

BAPTISM

Passionate about
the transformation
of people into fully
devoted followers
of Christ

They devoted themselves to the apostle’s teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts... and the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved

Acts 2:42-47

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INTRODUCTION

Baptism is an important step in the faith journey of any and every follower of Christ. It is an encouragement to the whole church body to witness an individual publicly affirming their faith in and submission to Christ as their Lord and Saviour. While the history of the Christian Church has witnessed many forms, titles and varying understandings of the meaning of baptism over the centuries, there has been, a constant theme that affirms baptism as an initiatory rite of the Christian faith.

In the New Testament baptism had its origin in the command of Christ to make disciples and baptize them (Matt. 28:19).

The purpose of this booklet is to provide a biblical approach along with a historical understanding of the role of baptism in the life of the person who chooses to follow Christ, and to explain how baptism takes place in our local church fellowship here at Valley View.

**In Christ,
Pastor Garry James**

BAPTISM IN THE SCRIPTURES

The key passages from which we learn what the bible teaches about baptism are found in the baptizing ministry of John, including Jesus; and the baptism of new followers of Christ as recorded in the book of Acts, and commented on by other New Testament writers.

John The Baptist Prepares The Way

1 In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea 2 and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." 3 This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah:

"A voice of one calling in the wilderness, "Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him."

4 John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. 5 People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. 6 Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?"

8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. 9 And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

11 "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

The Baptism Of Jesus

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. 14 But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" 15 Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented. 16 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

- Matt. 3 - NIV

The words baptism, baptize, baptized, baptizes and baptizing all occur throughout the New Testament scriptures. The next few pages have a comprehensive list of these references.

BAPTISM

And Sadducees coming for baptism..... *Matt. 3:7*
 Baptism of John as from what source..... *Matt. 21:25*
 Wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance..... *Mark 1:4*
 The baptism with which I am baptized?.....*Mark 10:38*
 The baptism with which I am baptized?.....*Mark 10:39*
 Was the baptism of John from heaven.....*Mark 11:30*
 Preaching a baptism of repentance for..... *Luke 3:3*
 Been baptized with the baptism of John..... *Luke 7:29*
 But I have a baptism to undergo, and..... *Luke 12:5*
 Was the baptism of John from heaven or..... *Luke 20:4*
 Beginning with the baptism of John until..... *Acts 1:22*
 After the baptism which John proclaimed..... *Acts 10:37*
 Baptism of repentance to all the people..... *Acts 13:24*
 Only with the baptism of John..... *Acts 18:25*
 And they said, "Into John's baptism"..... *Acts 19:3*
 Baptized with the baptism of repentance..... *Acts 19:4*
 With Him through baptism into death..... *Rom. 6:4*
 One Lord, one faith, one baptism..... *Eph. 4:5*
 Having been buried with Him in baptism..... *Col. 2:12*
 Corresponding to that, baptism now saves..... *1 Pet. 3:2*

BAPTIZE

I baptize you with water for repentance..... *Matt. 3:11*
 He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit..... *Matt. 3:11*
 Will baptize you with the Holy Spirit..... *Mark 1:8*

As for me, I baptize you with water..... Luke 3:16
 He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit..... Luke 3:16
 I baptize in water, but among you.....John 1:26
 He who sent me to baptize in water.....John 1:33
 Now I did baptize also the household of..... 1 Cor. 1:16
 For Christ did not send me to baptize..... 1 Cor. 1:17

BAPTIZED

Baptized by him in the Jordan River..... Matt. 3:6
 Coming to John, to be baptized by him.....Matt. 3:13
 I have need to be baptized by You.....Matt. 3:14
 After being baptized, Jesus came up.....Matt. 3:16
 Baptized by him in the Jordan River.....Mark 1:5
 I baptized you with water..... Mark 1:8
 And was baptized by John in the Jordan..... Mark 1:9
 Or to be baptized with the baptism with.....Mark 10:38
 The baptism with which I am baptized?.....Mark 10:38
 And you shall be baptized with the.....Mark 10:39
 The baptism with which I am baptized.....Mark 10:39
 And has been baptized shall be saved.....Mark 16:16
 Who were going out to be baptized by him.....Luke 3:7
 Tax collectors also came to be baptized..... Luke 3:12
 Now when all the people were baptized..... Luke 3:21
 Jesus was also baptized, and while He was..... Luke 3:21
 Been baptized with the baptism of John..... Luke 7:29
 Not having been baptized by John..... Luke 7:30

