



WHERE FIRE MEETS WATER
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INTRODUCTION

DEAR PARENT GUIDE

We hope this book is a helpful resource that inspires a deep understanding of the Gospel in your child's heart, as well as a joy to proclaim the salvation they have received. As Christian parents, what we want most is for our kids to embrace the truth of the Gospel and enter into a vibrant, lifelong relationship with Jesus.

Baptism can sometimes feel like the ribbon at the end of a long race—a sign that our kids have finally “taken hold” of their faith. But as we know, baptism isn't the finish line. It is merely the starting line. We are reminded of the Apostle Paul's words in Philippians:

“I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection

from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 3:10–14

We want our kids to know Christ. If you've ever banked on the success of a playdate combo because you really wanted to hang out with the other parent, you know that a genuine relationship can never be forced! Jesus is the same way. We cannot force our kids into a relationship with Him, but we can foster an environment where faith grows naturally. We do this primarily by living out our own relationship with Jesus daily and inviting our kids into God's story that we care so deeply about.

This book will be most helpful not by tossing it onto their desk to read alone, but by inviting them to learn together with you. When kids explore big ideas alongside a trusted adult who acts as a learning companion, their interest piques and a lasting bond is cemented.

Now, being a learning companion doesn't mean playing dumb or pretending you don't know anything when it comes to Jesus, life or the Bible. It simply means asking questions just as often as you give answers. Before sharing your own thoughts, try making "I wonder..." statements:

"I wonder why Jesus chose water for baptism?"

"I wonder what it felt like for Cornelius when the Holy Spirit showed up?"

Your curiosity sparks their curiosity, giving them space to share what they know and articulate their faith without feeling shut down or tested.

For a book about baptism, our primary goal is to anchor hearts in the Good News of Jesus Christ. The Gospel is the backbone behind baptism, so we want to make sure we get this part right. We want them even more excited about what Jesus has done for them than how excited they are about getting dunked in a tank!

Baptism is one of the most beautiful gifts God has given the Church, but it can also be confusing for young hearts.

"Is it a magic spell?"

"Does getting dunked save you?"

"What if I still make mistakes after I get baptized?"

This study is designed to help you navigate these big questions at home, giving you shared language, core theological anchors, and practical conversation starters. *Here are some quick tips to get started:*

CREATE SPACE

Set aside time to read each chapter together and explore the discussion questions. Make a date out of it by attaching it to a fun outing.

FOCUS ON THE RESCUE FIRST

Make sure your child understands why they need Jesus before focusing on the water. Excited hearts come from understanding the Gospel, not just the event of baptism.

DITCH THE DEADLINE

Avoid setting target dates (like Easter, summer camp, or a birthday) for their baptism. Let the Holy Spirit set the pace rather than a calendar.

DON'T FORCE THE OUTCOME

Give them freedom to process at their own speed without feeling pressured to say “yes” before they are ready.

LET THEM ARTICULATE WHAT THEY BELIEVE

Ask open-ended questions and resist the urge to finish their sentences or supply “canned” answers. Let them put their faith in their own words.

TAKE TIME TO SIMPLIFY

Break down big theological words (sacrament, righteousness, identification) into simple, everyday pictures— Jesus used visual object lessons so you can too.

CELEBRATE THE PERSON OVER THE PERFORMANCE

Remind them that baptism is about Jesus’ performance on the cross, not how perfectly they act in the tank or after baptism.

THE GREAT RESCUE

Picture this: You are strapped into the seat of a massive, wooden roller-coaster. The safety bar clicks down tight against your lap. The operator pulls the big lever, and with a loud CLANK-CLANK-CLANK, your cart starts climbing up the highest hill in the park.

You look over the edge. You're higher than the treetops. You start to feel butterflies in your stomach. You reach the very top, the cart pauses for a split second... and then you look down at the track ahead.

Only, there's a giant problem.

A chunk of the track is completely missing. Your heart stops. You can't slam on the brakes. You can't jump

out. You can't grab a hammer and fix the metal track yourself while moving 50 miles an hour.

You are completely, 100% helpless. You put yourself in this roller-coaster, ignoring the fact that it was broken and now you can't get out. There is literally nothing you can do in your own strength to save yourself from the crash. We need someone greater than ourselves, greater than the roller coaster, greater than life itself to swoop down and save us.

The Bible tells us this is what our reality is like, only with an even more terrifying twist. We actually think the broken track is a great idea for our life. That there is a way to live our life that seems right to us but it actually leads to our death.

In Ephesians 2, the apostle Paul doesn't just say we were struggling or confused. He uses a heavy word: he says we were **dead** in our sins.

Think about a statue in a park. If you walk up to a bronze statue of a soldier and whisper,

*"Hey, wake up! Eat some dinner!
Walk around!",*

does the statue move? No! Why? Because it has zero life in it. It can't choose to wake up. It can't pull itself

together. On our own, because of our sin, our hearts are spiritually dead toward God. Sin isn't just making a mistake; sin is turning our backs on the God who made us. When we sin, death is already impacting our life, not just in our future.

Like how our anger makes it worse with our parents and friends or the anxiety we feel and sense of loneliness. Yet we still keep making mistakes and choosing to be selfish and be mean at times. We are lost; like lost sheep missing our shepherd. What can we do?

