 2:12
  - Having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.
- Romans 6:3-4
  - Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

5. Based on these three passages, would you agree that baptism symbolizes new life?

6. What about a baptism relates to death, burial, and a new life resurrection?

❖ ***Baptism is declaring your belief in Jesus and His Lordship over your life and you are claiming a connection to the body of Christ.***

- Acts 2:38-41
  - Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call." With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.
- 1 Corinthians 12:12
  - The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

7. Do you agree that baptism is an act of claiming a connection with Jesus and the body of Christ (the Church)?

8. How does baptism serve as a part of your confession of belief that Jesus is LORD?

**“Baptism is an outward expression of an inward event.”**