People were coming and were being baptized.....John 3:23
 For John baptized with water, but you..... Acts 1:5
 You will be baptized with the Holy Spirit..... Acts 1:5
 And each of you be baptized in the.....Acts 2:38
 Who had received his word were baptized.....Acts 2:41
 They were being baptized, men and women.....Acts 8:12
 And after being baptized, he continued on.....Acts 8:13
 Baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.....Acts 8:16
 What prevents me from being baptized?.....Acts 8:36
 As well as the eunuch, and he baptized him.....Acts 8:38
 His sight, and he got up and was baptized.....Acts 9:18
 Can refuse the water for these to be baptized..... Acts10:47
 Be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.....Acts 10:48
 John baptized with water, but you will.....Acts 11:16
 Will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.....Acts 11:16
 She and her household had been baptized.....Acts 16:15
 Wounds, and immediately he was baptized.....Acts 16:33
 Heard were believing and being baptized.....Acts 18:8
 Into what then were you baptized?.....Acts 19:3
 John baptized with the baptism of.....Acts 19:4
 Baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.....Acts 19:5
 Get up and be baptized, and wash away.....Acts 22:16
 All of us who have been baptized into Christ..... Rom. 6:3
 Jesus have been baptized into His death?..... Rom. 6:3
 Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?..... 1 Cor. 1:13

I thank God that I baptized none of you..... 1 Cor. 1:14
 Would say you were baptized in my name..... 1 Cor. 1:15
 Do not know whether I baptized any other..... 1 Cor. 1:16
 And all were baptized into Moses in the..... 1 Cor. 10:2
 We were all baptized into one body.....1 Cor. 12:13
 Those do who are baptized for the dead.....1 Cor. 15:29
 All, why then are they baptized for them.....1 Cor. 15:29
 All of you who were baptized into Christ..... Gal. 3:27

BAPTIZES

The One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.....John 1:33

BAPTIZING

Baptizing them in the name of the Father..... Matt. 28:19
 Why then are you baptizing.....John 1:25
 The Jordan, where John was baptizing.....John 1:28
 To Israel, I came baptizing in water.....John 1:31
 Was spending time with them and baptizing.....John 3:22
 Also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim.....John 3:23
 Testified, behold, He is baptizing.....John 3:26
 And baptizing more disciples than John.....John 4:1
 Although Jesus Himself was not baptizing.....John 4:2
 The place where John was first baptizing..... John 10:40

BAPTISM THROUGHOUT CHURCH HISTORY

In both Old and New Testament times, baptism was carried out by immersion in water in a local river, pond, bath house, lake or sea – whichever was readily available. As the Gospel spread into regions which did not have an abundance of water readily available other modes of baptizing evolved.

As early as the second century, “pouring” was applied by the one baptizing pouring water three times over the head of the one being baptized – once for each member of the Trinity. The Didache, (teaching of the Twelve Apostles) written early in the second century stated:

“But concerning baptism, thus shall ye baptize. Having first recited all these things, baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in living (running) water. But if thou has not living water, then baptize in other water; and if thou art not able in cold, then in warm. But if thou hast neither, then pour water on the head thrice in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”¹

¹ J.B. Lightfoot, orig. ed.; J.R. Harmer, ed. & comp., *The Apostolic Fathers* (Reprint. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1956), p. 126.

The inference is that although the early church employed immersion, it allowed for pouring. So, it appears that both of these modes were in existence as early as the second century. Further support for the pouring mode is claimed from early pictorial illustrations showing the baptismal candidate standing in the water with the minister pouring water on his head.

In the early centuries “sprinkling” was reserved for the sick or those too weak to receive public baptism by immersion or pouring. Sprinkling was not accepted in general usage until the thirteenth century. In the third century, Cyprian declared that it was not the amount of water, nor the method of baptism that cleansed from sin; rather, where the faith of the recipient was genuine, sprinkling was as effective as another mode.