In the movie Toy Story 2, there's a hilarious scene where Buzz Lightyear and his toy friends need to cross a crazy six-lane highway. To avoid being seen, they all hide under bright orange plastic traffic cones. They waddle across the asphalt, stopping every time a car zooms past. They make it across, pop off their traffic cones, high-five each other, and think,

*"Look at us! Our clever plan worked!
We saved ourselves!"*

But if you watch the scene closely, you realize something scary: as those toys were waddling, they caused a massive pileup behind them! A giant rolling cement pipe broke loose from a truck and smashed through the intersection, barely missing them. The

toys thought their little “cone-waddling” saved them, but in reality, they survived because of things totally outside of their control!

Sometimes, people treat Christianity like cone-waddling. We think,

“If I just follow the rules, go to church on Sunday, be nice to my annoying brother, and get baptized, I can march right up to God and show Him how good I am!”

But the Bible tells us a completely different truth.

In Isaiah 64:6, the Bible says that even our very best attempts to make ourselves good are like dirty, muddy rags compared to God’s holiness. There is nothing good we can do to save ourselves. So we need someone who is as Holy as God to rescue us. Before we start talking about baptism, we need to talk about the Great Rescue!

Here is the thing about water in the Bible that might surprise you: **Water is almost always a picture of God’s judgment!**

Think back to the famous story of Noah in Genesis. People often decorate the baby’s room with cute paintings of Noah’s Ark with giraffes smiling out the

windows. But the real story of the Flood was intense! Rain poured from the sky, underground springs burst open, and massive floodwaters covered the entire earth.

Was Noah saved by the water?

No!

The water was the storm of judgment! If Noah had jumped into the ocean without a boat, he would have drowned just like everyone else. Noah was not saved by the water; Noah was saved from the water by the Ark.

It was God who told Noah to build and God who closed the door of the ark shut before it was too late. The Ark took the pounding rain. The Ark took the slamming waves. The Ark took on the full force of the storm while Noah, his family, and the animals stayed safe inside.

1 Peter 3:20–21 tells us that Noah's Ark was a shadow pointing forward to the real Rescue. Jesus Christ is our Ark.

Jesus is God with us. He is the visible image of the invisible God, another way to say He is one with the Father. God didn't send someone else to rescue us; He came Himself as God the Son.

Long before being born in Bethlehem, and long before Abraham, Jesus has always existed. He is the creator of the entire universe. Jesus is eternal, all-powerful, and perfectly holy. He is full of grace and truth, holding all things together. Above all, He is the Christ—our loving Savior and King who came to give His life as a ransom for you.

When Jesus died on the cross, He didn't just suffer physical pain. He took the full, crushing storm of God's judgment against our sin. He took the broken track. He took the rolling cement pipe. On the cross, Jesus stepped into the floodwaters of death so that anyone who trusts in Him as their Savior and Lord will find refuge in Him and be brought safely to God.

This is the Gospel. The good news of Jesus Christ.

[16] "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16

When Jesus died on the cross, he gave his life for the forgiveness of sins. Jesus paid our debt in full. But Jesus didn't stay dead. In fact, on the third day, He walked right out of the tomb, defeating death once and for all. And this is something only Jesus could do, because only God has power over death.

Jesus didn't just overcome death for Himself—He defeated death to give **NEW LIFE** to you!

Resurrected life isn't just something that happens way off in the future when you go to heaven. This new life is something we can start living now because of Jesus.

"But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our [sins], made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved!"

Ephesians 2:4-5

BUT GOD.

Those are two of the greatest words in the whole Bible! God has saved us and He has saved us by His grace through the free gift of faith; believing and trusting that Jesus is our great rescuer.

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,

Ephesians 2:8

Right now, as you read this, Jesus is inviting you to look at Him. He isn't asking you to perform, to be perfect, or to "cone-waddle" your way to Him. He is

asking you to trust Him—to give him your broken life, believe that He died on the cross for your sins and rose again, and receive the grace of His resurrected life.

Do you believe that Jesus is your Savior? That He is the only way, truth and life with God? Are you ready to receive Jesus as your Lord?

If your answer is yes to all three, then the next step is baptism.

It's time to get in the water and start trusting in Jesus' power over death and He alone gives you a new life.

Baptism doesn't save you; Jesus does. So getting baptized is all about celebrating what Jesus has done and sharing that good news with others. It's stepping out in front of your family, friends, church family and people who are still lost to say:

"I was dead in my sin, but God was rich in mercy! I trust in Jesus' death for my forgiveness, and I believe He has raised me into a brand-new life with Him!"

LET'S THINK

Why are you thinking about baptism?

If salvation is 100% Jesus' work and 0% our work, what attitude should this create in our heart towards God?

MY STORY

In your own words, why is Jesus' Resurrection just as important as His death on the cross?

LET'S TALK

In the Toy Story 2 example, the toys thought their traffic cones saved them. What are some "traffic cones" (things we rely on instead of Jesus) that people use to try to save themselves today?

How is Noah's Ark a shadow of what Jesus did for us on the cross?

A NEW HEART

Imagine jumping into a swimming pool on a blistering hot summer afternoon. You splash into the cool water. The water washes off the dirt from playing outside or not taking a shower for a week even though your mom said you had to.

Now imagine climbing out of that pool and ask yourself this question:

Did that pool water change who you are on the inside?

Did the water make you kinder to your siblings? Did it take away your bad attitudes? Did it give you a new heart? Of course not! Water can wash dirt off your

skin, but it can never change your soul.

This is the key to understanding baptism. Before we can talk about the water inside the baptismal, we have to talk about what God does on the inside of you.

