



1. What if I don't want to get wet?

This really is a stumbling block for people when it comes to baptism, so if that includes you, just know that you are not alone. People don't want to get wet.

Or they don't like the way they look wet: It messes up their hair, their mascara runs, their clothes cling, their contacts may pop out... the list goes on and on.

I think the ideal baptism for those who fall into this camp would be a light mist – like a perfume bottle spritz that they could walk through quickly.

Unfortunately, there is no way around this one. The primary symbol for baptism is water. The word baptize means to submerge in water. You are going to get wet.

But you can wear whatever you want – whatever would make you feel comfortable – and then you can make a beeline to change the minute you're done.

But in all seriousness, we cannot and should not dodge this for the sake of appearance.

Think about how trivial it is to allow something as simple as water to stand in the way of doing what Jesus asks of you once you've crossed the line of faith.

He died on the cross for you. He took nails in his hands, nails in his feet, spikes in the head, a lance in the side. He hung in absolute agony dying the worst death humankind has ever invented.

And He did this for you.

So, in gratitude, in recognition, in acknowledgment, aren't you willing to get a little wet just for a few minutes?

I hope so.



2. What if my family can't come or I want to be baptized with my family?

Over the nearly 30 years that I have been pastor of this church, I have seen people miss baptism opportunity after baptism opportunity because they want to make sure they have all their family members present: moms, dads, uncles, aunts, cousins, friends.

While I can appreciate wanting to have those who love you watch you make this public declaration for Jesus, it's no reason to wait. In fact, it really is missing the point.

Baptism is not a photo op. It's not a family event. You get baptized for an audience of One. It's for God, and God alone. He's the only Person you really need to be there. And He is going to be there.

Related to this are those who want their immediate family to be baptized together – whether that's just with their spouse or their kids as well.

This is a sweet idea to be sure. And we do have many spouses and families who have been baptized together here at Meck.

But again, that's not a reason to wait. Particularly if you're waiting for your younger kids to be old enough for baptism, or if you are waiting for your spouse to make a spiritual decision that you've already made.

Because, again, baptism isn't about your family. It isn't about your children or your spouse.

It's about you and God.

And who knows? Maybe the key to seeing those you love the most cross the line of faith is your courage to stand up and be counted first.



BAPTISM

The Top 10 Questions Answered

3. What if I don't have my act together yet?

I know many people (and you may be one of them) who say, "Once I get my act together, then I'll get baptized."

But that's getting it all wrong.

You don't need to have your act together. That's the whole point. This is about starting your journey; it's about beginning your relationship with Jesus.

If everybody waited until they got their act together to get baptized, nobody would ever get baptized.

This isn't about reaching a certain spiritual level – it's about the decision you've made to begin.

It's a reflection of the life you are wanting to live, not the one you HAVE lived, or are living now.

People who get baptized are people who have miles to go in terms of understanding all the ins and outs of Christian faith – they still have questions they can't answer.

They have miles to go in applying their faith to their marriages, their jobs, their finances, their habits – but that doesn't matter.

All that matters is that you've made the decision to cross the line of faith – from unbelief to belief – and are ready to make this outward declaration of an inward change that has taken place in your life.

It's letting the world know that you're going to try, from this point forward, to be more like Jesus with each passing year.



BAPTISM

The Top 10 Questions Answered

4. What if I'm not sure I want to join this church?

You may have just prayed the prayer to cross the line of faith. You may have just made the decision to enter into a relationship with Jesus. Or maybe you made this decision weeks, months or even years ago, but you never decided to be baptized.

But you may also be thinking, I want to go public for Jesus, but I'm not sure yet that Meck is where I want to call my church home. I'm still exploring this place and where I fit in here.