It is generally acknowledged that the early church immersed the people coming for baptism. “Baptizo” means “to immerse” and shows how the word has been used: “to sink a ship,” “to sink (in the mud),” “to drown,” and “to perish.”² This basic meaning accords with the emphasis of Scripture:

Jesus was baptized by John “in the Jordan” and He came up “out of the water” (Mark 1:9-10; cf. Acts 8:38).

On the other hand, the Greek has words for sprinkle and pour that are not used for baptism.

² Albrecht Oepke, “baptizo” in Gerhard Kittel, trans. & ed., and Geoffrey W. Bromiley, trans., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 1:530.

FOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT BAPTISM

In order to help us understand what the bible teaches about baptism, we will open the scriptures to answer four questions to examine what the Bible teaches.

QUESTION ONE: *What is Baptism?*

Baptism is an identification with Christ in his death and burial and resurrection; Therefore it is a symbol of our union with Christ.

“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 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.” (Rom. 6:3,4)

Baptism is an act of obedience. Jesus commanded It.

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matt. 28:19)

“Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved.”(Mark 16:15,16)

Because Jesus commands us to be baptized, and because obedience to His commands is an indicator of submission to His Lordship; We may deduce that baptism is an indicator of our submission to the lordship of Christ in our lives.

"Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say?" (Luke 6:46)

"Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved." (Mark 16:15,16)

Baptism is also a visible act of dedication to God. In baptism, we acknowledge that we no longer want to live for self. We have put the self life to death, and have taken new life in Christ.

"You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body." (Cor. 6:19, 20)

QUESTION TWO: *Why Should I Be Baptized?*

Jesus set the example for us.

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. 14 But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"

15 Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented. (Matt. 3:13-15)

He also commanded us to be baptized.

"The Great Commission". (Matt. 28)

The Early church baptized new believers in obedience to the Lord and this also serves as an example to us.

At Pentecost, they received his words and 3000 were baptized. (Acts 2:38-41)

38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

40 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." 41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

Philip in Samaria (Simon the sorcerer) were baptized. (Acts 8:9-13)

9 Now for some time a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he was someone great, 10 and all the people, both high and low, gave him their attention and exclaimed, "This man is rightly called the Great Power of God." 11 They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his sorcery. 12 But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. 13 Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw.

The Ethiopian Eunuch with Philip. (Acts 8:34-40)

34 The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet taLukeing about, himself or someone else?" 35 Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

36 As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?" 38 And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. 39 When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. 40 Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

Saul of Tarsus, baptized only three days after conversion. (Acts 9:18)

18 Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, 19 and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

Lydia, the believing business woman in Thyatira. Following Paul's conversation with her she was baptized. (Acts 16:13-15)

13 On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. 14 One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord

opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. 15 When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

The Philippian Jailer who trusted Christ because of the Apostle's righteous actions. (Acts 16:25-33)

25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. 26 Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose. 27 The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. 28 But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"

29 The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. 30 He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

31 They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." 32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. 33 At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized.

QUESTION THREE: *Who Should Be Baptized?*

Anyone who has believed on the Lord Jesus Christ for their personal salvation should be baptized.

From each of the above passages listed in Question #2, we see a very clear pattern of people “**hearing, believing and being baptized**”. Therefore we understand that baptism is for those who have first heard the Gospel message and have then made a personal decision to believe in the work of Christ for their salvation and have submitted to His Lordship in their lives. It is then that they choose to be baptized.

QUESTION FOUR: *How Do We Baptize At Valley View?*

In the Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada (the family of churches with whom we are aligned), baptism is an initiatory rite in the sense that it is or should be something that a new follower of Christ does early on after trusting in Christ as Saviour.

OUR LOCAL CHURCH CONSTITUTION*Article V Ordinances*

Believer’s baptism and the Lord’s Supper are recognized as the two ordinances of the Church as commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ. Baptism is an act of obedience for all believers. While other modes of believer’s baptism are recognized, baptism by immersion is taught and practiced as the scriptural mode. The Lord’s Supper is administered regularly and offered to all believers.