When you open your Bible to the Gospel of Mark chapter 1, the very first person you meet isn't Jesus. It's John the Baptist. And John was definitely not your average guy! He lived out in the dusty desert, wore clothes made of scratchy camel hair tied with a leather belt, and ate wild honey and actual grasshoppers for lunch.

However, people from all over the country hiked miles into the wilderness to hear John preach. John was called by God for a specific mission: to prepare the way for Jesus.

John stood by the Jordan River and called people to repent—to turn away from their sin and turn back to God. He offered to baptize people in the waters of the Jordan River.

Then people would confess their sins saying,

"We have broken God's law, and we need to turn back to God!"

John submerged them under the water. It was an incredible movement. But John didn't let the crowds worship him. He didn't build a giant fan club or put his name on a billboard. Instead, John looked at the crowd and declared:

"After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Mark 1:7-8

John knew his limits. He was saying,

"I am just preparing the way! My water baptism is an outward sign. But Jesus is the true Savior who is worthy and powerful enough to save you! I can dunk your body in water, but only Jesus can change your heart from the inside out!"

Our heart is at the core of who we are. Think of it as the central heartbeat of what makes up our thoughts, attitude, passions and desires. When the heart has no love for God our heart is plagued by the sin of pride, selfishness, and fear. Before we can start living for God, our heart needs to first be changed more than we realize.

Hundreds of years before John the Baptist, God

made an incredible promise through the prophet Ezekiel about our salvation. God didn't tell us how we could fix our heart ourselves with better rules; He promised He, Himself, would come and perform a spiritual heart transplant:

"And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh."

Ezekiel 36:26

Think about that! On our own, because of sin, our natural hearts are like heavy blocks of concrete — cold, hard, and unable to love God or respond to Him. You can pour gallons of water over a rock in your garden, but the rock will never grow into a flower.

How does that heart transplant actually happen? It happens through the work of the Holy Spirit. That promised new spirit to come and live inside of you is the same Holy Spirit Jesus promised to send and help us.

In Matthew 3:11, John says that Jesus will baptize you with "the Holy Spirit and fire."

Not with water, but fire! That sounds way worse than having to plug my nose when I go under the water.

Think about what fire does. Fire burns away dead brush, purifies gold by melting away the dirt, and brings warmth and light in the dark. The Holy Spirit acts like a holy fire coming to purify us.

The Holy Spirit is burning away your love for sin. When it feels awful like a bad taste in your mouth just thinking about sin. That's the Holy Spirit working inside of you. He gives us a desire to obey God, and helps us understand the truth of the Word of God.

In John 16:14–15, Jesus explained that when the Holy Spirit comes, He takes what belongs to Jesus—His truth, His love, His cross, and His resurrection—and makes it known to us.

- The Holy Spirit is like a spotlight that shines brightly on Jesus.
- He opens your eyes so you finally see that Jesus is your Savior and Lord.
- He takes Jesus' truth and makes it real to your heart, assuring you that you are forgiven and loved.

This is the inward transformation. Before you ever touch a single drop of baptismal water, you've already been baptized by the Holy Spirit. He has already given you a new heart and planted Jesus' truth deep inside your soul.

So why do we still use water for baptism if only the Holy Spirit can change our hearts?

Because God made us with physical bodies! God knows that we learn through our senses—what we can see, touch, and hear. That's why God gives us tangible signs (physical markers) to anchor His spiritual promises in our minds.

Think about it like a wedding ring.

If a married man takes off his wedding ring while working on a car or doing the dishes, does he suddenly stop being married? No way!

The ring doesn't create the reality; it announces the reality! The wedding ring says, "I belong to my spouse."

Water baptism is an outward testimony showing the reality of a person's repentance, belief in Jesus, and commitment to follow Him in obedience.

It is an outward sign of an inward transformation.

Water baptism doesn't grant you a new heart; God gives you a new heart through faith in Jesus. The Holy Spirit has prepared the way for you to declare that your water baptism celebrates how God has made you into a new creation.

LET'S THINK

*If someone asked you,
"What's the difference between water cleaning
your skin and the Holy Spirit changing your
heart?", what would you say?*

Read Ezekiel 36:26, What has God promised?

MY STORY

How does knowing that God gives you a new heart take away the pressure to try to save yourself?

LET'S TALK

Why do you think God gave us physical signs (like water and communion bread)?

What does "transformation" mean?

Why was John the Baptist sent ahead of Jesus, and what did he mean when he said Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit?

THE BEST ROBE

A lot of people, including adults, worry about the same thing after they get baptized:

“What if I fall short and mess up the whole thing?”

You lose your temper with your sibling, you lie to your parents to stay out of trouble, or you let selfish thoughts fill your mind. Does this ruin your baptism? Did it not “take”? Is God disappointed all over again? We worry that our sins will erase God’s grace and push us right back out of His family.

If you’ve ever been scared that baptism requires perfection, there is good news; the gospel, to be a

matter of fact.

I'll let you in on a not-so-secret secret about the Gospel: ***There is no end to God's grace because of Jesus.*** You may have seen your parents reach the absolute end of their patience, but you couldn't dig a hole deep enough or make a mess big enough to find the bottom of God's grace! As the apostle Paul writes:

where sin increased, grace increased all the more.

Romans 5:20b

Now, when some people hear that God has an endless supply of grace, they ask a sneaky question:

"Wait a minute... if God's grace covers every mistake, does that mean it's okay for me to just keep on sinning all I want?"

