

# Connect360: Baptism: The Spiritual Catalyst

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- *Lesson Five in the Connect360 unit “DiscipleMaking: Patterns of Discipleship and Evangelism for the Contemporary Church” focuses on Mark 1:4-5, 9-11; Acts 8:9-13; 34-39.*

Baptism is an act of obedience central to the believer’s identity as a follower of Jesus Christ.

In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus commissions his disciples to “go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

Baptism, then, becomes the first step in discipleship, a public declaration of one’s allegiance to Christ and a sign of submission to his authority.

This obedience to the command of baptism signifies the believer’s decision to live according to God’s will and purpose.

As Paul wrote in Romans 6:3-4: “Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?”

“We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”

Baptism is the believer’s declaration of having died to the old self and been raised to new life in Christ.

It is the first step in the journey of obedience to God, which includes living

according to his word, bearing fruit of the Spirit, and engaging in ministry. Through baptism, believers publicly declare their allegiance to Jesus and their intention to follow him in all aspects of their lives.

A 73-year-old man recently was baptized. When asked about his decision to follow Christ and be baptized here replied: "I was sprinkled as a child, received Jesus as my Savior at age 21, and been disobedient until now. I need to be obedient."

Choosing to fully follow Christ in believer's baptism was a significant moment in his life. What a day of celebration it was for him and his family.

Just a word of caution on this point. An axiom of faith life is "disobedience leads to doubt." When followers of Jesus fail to act obediently in the area of baptism, doubt in other areas can creep into their life.

Jesus' emphasis on baptism as a marker of discipleship is not accidental, it is intentional. Guiding believers into baptism contributes to greater confidence in their faith and fellowship.

Disciple makers should and must make baptism a priority.

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