

What Does It Mean To Be A Christian?

Man was created to enjoy fellowship with God. We were created to love and be loved by God. However, sin ruined this purpose of God and man. Adam transgressed and through his transgression, the whole human race was alienated from the Lord.

Rom. 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

A. What's the problem?

1. Man has a natural desire to be self-centered and to ignore God's principles for living.

Prov. 21:2 Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts.

Phil. 2:21 For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.

"Look out for Number One!" "Do your own thing!"

"If it feels good, do it!" "It's my life, I'll do what I please!"

The Bible calls this attitude sin.

Isaiah 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

1 John 1:18 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Sin makes it impossible for us to relate to God. It causes us to fear God, to try in some way to hide from Him, and to live our lives outside of His will.

2. The result of sin is separation from God.

Isa. 59:2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

Rom. 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

Rom. 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life Jesus Christ our Lord.

The penalty for sin is death (separation from God). There is a great chasm that separates us from God, and nothing on this earth can bridge the gap between God and man.

When our relationship to God is not right, it causes problems in every area of life: marriage, career relationships, finances, emotions, etc.

3. When people have problems, they often try many different ways of coping before acknowledging

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their need of God.

Prov. 16:25 There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Even when we know that our deepest need is for God, we will often try wrong ways to get to know Him:

“My mother or dad was a Christian.”

“It doesn’t matter what you believe, just be sincere.”

“I’ll clean up my act.”

“I’ll work real hard at being good and earn it.”

“I’ll be religious and go to church.”

“All religions lead to God, I just need to find one I’m comfortable with.”

B. What’s the solution?

1. The penalty for sin must be paid before your relationship to God can be restored.

Heb. 10:11-12 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God.

Rom. 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

God himself came to earth as a human being in order to bring us back into a right relationship with Himself. If any other way would have worked, Jesus Christ would not have had to come. The way to God is a person, and that person is Jesus Christ, who is God in the flesh

2. Jesus has already taken care of your sin debt when He died on the cross.

God did this for us because He loves us and wants us to know Him.

Rom. 5:8 But God commandeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

I Pet. 3:18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit.

It is Christ who bridges the gap between God and man. Jesus paid the penalty for our sin in full, and God’s Justice was completely satisfied. The proof that God was pleased with what Jesus did is the fact that Jesus rose from the dead. Death itself was defeated.

I Cor. 15:3-8 For I delivered unto you first all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five

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hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto the present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen James; the of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

God has done all that is necessary to rescue us from our sin and from eternal separation from Him. He took the initiative. He loved us first. Now he waits for each of us to personally accept what he has done for us to personally accept what He has done for us; to put our complete trust in His provision for our salvation.

C. What does God want me to do?

1. Confess that I am a sinner.

Rom. 3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one

Rom. 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

2. Believe that Jesus died to pay for my sins, and that he rose again, and that He is alive.

Rom. 10:9-10 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

3. Accept by faith God's gift of salvation.

Eph. 2:8-9 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God not of works, lest any man should boast.

Our relationship to God is not restored by anything we do, but on the basis of what Jesus has already done for us!

The Importance of Being Baptized

A. Why should I be baptized?

1. To follow Christ's example.

Mark 1:9 And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.

Jesus wasn't baptized because He was a sinner but because He was submitting to the Father. It was an

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outward symbol of His obedience to God's plan for our salvation through His death and resurrection.

2. Because Christ command it.

Matt. 28:19-20 Go ye therefore and teach all nation, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

3. It demonstrates the reality of my faith.

Acts 18: And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.

4. It unites me with a local church.

Acts 2:41, 47 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.... And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

B. What is the meaning of baptism?

1. It illustrates Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

1 Cor. 15:3-4 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

Col. 2:12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

Rom. 6:4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

2. It illustrates my union with the body of Christ.

1 Cor. 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

3. It illustrates my walk as a Christian.

2 Cor. 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Rom. 6:4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

C. Why baptism by immersion?

1. Because Christ was baptized that way.

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Matt. 3:16 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:

2. Every baptism in the Bible was by immersion.

Acts 8:38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

3. The word “baptize” means to immerse in water. “Baptize” comes for the Greek word Baptizo which means “to dip or immerse, to plunge or sink into.”

4. It best symbolizes a death, burial, and resurrection.

D. Who should be baptized?

Every person who has believed in Jesus Christ.

Acts 2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

The Bible teaches very clearly that each individual must make their own decision to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. That decision cannot be made by someone else. At Bannister Road Baptist Church we are committed to doing everything according to Scripture, therefore, we wait until children are old enough to make their own decision to receive Christ as their Savior. We also make sure that they understand the true meaning of baptism before we baptize them.

At Bannister Road Baptist Church, baptism is a membership requirement. Every member needs to have been baptized in a church of like faith, and practice. By “like faith” we mean similar doctrine, and by “like practice” we mean the way we express our beliefs. For example: Bannister Road Baptist Church does not believe that sprinkling is the proper method of baptism. Nor do we believe that one must be baptized to be saved. Such belief would require the person seeking membership to submit to biblical baptism.

E. When should I be baptized and other questions? As soon as you have put your trust in Jesus Christ.

Acts 2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

What should be worn? Clothing should be worn that you don't mind getting wet. Baptismal robes are provided to be worn over your clothing. Bring the clothes you will change into to be baptized, a towel, and a plastic bag for your wet clothes.

Will you have to say anything? You will be introduced by name and will be asked, “Has there been a time in your life when you have trusted Christ as your personal Savior?” This is the only word you need to say

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is: "Yes!"

The Meaning of the Lord's Supper

A. What is the Lord's Supper?

1 Cor. 11:23-26 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

1. It is a command given to the local church (vs. 23)
2. It is a way to remember (vs. 24)
3. It is a symbol (vs. 25)
4. It is a statement of faith (vs. 26)

B. Who should take the Lord's Supper?

1. Only those who are already believers
2. Only those believers who are in fellowship with God

1 Cor. 11:29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

C. How do I prepare myself for the Lord's Supper?

1. Self-examination (I Cor 11:27-28)

1 Cor. 11:27-28 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

2. Recommitment

Rom. 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

3. Confessing my sins | John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

4. Restoring relationships

Matt. 5:23-24 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath

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ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

D. When and how often do we observe the Lord's Supper?

Jesus never said when or how often believers should observe the Lord's Supper. He instituted it on the night before His death. At Bannister Road Baptist Church the Lord's Supper (or Communion) is observed at least bi-monthly.