Paul addresses that question head-on in the Bible with two loud words: "OF COURSE NOT!" (Romans 6:2). And then he points us straight back to our baptism.

To understand why, you have to look at who is sitting on the throne of your heart. Paul explains it like this:

"Just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Romans 5:21

What does it mean for something to "reign"? Think of a king wearing a crown, sitting on a throne, and calling all the shots.

Before you knew Jesus, Sin sat on the throne of your heart, having you acting like a tyrant, feeding your fear and pride all the way toward death. But when your trust is in Jesus, Sin gets thrown off the throne! Grace is now ruling over your heart. And Grace doesn't give you a free pass to do bad things. Instead, the King of grace, Jesus Himself, gives you a brand-new heart with a desire to do right!

Though we may still miss the mark at times, Paul's reminder for us to look to our baptism is for our encouragement.

Your standing with God isn't based on your ability to never mess up again. It is based on the fact that you have been clothed in the perfection of Jesus Christ! The Bible uses a brilliant visual to explain what happens to you when you put your trust in Jesus. In Galatians 3:27, the apostle Paul writes:

“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”

Grace from Jesus is all about us being clothed in His robes of righteousness. Think about Jesus’ famous story of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15).

A young son wants to run off to wild country. He wants his father’s wealth but doesn’t want a life with his father. So he leaves his good father and immediately squanders his inheritance. He ends up in a muddy pig pen, starving, smelly, and dressed in ripped, filthy rags. He decides to walk home, expecting his father to be furious and force him to work like a hired servant.

But what does his father do when he sees him coming? The father runs to him, throws his arms around him, and calls to the servants:

“Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet!”

Luke 15:22

The father didn’t stand at the end of the driveway with a garden hose saying, “Go scrub yourself clean in the river, and then maybe I’ll let you in the house!” No! In one instant, the son went from rags to riches.

The dirty, smelly rags of his past were completely covered by the royal, spotless robe of his father's family. Jesus told this story so that we would see the truth of His promise in the Book of Isaiah.

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness

Isaiah 61:10a

God, our Father, does not look at us and see our old rags of sin and shame. When Jesus reigns in us, The Father sees the perfection of His Son and treats us as He treats Him. But how?

When Jesus went down into the Jordan River to be baptized by John, He hadn't preached a single public sermon yet. He hadn't performed any miracles, healed any sick people, or gathered His twelve disciples.

Yet, as He came up out of the water, God the Father opened the heavens and declared:

"You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

Mark 1:11

Notice the order! God declared His love and delight over Jesus before Jesus accomplished any work on the cross.

Because you are clothed in Christ, God speaks that exact same declaration over you! Even before your water baptism, you are beloved because of who Jesus is. You belong to him because of what Jesus has done for you and not how flawlessly you perform. And our baptism is meant to help us see how forever this is.

On the days when you stumble and you don't feel like God could possibly love you as much as The Father loves His Son, you just remind yourself that ***faith is built on facts, not feelings.***

Emotions go up and down like a roller coaster. Some mornings you wake up feeling brave and happy; other days you wake up tired, grumpy, or discouraged. But standing before God doesn't depend on how "holy" you feel on any given morning. It depends on God's solid, unbreakable promise!

Our feelings don't understand what the word "baptism" actually means. It comes from an Ancient Greek word, "***baptizo***". This word was used by clothes makers when dipping fabric into dye and cooks when they were making pickles. Baptizo

means to plunge something under the surface so completely that it undergoes a total transformation, becoming infused and inseparable from whatever it is dipped into.

Imagine taking a plain white cloth and plunging it into a bucket of red dye. The dye doesn't just sit on top like paint. And the cloth doesn't just get wet; it undergoes a total change. The dye soaks into every single fiber until the two become completely inseparable. The fabric is permanently transformed! That is the most important part of what is happening in your baptism. Your identity is being fully infused with Christ. Like the dye, through His blood shed on the cross, your identity is changed forever, and you are inseparable from Him!

Water baptism is the physical, visual picture of that unchangeable fact. It's an undeniable marker in your life that you can look back on whenever you doubt your feelings.

Pastor and author Tim Chester explains it like this:

*"Standing before God depends on His promise, not internal emotions... **I know I have His promise because there was a day I was wet.**"*

When you get baptized, it is an external, real-world

fact. God commands for us to be baptized when we receive Jesus as Christ. He wants us to have this visible event to connect us to the transformation and baptism He has done inside of us. You can't always trust a shifting feeling in your stomach, but you can always look back at your baptism as a historical marker that says:

"God made a covenant promise to me, and I was in that water!"

Hundreds of years ago, the great church reformer Martin Luther had a special way of dealing with these same struggles.

When Luther struggled and felt weak in his guilt and shame, He would knock everything off his desk so he could see the carving he made across the top; which read:

"Baptizatus sum!"

(Latin for: "I am baptized!")

Whenever doubt, guilt, or fear crept into his heart, Luther would point to the words on his desk and shout, ***"I am baptized!"***

Luther knew that his salvation didn't depend on whether he felt saved or not. His baptism was God's physical mark and covenant seal over his life. It was

proof that God had made an official promise to him—and God never breaks His promises.

In the ancient world, kings pressed their heavy gold signet rings into soft, warm wax to seal important royal declarations. That wax seal meant:

"This belongs to the King. It is official, and no enemy can break it."

