

and his family were saved by water. So, don't let anyone tell you baptism does not save you! Everyone in need of what baptism does must be baptized. Those who do not need what baptism does (i.e. infants) do not need to be baptized. As we have seen, baptism is essential for the sinner to be saved, forgiven, and come into Christ! In fact, baptism stands between the old person of sin, with the new life in Christ not starting until you have buried the old person in the waters of baptism (Romans 6:3-4)! And, it is also essential to be baptized for the right reasons. Although you may have been baptized in the past (i.e. as a baby, thinking you were saved prior to being baptized, etc.), you must be baptized correctly.

Baptism is an immersion in water. "Baptism" is practiced in different ways in churches today (immersion, sprinkling, pouring). But, the Greek word for "baptism" means to immerse or overwhelm (requiring one to be completely covered with water). The Bible shows baptism as immersion (Matthew 3:16; Acts 8:38-39). And, it is called a "burial" (Romans 6:3-4). Therefore, if you have not been fully immersed in water for the right reasons, you must do so to be saved!

Remain Faithful

Faithfulness is essential for salvation. After baptism, you are a Christian – and your life as a Christian must look different than how you lived prior (Romans 6:3-4). Then, you are expected to be faithful to Christ until you die (Revelation 2:10). To remain a faithful follower of Jesus, you must give Him control of your life, let His will be done in your life rather than your own, keep His commandments, deny yourself, endure hardships for Him, put Him first, don't deny Him, learn from Him, grow in His service, and follow Him wherever He leads through His word in the New Testament.

How Christians can be forgiven of sin. It is possible to sin after becoming a Christian and lose your salvation (Galatians 5:4). When you sin, you must return to Christ so you can be forgiven. This requires repenting of your sin, confessing your sin to God, and asking Him to forgive you (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9).

Conclusion

God has told you exactly what you must do to be saved from your sins. If you have not obeyed His instructions, you are not saved – and should obey Him immediately!

Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series

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Answers To Life's Most Essential Questions



We have all sinned against God and deserve to be punished in the eternal fires of Hell. Thankfully, God has loved us enough to provide the sacrifice for sin through Jesus Christ (Romans 6:23). But, is there anything God has required of us to be in Christ Jesus and access His gift of salvation? Is there anything God has required of us to be forgiven of our sins? If so, what is it? It's like the ground between you and God has been broken because of sin – and there is no way for you to get back to God. But, Jesus has provided the bridge (picture the cross as a bridge). Now, you must consider what (if anything) God requires you to do to be reconciled with God and forgiven of sin (Acts 2:37). While there are certainly many people and churches who answer this question differently (i.e. just believe in Jesus, ask Jesus into your heart, nothing you must do, etc.), we should only be interested in what God says we must do to be saved!

The purpose of this lesson is to learn some basics about what God requires you to do to be forgiven of your sins and have eternal life in Heaven.

Is There Anything You Must Do?

It is impossible to earn salvation. There is nothing you can do to *earn* (deserve) salvation after you have sinned (Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-10). Jesus has provided the only avenue for your salvation (Romans 6:23). Yet, since eternal life is "in" Christ Jesus, what is necessary to enter a right relationship with Jesus?

God has required obedience. Although Jesus died for everyone, not everyone will be saved (Matthew 7:13-14). Clearly, there is something God has required of people – or everyone would be saved through Jesus! For example, suppose someone sends you a \$20 check in the mail for your birthday. It is a free gift you did not earn. However, to receive the gift, you must: Go to the mailbox, get the envelop out of the mailbox, open the envelop, take out the check, sign the check, take the check to the bank, and cash the check. Then, you will have your free gift. Although you did not earn it, there were steps to

receiving it. The same thing is true concerning salvation. God has provided the free gift of salvation. However, He has commanded you to do certain things to receive the gift. And, doing these things does not nullify God's grace or earn your salvation. For, there is a difference between works of *merit* (by which you try to earn your salvation) and works of *obedience* (by which you obey the conditions God has placed on your salvation)! When you do what God commands, you are *not* earning salvation (Luke 17:7-10). Instead, you are simply obeying God and demonstrating true faith (James 2:24; Matthew 7:21-23)!