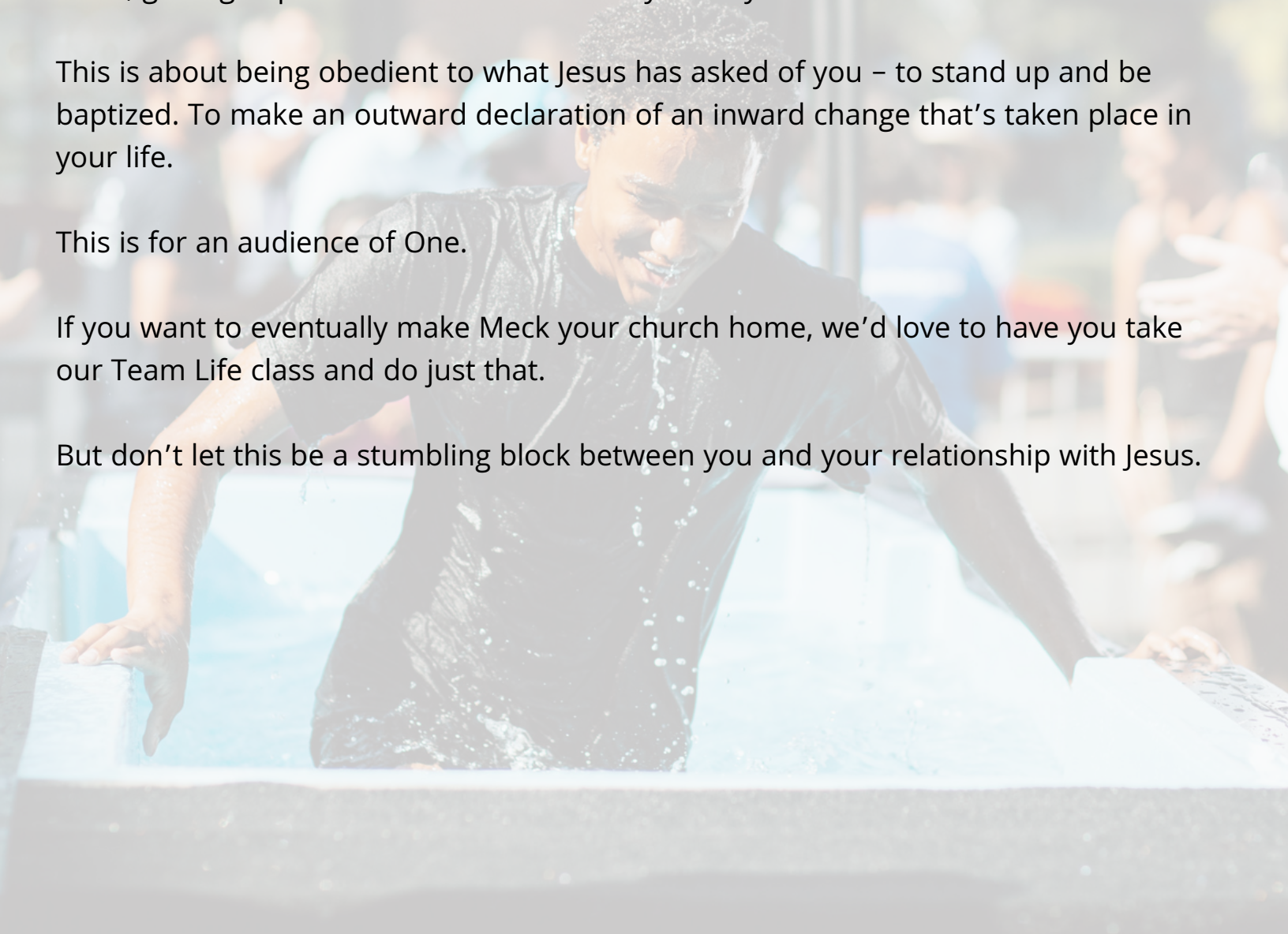
That is totally allowed here! While baptism is a requirement to become a member of Meck, getting baptized doesn't automatically force you to become a member.

This is about being obedient to what Jesus has asked of you – to stand up and be baptized. To make an outward declaration of an inward change that's taken place in your life.

This is for an audience of One.

If you want to eventually make Meck your church home, we'd love to have you take our Team Life class and do just that.

But don't let this be a stumbling block between you and your relationship with Jesus.





BAPTISM

The Top 10 Questions Answered

5. What if I don't know what to expect?

It is very common for people to fear the unknown. It can be difficult to not know what will happen when you get baptized, how it will happen for you to be baptized, or what's involved in the act of baptism.

During the service, we'll have a time when everyone who is ready to be baptized will stand up and head outside. Those who already registered for the baptism service ahead of time will come dressed and ready to go because we'll send out an email with all of the suggested clothing. But even if you decide to wait until the last moment, we'll be ready for you. We'll have clothing and underwear in sizes small to three XL. We've got changing areas prepared. We have combs and hair ties, bags to put your clothing in, and towels for when you get out of the water.

Everyone coming to get baptized will line up outside. When enough time has passed for the line to form and people to get changed, I will head outside to perform the baptisms. I'll be wearing a white robe, which pastors have worn for centuries for baptism symbolizing the forgiveness of sins and the start of a new life in Christ.

When it's your turn, you'll climb the stairs to get into the baptistry, take a seat on the bench, and I'll grab your hand. I'll ask you whether it's your desire to be baptized. You'll answer "Yes", and then I'll say, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

I'll dip you back under the water, hold you there for three days (just kidding), and then bring you back up. You'll stand up and walk down the stairs on the other side of the baptistry where there will be volunteers waiting to wrap you in a towel and congratulate you. And then you can get changed.