Baptism is God setting His visible seal on you. The promise comes from the gift of the Holy Spirit who has made an internal seal on your heart.

*In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,
14who is the guaranteed of our inheritance*

Ephesians 1:13-14

The Holy Spirit inside you is God's personal down payment—His unbreakable promise that He will never leave you, never abandon you, and will bring you all the way home to heaven.

When you stumble, you don't give up in despair. You look back at your baptism, remember the Holy Spirit's seal on your heart, and say:

"My sins were washed clean by Jesus! He has given me a resurrection life. God traded my filthy rags for His royal robe, made me into a new creation, I am beloved because of Jesus, marked with His Holy Spirit, and I belong to Him forever!"

LET'S THINK

Why does God call you beloved, even though you have made mistakes against God?

How does knowing that you are "clothed in Christ" change the way you want to live your life?

WORSHIP LAB

Items Needed:

- Drop cloth or T-shirt
- Large bucket or bin
- Liquid dye
- Rubber gloves
- Salt
- Stainless steel spoon

Step 1:

Fill bucket with hot water

Step 2:

Wearing rubber gloves, add liquid dye and add a little salt if dyeing cotton

Step 3:

Using a stainless steel spoon immerse cloth in dye bath

"The word baptism in Greek means to immerse, like going fully underwater. But it also means to undergo change or to be infused with something, permanently."

Step 4:

Keep the item in the dye for 5 to 15 minutes, stirring the whole time. Then remove cloth from the dye bath. Rinse in running water, starting with warm water and then making it cooler, until it runs clear. (You can also rinse the fabric in the washing machine's rinse cycle.) Wash out bucket, bin, or sink immediately.

Step 5:

Wash item with mild detergent on the cold cycle, then dry.

"Like the cloth is permanently changed, so are we changed, by the Holy Spirit who infuses us or you could say baptizes us with Christ, forever."

LET'S TALK

If the Prodigal Son doesn't deserve "the best robe", then why is he clothed in them?

Read Acts 2:37-39: What does the Bible call us to do with our faith in Jesus?

IN THE NAME

So, you believe in Jesus. You've received Him as your Lord and Savior. You know your sins are forgiven, and God's Word promises that you are sealed with the Holy Spirit forever. You belong to God, and nothing can change that!

So that brings up a huge, honest question:

"If I have already been baptized through fire by the Holy Spirit... why do I still need to get baptized in water?"

The thief on the cross was not baptized, yet we know he is now in heaven because Jesus promised the thief he would be with Him. So if water baptism doesn't

save, why do it?

Being saved already doesn't make water baptism unnecessary. It's the exact reason you get water baptized! The water is the celebration of the fire for God that is already inside you. In the bible, when Peter is sharing the gospel with Cornelius and his family, the Holy Spirit falls on them and they are baptized by fire right then and there! Listen to how Peter responds:

Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have."

Acts 10:47

A very famous theologian Charles Spurgeon says it like this:

You do not get baptized in order to become a child of God, but because you are already a child of God. The fire of the Spirit gives the life; the water proclaims the life."

If we have something to celebrate, it means we have something to share. But what?

Water baptism is all about identification.

"Identification" is a big word that simply means showing to whom we belong.

Cornelius' family who received Jesus as their Savior, were known as gentiles and this amazed others because it showed that all who were saved by Jesus, whether they were from another nation, was now a child of God. They now belong to God's Family.

When a basketball player puts on their team jersey, the jersey doesn't make them a basketball player; they were already on the team! But putting on the jersey shows the entire crowd who they belong to. When Lionel Messi puts on his soccer jersey, does that instantly make him a world-class professional soccer player? Of course not! But it does remind him who he is and who he is playing for.

Water baptism is like putting on your Jesus jersey. It announces whose team we are on. And it reminds us of the banner (whose name) we live under.

When you step into the water, your baptism will declare the Name of the One you belong to. But if you listen closely, you'll notice it's not just one name—it's Three!

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..."

Matthew 28:19

Notice that Jesus said ***“in the name”*** (singular), not “names” (plural). That is because our God is One God in Three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. That is because each Person of the Triune God worked together for your rescue.

The love the Father has for you, sent His Son.

The Son accomplished your rescue on the cross and empty tomb.

Holy Spirit gives you a new heart and seals you in all of God’s promises.

When you are immersed in the water, you are being permanently identified with the entire Trinity. You are being “soaked” in the love of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the presence of the Holy Spirit. Going under the water, you leave behind your old identity and come back up marked by the name of God Himself!

Because we are given a new identity in Christ, getting baptized displays that change like a moving picture of the gospel. Our new identity isn’t like drawing a random card in the “Guess Who?” game and saying, “I guess this is who I am now!” ***Our identity in Christ means our life looks like Jesus’ life—including our baptism!***

Have you ever thought about why baptism looks the way it does, with someone going fully under the water and then rising back up gasping for breath? Look at how the apostle Paul breaks this down in Romans 6:3–4 and see if you can see the similar actions happening in a baptism:

“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”

Let’s break it all down:

1. Going UNDER the Water (*Burial & Cleansing*)

When you lean back and go down under the water, you are visually telling everyone: “I am identifying with Jesus in His death!” Going under the water represents two big truths:

Burial: Your old, spiritually dead life—the life trapped in sin, trying to earn God’s love—is officially dead and buried with Christ in the grave.

Washing: Just as water cleans dirt off your body, going under the water symbolizes

that your sins have been completely washed away by the blood of Jesus.

