Essentials 201

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# Introduction

Being a Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ, is far more than adhering to a list of dos and don’ts; it is an intimate relationship with our loving Heavenly Father. In John 10:10, Jesus says He came so that we could live a *full* life – not a just-get-by life. Jesus wants us to live a life overflowing with the benefits of being in relationship with Him. In this class, we will discuss a few foundational truths for living a full life with Jesus Christ, Father God, and Holy Spirit.

To grow in spiritual maturity and deepen your relationship with Jesus, we encourage you to read through the books *Ten Steps Toward* *Christ* by Pastor Jimmy Evans and *Kingdom Come* by Pastor Jimmy Witcher. These resources will provide you with practical ways to walk with Christ and learn how to live in Heaven on Earth.

We invite you to open your heart and allow the Holy Spirit to minister all He has for you on this journey.

# STEP ONE: Being Born Again

*Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”* John 3:5-6

To understand being born again it will be helpful to look back at the Garden of Eden and God’s creation of Adam and Eve.

## The Origin of Death

When God created Adam and Eve, He breathed life into their nostrils and they became “living beings” (Genesis 2:7).

Genesis 3 records how Satan tempted Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, which caused them to be separated from God. As a result, their minds became darkened, their emotions became corrupt, their bodies began to age and decay, their relationship divided, and they passed their fallen nature on to their children and generations after them. To this day, spiritual death and the natural tendency to rebel against God are inherent in all of us as a result of the fall of Adam and Eve (Romans 7:14-21).

## The Gift of Spiritual Life

Jesus came to save us by dying for us on the cross and paying for our sins.

*God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.*

*He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.* John 3:16-18

By believing that Jesus is God’s only Son sent into the world to pay for our sins, we are saved from sin and hell and born again of the Holy Spirit.

*What does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.* Romans 10:8-11

Jesus did the hard part for us, and by believing and confessing we can freely receive salvation from God. There is nothing we can do to deserve it (Ephesians 2:1-9).

##  Prayer of Salvation

“Lord Jesus, I choose to turn toward You and make you my Lord and Savior. I believe that You are God. You came to earth. You lived a perfect life and You died on the cross for my sins. I receive Your grace and forgiveness for all of my sins and failures. Thank You for forgiving me. I also forgive myself. I choose to live my life for You. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit. Lead me, speak to me, and give me the power to live a successful Kingdom life here on the earth as it is in Heaven. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”

If you prayed that prayer, congratulations! You are born again. You are eternally changed and your salvation is secure in Christ.

# STEP TWO: Covenant of Water Baptism and Communion

***It is Commanded***

Once we have received Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord, our relationship has been established. Now we get to begin the journey of following Jesus every day of our lives. This is truly one of the greatest joys we will ever experience!

If we are to follow Jesus, then we also are to obey Him. Obedience is crucial to living a life of freedom and blessing. It is obedience to what God says that grows our relationship with Him and proves our love for Him (John 14:15). And after salvation, Jesus gives us our first opportunity to obey Him by being *water baptized*.

*“Then Jesus came close to them and said, ‘All authority of the universe has been given to me. Now go in my authority and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And teach them to faithfully follow all that I have commanded you. And never forget that I am with you every day, even to the completion of this age.’” Matthew 28:18-20 (TPT)*

**Water baptism is an important next step after we receive salvation!**

## What Water Baptism Means

To be water baptized means to be *fully immersed* under water. This represents our whole being - body, soul, and spirit - coming completely under the authority and reign of Jesus. The Bible describes this transformation as being made new (2 Corinthians 5:17-18). When we go under water, our old life - who we once were before Christ - is done away with. When we come out of the water, we take hold of our new life in Christ. Because of the relationship we have with Jesus, sin and death have lost their power over our lives. We are now free to live for Him!

Being water baptized means we are publicly identifying ourselves with Christ as His followers. It is a public act that signifies a couple of private decisions we’ve made:

* To die to sin and live for Christ (Colossians 2: 11-12; 2 Corinthians 5:17).
* To receive Christ’s death as the payment for our sins and failures

(1 Peter 3:21-22).

Our decision to make Jesus our Lord and Savior was never meant to remain private. Jesus shares with us that water baptism is a public demonstration of the decision we have already made in our hearts. Baptism declares to the world - and to the enemy - that we are unashamed of Jesus and this decision was not made lightly. As we obey and get water baptized, we are setting the precedent for how we will follow Jesus the rest of our lives.

When we are committed to Jesus, our obedience to Him will open us up to living in the benefits of the Kingdom. These benefits flow from our personal relationship with Him.

## Baptism is A Covenant of Commitment

A covenant relationship is the most special and sacred relationship we can have. The word covenant means “to cut,” and it conveys the meaning of a permanent, sacrificial relationship (Luke 22:20). Through His sacrifice, Christ made covenant with us to establish a permanent bond between us.

Our covenant with God is the most secure relationship we will ever have. Water baptism is a tangible demonstration of what has happened between us.