It's as simple as that.



BAPTISM

The Top 10 Questions Answered

6. What if I just don't think it's really that urgent?

I have had enough pastoral conversations to know that some people are simply in no hurry to get baptized. They've made the decision to enter into a relationship with Jesus, but they think to themselves, What's the rush? There's no need to do this right away.

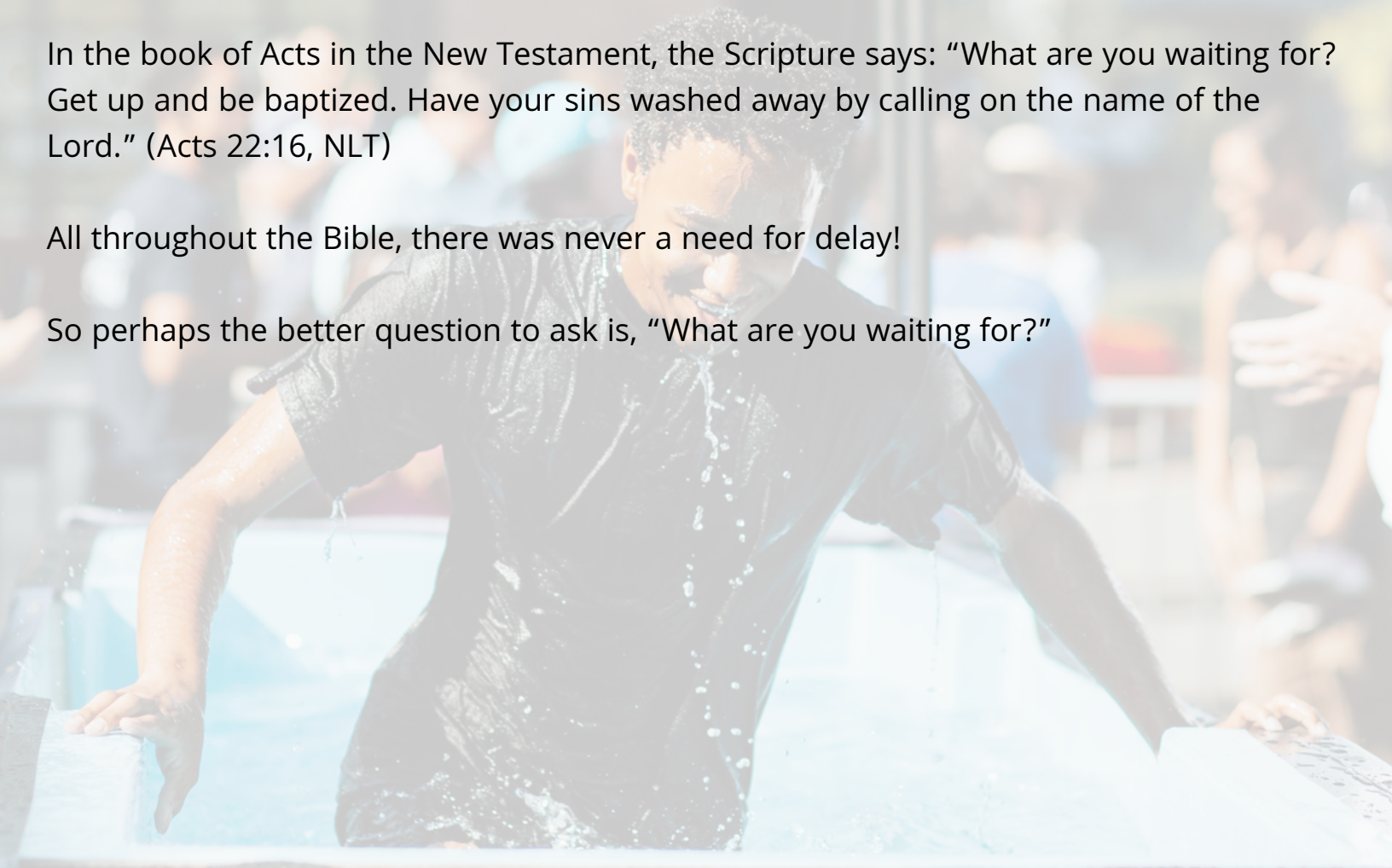
The problem is that throughout the New Testament, the sequence followed by those who cross the line of faith was always to hear, believe, and then be baptized.

In fact, one day, thousands made a decision for Christ and the Bible says that those who believed were baptized that day!