2. *RISING out of the Water*

(Resurrection & New Life)

You don't stay under the water (thank goodness!). Your pastor brings you right back up out of the water into the open air.

When you burst up out of the water, everyone in the church claps and cheers! Why? Because coming up out of the water represents Jesus' Resurrection!

You are visually shouting:

"Jesus didn't stay in the tomb. He has defeated death! I have been raised with Christ! I am stepping into a brand-new, resurrected life that starts right now!"

When we have faith in Jesus, we are trusting over our lives to His death and resurrection; that He has paid for our sins and if He has power over death then He can give us new life beyond the grave as well.

When you come up out of the water, your story with Jesus isn't over—it's just beginning! In this new life, God is actively at work changing you day by day,

making you more and more into the image of Jesus (Romans 8:29).

Baptism is the very first step in this new life of discipleship for three huge reasons:

Obedience: Jesus explicitly commanded all His followers to be baptized (Matthew 28:19). When you step into the water, you are taking your first big public step of obeying your King.

Surrender & Identification: You are surrendering your whole life so that your entire identity belongs to Jesus. As the apostle Paul wrote in Galatians 2:20:

"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me."

Power to Please God: Trying to live a good life in your own human strength is impossible. But because the resurrected Jesus now lives inside you through the Holy Spirit, you finally have the real power to live a life that pleases God!

Someone asks you,

"How are you saved by Jesus?"

When you get baptized, you are showing them with your whole body.

You are telling your family, your church, friends and even those lost in need of the gospel:

"I am not ashamed! I died with Jesus, I was buried with Jesus, and now I am alive with Jesus forever because JESUS LIVES!"

You don't get baptized to show off how great you are. **You get baptized to show how great and amazing Jesus is!**

LET'S THINK

How does the picture of “putting on a team jersey” help you understand why we get baptized?

What does it mean to identify with Jesus?

MY STORY

What is holding you back from getting baptized?

What has Jesus done for you? How has He saved you?

LET'S TALK

What does identifying with Jesus mean?

Now that we have read through this entire book, what is God showing you about your own faith, trusting Jesus, and taking the step of baptism?

FAQ

ALL THE QUESTIONS

DO I HAVE TO GET BAPTIZED TO GO TO HEAVEN?

Answer: No. Water baptism does not save your soul or buy your ticket to heaven—only Jesus' death on the cross and His resurrection can save you! Salvation is a free gift received by faith. You get baptized not to get saved, but because you are already saved and want to celebrate with your King.

Bible Says: "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast." Ephesians 2:8–9

WHY SHOULD I GET BAPTIZED?

Answer: Getting baptized isn't what saves you—salvation is a gift God gives you through faith! But baptism is still a huge, exciting step in your faith journey. Here are three big reasons why you should take the plunge:

It is a visible sign of an invisible grace:

Baptism is like a living picture of what God has already done: cleansing your heart and giving you a brand-new life.

The Lord commanded it: Jesus

commanded all of His followers to be baptized. Taking this step is a holy act of obedience that honors Him as your Lord.

It is your official public announcement:

Baptism is about telling everyone the good news of Jesus. It tells your family, your church, and the world: "I am not ashamed. I belong to Jesus!"

You don't get baptized to become a Christian; you get baptized because you already are one!

Bible Says "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins..." Acts 2:38

WHAT ABOUT IN THE BIBLE WHERE IT SAYS THAT BAPTISM SAVES?

Answer: That can sound confusing at first! In 1 Peter 3:21, Peter actually writes that “baptism now saves you.” But if you read the very next words, he explains what he means so we don’t get mixed up:

It’s not the water: Peter says, “not as a removal of dirt from the body.” Water only washes your skin—it can’t wash away sin.

It’s about trusting the Lord: Peter explains that baptism is “an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Christ.”

A good conscience is for our benefit. When we get baptized, we see the evidence of our faith because we are obeying and following the Lord. The water itself doesn’t save us. What Christ did on the cross and in His resurrection does! Getting baptized is a moment when we see our trust in action.

Bible Says: “Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ...” 1 Peter 3:21

HOW DO I PUT MY FAITH IN JESUS?

Answer: *If you are asking this question, God is already at work in your heart! Putting your faith in Jesus isn't about saying magic words or trying to feel "sincere enough." It starts with simple honesty: admitting, "I have sinned against God, and I need Him to rescue me."*

From there, faith means placing all your weight on Jesus as your Savior—just like sitting down and trusting a chair to hold you up. At some point, we have to stop holding ourselves up and let Jesus carry us. Salvation isn't about how strong your faith is, but how strong Jesus is! Are you ready to receive Jesus' gift of salvation and trust Him with your life?

Start talking about it with Jesus. Pray asking for forgiveness and thanking Him for His grace over your life.

Bible Says: *"If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."*

Romans 10:9

WHAT IF I DON'T REMEMBER WHEN I FIRST TRUSTED JESUS?

Answer: You don't need a timestamp on a calendar to belong to Jesus! True assurance doesn't come from our ability to remember, but from Christ Himself. The focus is not on looking inward, but looking upward. Baptism is about saying, "I look to Jesus for my salvation alone!"

Bible Says: "Let us run with endurance the race set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith." Hebrews 12:2

IS BAPTISM SOMETHING I DO FOR GOD, OR SOMETHING GOD DOES FOR ME?