An example of faithful obedience. Consider the example of Noah (Hebrews 11:7). When God determined to destroy people from the earth for their wickedness (Genesis 6:5-7), Noah found favor in God's sight (Genesis 6:8). Then, God gave Noah detailed instructions about how to build an ark and be saved from the flood. Noah chose to trust in God enough to obey. Similarly, you face the same choice today. You are living in a sinful world God will destroy one Day (2 Peter 3:10). And, God has given you the opportunity to be saved through Jesus. But, you must trust in God so much that you obey Him in whatever He says!

Hear God's Word

Hearing God's word is essential for salvation. Hearing the word of God should lead you to saving faith (Romans 10:13-15, 17). You will not develop saving faith by hearing the teaching or opinions of people. So, you must study God's word every day to know what God wants you to know (Acts 17:10-12).

What you must hear. Although God does not require you to have a full knowledge of everything He says in the Bible before you can be saved, He does require you to know some basic things (i.e. the fundamental things we have been studying in this series). Namely, if you don't hear what God has done for you so you can be saved or what He has commanded you to do, you will not be saved (Acts 18:8)!

Believe In Jesus

Belief is essential for salvation. You must be mentally convinced Jesus Christ is the Son of God who came to earth, lived as a man, died a horrible death on the cross, was buried in a tomb, and rose from the dead (John 8:24). Other passages also teach the essential nature of belief (as well as confession and baptism, Mark 16:16; Romans 10:9-10).

You are not saved by faith only. While belief (faith) is essential for salvation, it is not the only thing that is essential. In fact, the Bible speaks of faith in a couple different ways. Sometimes the Bible speaks of belief (faith) in the sense of being mentally convinced something is true (i.e. Jesus is the Son of God). But, the Bible often speaks of a more comprehensive belief (faith) that couples a mental conviction with obedience. This is real, saving faith (consider the many

examples of active, obedient faith in Hebrews 11). However, many religious organizations teach that being mentally convinced Jesus Christ is the Son of God is the *only* requirement for salvation. Yet, we should be concerned about what God teaches! And, God clearly teaches against this idea of "faith only" for salvation (James 2:14-26).

Repent

Repentance is essential for salvation. Repentance is commanded by Jesus (Luke 13:3, 5) and is necessary for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:37-38). In fact, God commands all people everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30-31).

Learning true repentance. The Bible teaches that godly grief produces repentance (2 Corinthians 7:10). Whenever you recognize what your sins have done to your relationship with God, you should mourn over what your sins have done to your relationship with God and want to undo the sins you have committed. So, repentance requires you to hate your past sins and determine to live for God in the future. Repentance takes place in the mind by acknowledging your past sins and determining to put them off from your life, putting the old person of sin to death and making a way for the new person who is patterned after God's holiness (Colossians 3:1-17; Galatians 2:20). When you repent, you are determining to live *entirely* for Jesus!

Confess Christ

Confession is essential for salvation. Jesus requires people to confess Him (Matthew 10:32-33). Although this is not a one-time only confession, God expects people to confess Christ during their earthly lives. Romans 10:9-10 then specifically commands that a confession be made for salvation.

What you must confess. This is *not* a confession of your sins or that you are a sinner. Rather, it is a confession that acknowledges your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, your dependence on Him for salvation, and your commitment to make Him Lord of your life (Romans 10:9). The Ethiopian man in Acts 8 provides a good example of such a confession (though some Greek manuscripts do not contain v. 37).

Be Baptized

Baptism is essential for salvation. While most churches do *not* teach baptism is necessary (required) for salvation, the Bible teaches it is! Do not let any preconceived ideas or religious teaching hinder your understanding of what God says. For example, Mark 16:16 teaches belief and baptism are necessary for salvation. Acts 2:37-38 teaches repentance and baptism are necessary to being forgiven of sin. Acts 22:16 teaches baptism is essential to having sins washed away and calling on the name of the Lord (Romans 10:13). Galatians 3:27 teaches a person is baptized into Christ (where salvation, all spiritual blessings, and forgiveness are, Romans 6:23; 2 Timothy 2:10; Ephesians 1:3; Ephesians 1:7). And, 1 Peter 3:20-21 teaches baptism saves you just as Noah