In the book of Acts in the New Testament, the Scripture says: "What are you waiting for? Get up and be baptized. Have your sins washed away by calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16, NLT)

All throughout the Bible, there was never a need for delay!

So perhaps the better question to ask is, "What are you waiting for?"





7. What if I've been a Christian for years – doesn't it seem weird to do it now?

While some people don't seem to understand why it's so important to be baptized right away, there are some who have delayed so long that they feel as though there's been too much time between crossing the line of faith and getting baptized.

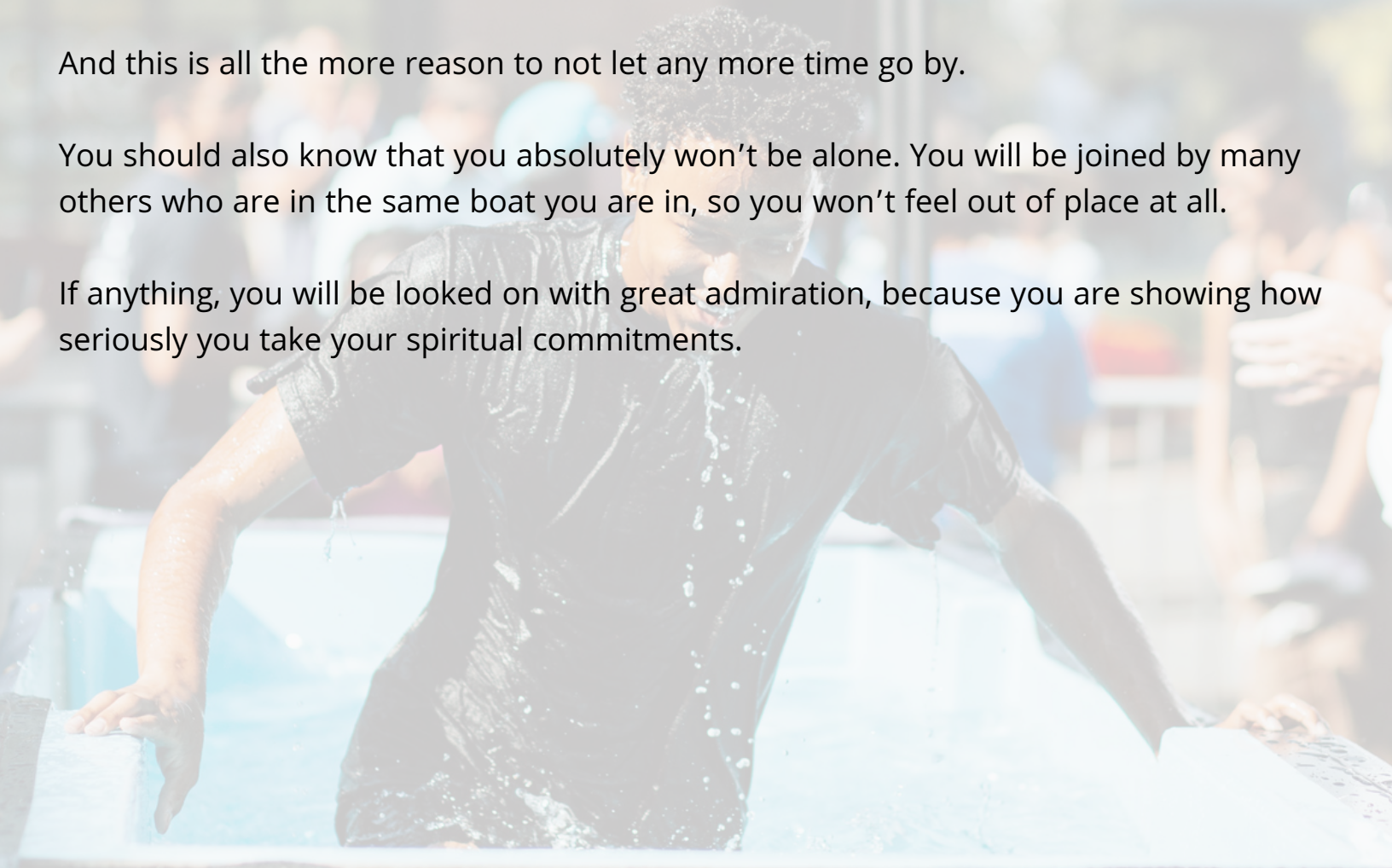
I've even had some people tell me that they're embarrassed to come forward to be baptized because it's been so long.

Don't be embarrassed! That is the last thing that God wants for you!

And this is all the more reason to not let any more time go by.