Answer: Both! First, it is God showing you a physical picture of His promise—washing your sins clean and marking you with His Triune name (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). Second, it is your response of loving obedience to King Jesus, who commanded all His followers to be baptized.

Bible Says: He saved us, not by the righteous deeds we had done, but according to His mercy, through the washing of new birth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. — Titus 3:5

DOES GETTING BAPTIZED MEAN MY SALVATION IS COMPLETE?

Answer: *In one way, yes. And in another way, no! On the cross, Jesus completely paid for your sin. You don't need baptism to add anything to His finished work. You have been saved by grace alone. But baptism isn't the finish line of your faith; it's the starting line!*

While your rescue is 100% complete in Christ, your journey of following Him is just getting started. Jesus has saved you from sin, and now He is actively saving and shaping you day by day to become more like Him. This is called sanctification: being molded into the character of Christ. Baptism points to the official ruling that you are a child of God in Jesus—and marks the beginning of a lifelong adventure with Him as your saving King!

Bible Says: *"And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ." Philippians 1:6*

WHAT IS A "SACRAMENT"?

Answer: A "sacrament" is a holy practice given directly to us by the Lord. It isn't a human tradition or something invented by a church. It is a sacred moment where our physical life collides with God's grace! A sacrament must be created, instituted, commanded, and practiced directly by the Lord. Because those requirements are so specific, there are only two practices in the entire Bible that qualify as sacraments: Baptism and Communion.

Baptism: This is the starting line. It is performed once to mark the beginning of your new life, publicly declaring that you belong to God's family.

Communion (The Lord's Supper): This is the ongoing feast. It is practiced regularly to help us remember the Lord's sacrifice, reset our hearts, and celebrate His grace together as His church.

While other church activities like singing, praying, and serving are wonderful, only Baptism and Communion were given as these unique, physical meeting points with the Lord's grace!

Bible Says: "God made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ..." Ephesians 1:9

IF I HAVE THE HOLY SPIRIT, WHY DO I NEED WATER TOO?

Answer: Fire baptism happens on the inside—it's God changing your heart, burning away sin, and sealing you forever. Water baptism happens on the outside—it's the public announcement and party where you show everyone what God did on the inside!

Bible Says: "Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" Acts 10:47

WHY GET SOAKED IN WATER INSTEAD OF JUST PRAY?

Answer: Because God made us physical! You can't touch the Holy Spirit sealing your soul, and you can't see your sins being washed away. But you can feel the water, hear your church cheering, see the splash, and walk away dripping wet! Water baptism gives your physical body a real moment where we can touch God's work in our life.

Bible Says: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands..." 1 John 1:1

I WAS BAPTIZED AS A BABY, DO I GET BAPTIZED AGAIN?

Answer: *This is one of the most important questions in church history! Famous pastor Martin Luther was baptized as a baby. He carved the words "I am baptized!" into his wooden desk. He wanted to remind himself that baptism is first and foremost about God's faithful promise, not how strong our feelings are. Because God's promise is sacred, we never treat baptism like something we just redo over and over.*

At the same time, where and why you were baptized matters. For example, being baptized in a religion with different teachings than by faith alone carries a misunderstanding about Baptism. Because every family's story is unique, if you were baptized as a baby, let's sit down with your parents and your pastor! Together, we can look at your specific story, honor God's work in your life, and pray through whether believer's immersion is the right next step for you.

Bible Says: *"There is one body and one Spirit... one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all..." Ephesians 4:4–6*

WHAT IF I STILL SIN AFTER I GET BAPTIZED? DO I NEED TO GET BAPTIZED AGAIN?

Answer: Nope! Baptism isn't a promise that you will be 100% perfect. You get baptized once because Jesus died and rose again once. When you make mistakes after baptism, you don't need more water—you just talk to Jesus, ask for forgiveness, and keep walking with Him!

Bible Says: "For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified." Hebrews 10:14

AM I OLD ENOUGH OR A TEST I HAVE TO PASS FIRST?

Answer: God doesn't have an age limit or a written exam for baptism! You don't need to know every theological word in the dictionary or be an adult to follow Jesus. If you understand that you are a sinner, trust that Jesus died and rose again to save you, and want to follow Him as Lord, you are ready!

Bible Says: "Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity." 1 Timothy 4:12

WHO CAME UP WITH BAPTISM?

Answer: God did! Baptism was God's idea from the very beginning.

Long before Jesus came and died on the Cross, God gave His people instructions in the Old Testament for ceremonial washings. These cleansings were God's visual aid to teach His people that sin makes us spiritually dirty and that we need God to wash us clean.

Later, God sent John the Baptist to call people to turn back to Him through baptism. Finally, Jesus took these ancient washings and made baptism the official sign for all His followers! God designed baptism to be a powerful picture of how He washes away our sin and welcomes us into His family.

Bible Says: "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses..."
Ezekiel 36:25

CAN'T I JUST BAPTIZE MYSELF?

Answer: *Baptism is part of discipleship, something Jesus told us to do together. You may notice it's someone else who lowers you into the water and raise you back up! That is on purpose. Salvation is not something you accomplish by your own effort. It is something God does for you. Being baptized by your pastor or church leaders is a physical reminder that Jesus rescued you when you couldn't rescue yourself.*

Bible Says: *"when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."* Acts 8:12

WHAT IF MY PARENTS DON'T GO TO CHURCH?