## Two Big Questions

### Q. Why is getting baptized so important?

Baptism is important because Jesus commanded it and was even baptized Himself as an act of obedience to God the Father (Matthew 3:15-16). Just as the Father identified Jesus Christ as His beloved Son, He identifies you as His beloved son or daughter. When you make Jesus your Lord and Savior, you are accepted by the Father just as Jesus is accepted by the Father. He delights in you just as He delights in Jesus.

## Q. Can I be saved if I don’t get water-baptized?

The thief on the cross next to Jesus recognized Him as Lord and King, and as a result, Jesus told him that he would join Him in Paradise that very day (Luke 23: 39-43). Of course, the thief couldn’t be baptized. It was physically impossible—but he got to Heaven!

Others are baptized (sprinkled) as children and are taught that their infant baptism is all that is necessary. This is problematic because no one can make the decision for you to be saved or baptized but you.

God is a gracious and reasonable God, but being water baptized is an important expression of the sincerity of our relationship with Jesus Christ and obedience to God.

## Communion is a Covenant of Relationship

Jesus first instituted communion with His disciples just before His crucifixion, and He commanded us to do this in remembrance of Him (Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-32).

Communion reminds us of the most important element of our faith—the love that Jesus revealed to us on the cross. The curse of sin was removed from our lives as it was placed upon His own body (Galatians 3:13-14).

His blood was also shed to remove our sins so we could have an eternal and intimate relationship with God.

Communion is one of the most sacred foundations of the Christian faith. In our church, we serve communion corporately once a month, but it is available every week for those who want to take it more often.

Water baptism is the covenant seal of our relationship with Christ. It is a one-time act and does not need to be repeated.

Communion is the ongoing covenant sign of our relationship with the Lord.

# STEP THREE: Baptism in the Holy Spirit

*He said, “you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”* Acts 1:4-8

There are many examples of Scripture where the Bible refers to the coming of the Holy Spirit and what He would accomplish in our lives.

*And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper…*John 14:16-17

*The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name…* John 14:26

*When the Helper comes…*John 15:26

*When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth…* John 16:13-14

*The manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all…*

1 Corinthians 12:7-13

That word “Helper” is also translated as comforter. It means someone who walks alongside us to help us.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is about immersing us into an empowering relationship with the Holy Spirit so we can fully know and serve God.

## Commonly Asked Questions

## Q. How do I receive the Holy Spirit?

Simply by asking God and receiving Him by faith, just as you received Jesus when you were saved. He is a free gift of God (Luke 11:13).

## Q. Didn’t I receive the Holy Spirit when I was saved? Why do I have to receive Him again?

We are born again by the Holy Spirit, as explained in Step One. The disciples in Acts 1, including Peter, were saved but were commanded to wait in Jerusalem to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. There are other examples in Scripture of saved people who later received the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:12-17 and 19:1-6). At salvation, God baptizes us into Christ. When we ask for the baptism in the Holy Spirit, Christ baptizes us into the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:16). Baptism in the Holy Spirit is about allowing Him to immerse us into His fullness and to empower us to know and serve God.

## Q. Do I have to speak in tongues to be saved or to be baptized in the Holy Spirit?

No, there are many godly, Spirit-filled people who do not speak in tongues. Just because someone does or does not speak in tongues is not a marker of their spiritual status.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 14:18, *I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all.*

We encourage you to yield your tongue to the Holy Spirit and give Him the opportunity to impart this special gift to you.

## Q. Why do I need to pray in tongues?

Speaking in tongues is mostly expressed as a private prayer language. Praying in tongues vastly expands our ability to pray as we should (Romans 8:26).

Praying in tongues means recognizing our mental and spiritual inabilities to pray as we should and allowing the Holy Spirit to help us.

Even though our minds may be “unfruitful” as we pray or praise in tongues, our spirits are edified and blessed (1 Corinthians 14:14-15).

*But you, my delightfully loved friends, constantly and progressively build yourselves up on the foundation of your most holy faith by praying every moment in the Spirit.* Jude 1:20 (TPT)

## Prayer for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit

“Father, thank You for the promise of the Holy Spirit and for sending Him into my life. I turn toward you and away from sinful ways. I choose to forgive everyone who has hurt me, has sinned against me, or has hurt my loved ones. I surrender my life to live for You. By faith, I now ask You to baptize me in Your Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit, I pray, come into my life and fill me. Baptize me in Your Presence and power and lead me daily. I surrender completely to You and ask You to lead me closer to Jesus and empower me to live victoriously for Him. I pray that You will impart spiritual gifts into my life and use me to glorify God and help others. I also surrender my tongue to You and pray that You will give me a personal prayer language to enable me to pray more effectively. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

## Prayer for the Refreshing of the Holy Spirit

“Father, fill me fresh and new. I want to be continually filled to overflowing with Your Holy Spirit.”

*Don’t be drunk with wine, which will ruin your life, but be filled with the Spirit.*

Ephesians 5:18 (Easy-to-Read Version)