You should also know that you absolutely won't be alone. You will be joined by many others who are in the same boat you are in, so you won't feel out of place at all.

If anything, you will be looked on with great admiration, because you are showing how seriously you take your spiritual commitments.





8. What if I was baptized as a baby or a very young child?

I think that this is probably the most common question people have here at Meck: “What if I was baptized as an infant? Doesn’t that count?”

The answer is yes and no.

It counts in the sense that it was a very special event that your parents went through on your behalf, and nothing in a later baptism should denigrate that or devalue its reflection of their love for you and their desire for your faith development.

But the answer is “no” in terms of whether it was the same as a New Testament baptism.

You see, the baptism Jesus wants for you is one that is to be pursued as a believer, as a Christian, as someone who had crossed the line of faith making a self-conscious personal decision.

Because that’s what baptism IS – the sacred act that reflects what you have determined and purposed in your heart toward Jesus.

If you haven’t crossed the line, then the act is meaningless.

It would be like going through a wedding before you know who it is you’re going to marry, or whether you’re ever even going to BE married.

See, most churches that practice infant baptism do so in the hope that one day you will embrace the faith for yourself.

And they would be the first to say that there needs to be something later on that confirms it in your life, when you’re old enough to decide whether that’s where you have landed.



BAPTISM

The Top 10 Questions Answered

Cont'd

This is why these churches have classes called “confirmation.”

But that still leaves the baptism waters muddled, because you haven’t done what Jesus asked you to do. Because throughout the New Testament, baptism always follows someone’s personal decision for Jesus.

There’s not a single case in the Bible where that pattern isn’t followed.

The call of Jesus on your life is to follow through with baptism without delay as a sacred act of integrity, obedience, and public profession of faith.

Even if you were infant baptized.

Now maybe you weren’t infant baptized, but rather you were toddler baptized.

Or maybe you were old enough to know what you were doing, but it didn’t mean anything to you.

You were just a young kid, and you didn’t really understand what you were doing.

Well, again, the point is to have baptism as a sacred act that reflects what has happened in your life relationally with Jesus.

If you went through a baptism before, but you really weren’t in that relationship, then it doesn’t matter what you did or how old you were when you did it - you haven’t really been baptized into the Christian faith as a follower of Jesus.



9. What if I'm not sure I can keep up a life in a relationship with Jesus?

Much like those who wonder whether they should be baptized if they don't have their act together, others worry that after baptism, they won't be able to keep up the Christ life.

Nobody wants to start something or do something that draws attention, and then not be able to stay committed and follow through with it.

In our minds, it would have been better not to have done anything at all.

But feeling that way is a huge misunderstanding of what baptism is about.

None of us are keeping it up – at least perfectly. You may be saying, "Well, I don't want to be a hypocrite!"

No, and God doesn't want you to be a hypocrite either. But let's remember what a hypocrite is.

A hypocrite is someone who goes around and puts themselves forward as someone who lives a certain way when they don't.

It has nothing to do with someone who comes to Jesus and authentically begins trying to pattern their life under His leadership.

Of course you'll have setbacks - all Christians do - but the Bible says to come just as you are, receive God's gift of a personal relationship, and then let Him begin the transformation process.

Baptism just marks the beginning of that journey. God knows you'll make mistakes.

He just wants you to let Him start where you are.



BAPTISM

The Top 10 Questions Answered

Cont'd

Think of it this way: When you mark your life with a wedding, you aren't saying that you have the marriage thing down; you aren't saying that you won't ever have a fight; you aren't saying that every day will be romantic bliss.

You're saying that you're entering into a committed relationship. You're saying that you're going to begin the married life.

Baptism is no different. It's about saying that you are going to begin the Christ life.





10. What if I want to rededicate my life to Jesus?

If you're asking this question, you're not alone.

Unlike those who put off getting baptized because they worry that they won't be able to keep it up, maybe you were baptized, and you know you HAVEN'T kept it up.

You may have drifted into patterns of sin in your life that left you feeling ashamed and guilty. You may have hurt others, leaving a trail of wounded bodies behind you.

And now you know that you want a fresh start, a new beginning, and so you want to get baptized again.

The first time you were baptized – it meant something to you. You were baptized because you knew you had crossed the line of faith and wanted to go public for Jesus. But since then, you feel as though you've turned your back on Him.

While it's understandable that you'd want to do this again, you really shouldn't. Your baptism was a once-for-all event. It was a public declaration of a faith that was real and was true.

But that doesn't mean you can't have the fresh start you long for. You can do that through your actions. You can do that by how you're living your life now – how those around you see you living your life.

You can fall to your knees and ask God for forgiveness and He's there – right where He's always been.