Answer: *While it's wonderful when parents share your faith, your relationship with Jesus is personal between you and Him. Talk to your pastor or church leaders so they can encourage you, answer your questions, and support you along the way.*

Bible Says: *"Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." — 1 John 4:11*

WHAT IF MY FRIENDS WILL THINK I'M WEIRD?

Answer: *Standing up with Jesus takes courage! Getting baptized shows everyone that you aren't ashamed of Jesus as King over your life. Remember, Jesus was mocked and mistreated as He gave His life for you. You don't need to be afraid because He is with you. It's actually a powerful way to show your friends how much Jesus means to you.*

Bible Says: *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes."* Romans 1:16

WHAT SHOULD I WEAR IN THE BAPTISM WATER?

Answer: *At Kingship, we recommend that you wear clothes that stay modest and comfortable when wet—usually dark shorts and a t-shirt. Just make sure to bring a fresh set of dry clothes and a towel for afterward!*

Bible Says: *"For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ."* Galatians 3:27

WHAT IF I'M TERRIFIED OF GOING UNDERWATER?

Answer: *It's totally normal to be scared. Remember, if Jesus is more powerful than death then He's totally got you in all situations. You're not getting baptized alone, Jesus is with you. You also have your family, friends, and church cheering you on. The good news is your pastor remembers what it was like to be nervous and will hold you securely the entire time.*

Bible Says: *"Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you."* Isaiah 41:10

WILL I HAVE TO GIVE A SPEECH?

Answer: *At Kingship, we ask others to talk and share all about you and your relationship with Jesus. It's a very cool moment to hear what other people see in you. However, we still want to hear from you and ask you only one question: "Who is Jesus and what has He done for you?"*

Bible Says: *"Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven."* — Matthew 10:32

WHAT IF WATER GETS UP MY NOSE OR IN MY EYES?

Answer: You can plug your nose with your hand right before you lean back! The pastor will help walk you through exactly what will happen. These fears are the perfect thing to talk to Jesus about and find peace in Him.

Bible Says: “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you.” — Isaiah 43:2

WHAT IF I DON'T FEEL ANY DIFFERENT WHEN I COME OUT OF THE WATER?

Answer: Remember, Facts over feelings! Sometimes people feel a sudden flood of joy, and other times they just feel dripping wet and cold—and both are completely fine! Your baptism is valid because of the fact of what Jesus did on the cross, not because of how emotional you feel in the moment.

Bible Says: “For we walk by faith, not by sight [or by feelings]!” 2 Corinthians 5:7

WHAT IF I GET SUPER NERVOUS AND MESS UP IN FRONT OF EVERYONE?

Answer: *Everyone in the church knows you're taking a big, brave step, and nobody expects perfection! If you trip, forget a word, or sneeze in the water, everyone will still be clapping and cheering. God's power shines brightest through our nervous moments!*

Bible Says: *"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."*
2 Corinthians 12:9

HAVE PEOPLE BEEN GETTING BAPTIZED FOR A LONG TIME?

Answer: Oh yeah! Christians have been talking, writing, and discussing baptism for over 2,000 years. If you hopped into a time machine and visited different centuries, here is what four famous “church guys” across history would say:

Augustine (354–430 AD) — *The Early Church*
“Baptism is a visible sign of an invisible grace.”

(Translation: The water is something you can see on the outside, showing the real work God did on the inside!)

Martin Luther (1483–1546) — *The Reformation*
“Baptism is not a work that we offer to God, but a treasure He gives to us.”

(Translation: You aren’t doing God a favor by getting baptized—He is giving you a gift!)

Thomas Watson (1620–1686) — *The Puritans*
“Water in baptism washes the body, but only the blood of Christ washes the soul.”

(Translation: Getting wet in a tank doesn’t save you. Only Jesus can clean your heart.)

Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899–1981) — *The 1900s*
“As the engagement ring on the finger speaks, so baptism speaks to those who are baptized... giving them an assurance.”

(Translation: Baptism is like an engagement ring! It doesn’t make the love happen, but it’s a visible promise reminding you that you belong to Him.)

BELIEF

KINGSHIP BAPTISM STATEMENT

At Kingship Church we believe baptism is a sacrament - created, instituted, practiced, and commanded by God for His disciples to point towards our spiritual baptism in the Holy Spirit. By the Holy Spirit, those who put their sincere faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord, are sealed and identified with Christ (Ephesians 1:13). It is in our identification with Jesus' death that we are made right with God the Father (2 Timothy 2:19), and in His physical resurrection that we find new life, secured as God's people (Ephesians 4:30, Romans 6:3-5).

From the demonstration of God's grace as author of our faith (Hebrews 12:2, Philippians 1:6) and the coinciding gift of the Holy Spirit from which alone can grant us the power to profess Jesus as Lord (1 Corinthians 12:3), we respond in obedience through the sacrament of baptism.

Although we believe water baptism is not necessary for one's salvation nor the receiving of any further gift from God, we acknowledge the importance and significance of this outward display of an internal transformation brought about by the Holy Spirit.

By the individual disciple responding in obedience, this water baptism is a testimony to what has occurred, proclaiming Jesus' saving work in His death and resurrection, and symbolizing our identification with Christ.

At Kingship Church our preferred method of water baptism is full immersion. This speaks to the word's full meaning. Baptizo, to baptize, does not only mean to be "fully immersed" in the literal sense, but also reflects how one who is immersed in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection is forever changed (Galatians 3:27).

The highest value is that any baptism is a sign of the believer's identification with Christ.