OUR UNIQUE CULTURE OF BAPTISM AT VALLEY VIEW

We baptize by immersion, in a tank of warm water (or in a river, lake or other public place on occasion). The immersion symbolizes the dying to self, the washing away of former life and the rising to newness of life in Christ. This is not the “only way” to be baptized, however we do attempt to follow patterns established in the Old Testament ties and affirmed by Jesus in the New Testament.

Our baptism services tend to be great celebrations. The scriptures teach that when one person decides to place their faith in Christ, all heaven throws a party!

“I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.”
(Luke 15:7)

We reason that if all heaven can celebrate at a person’s decision to follow Christ, then perhaps the whole church should celebrate at that same person’s public profession of faith through baptism. So do not be surprised if at a baptism service here at Valley View we break into spontaneous applause and verbal rejoicing as each person being baptized emerges from the water. Feel free to rejoice with us!

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND BAPTISM

There are several scriptural passages where the presence of the Holy Spirit is manifested in unusual ways, both in and surrounding the act of baptism. More specifically:

- When Jesus was baptized, (Matt. 3)
- When Saul/Paul was baptized, (Acts 9)
- When the Ethiopian Eunuch was baptized, (Acts 8)

We observe and note this unusual working of the Holy Spirit as a help to you in expecting God to manifest his love for you in wonderful ways as you follow Christ in baptism. We encourage you to be open to the supernatural love of God manifesting itself in and through you as you follow Christ in baptism, and you will find it to be a blessed experience. You may also experience that through the Holy Spirit, God gives you specific new gifts of the Spirit. If this occurs, relax and enjoy all that he has for you.

(for further explanation, see "After your Baptism" on pg. 27)

GENERAL PREPARTION

The following are details you should care for in preparation for the baptism service.

THINGS TO BRING

Come to the service as fully prepared to enter the water as possible. Bring with you a complete change of clothing, a towel, handkerchief and a plastic bag (to carry home the wet clothing). Wear a light coloured top. You may wish to wear a bathing suit under your clothes.

WHERE TO MEET

Meet in the office foyer 30 minutes prior to the start of the service. A Pastor or other baptism coordinator will be available for assistance in last minute explanations and preparation for entering the water.

PASTORAL INSTRUCTION

The candidates will usually be ordered alphabetically by last name. The Pastor will give final instructions and pray with the group before the beginning of the service. In the Water Barefoot is fine, or wear shoes with a rubber sole into the water (water shoes or runners). The water is heated to a comfortable temperature. (usually around 85°)

- When you enter the water, turn and face the microphone (but do not touch it). Give your name with a clear audible voice. If sharing your story, go ahead and share. Speak slowly, clearly and in a natural and relaxed tone of voice.

- When you have finished your story, turn and face the stairs, stand with one hand clasping the other wrist in front or as the Pastor instructs you, then relax!
- The Pastor may ask you one or two affirming questions, and then will say, "On the profession of your faith, I now baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."
- Please breathe normally but then hold your breath before going under the water. When you feel movement backward, simply **bend your knees!**
- If you wish, pinch your nose with one hand to keep out the water.
- The whole weight of your body should be carried by the Pastor's hand on the back between the shoulders. He will hold your clasped hands. Fully trust the Pastor to baptize you.
Don't try to baptize yourself!
- On rising from the water, wipe the water from your eyes. Don't hurry, don't struggle... just enjoy the presence of God and the celebration of the people.
- There will be helpers to assist you. Let them help you because the steps are slippery when wet.

YOUR PERSONAL STORY

We usually encourage everyone who is baptized to give a two or three minute personal testimony of salvation. It gives you opportunity to express publicly what God has done in your life, and it also blesses those who have journeyed with you to hear what God has done in your life!

However, if for some reason you cannot give your testimony, we do not want this issue to keep you from being baptized.

THERE ARE OTHER OPTIONS

- The Pastor could "interview" you and you could give brief answers to a series of questions that you would agree to in advance.
- The Pastor could ask you some specific questions to which you would answer only "yes" or "no".
- You could arrange with the Pastor to video record your testimony a week or so prior to the service. This would be shown instead of a live talk.
- A short, well-written testimony giving the church family an idea of what your life was like before coming to Christ, how you met Christ, and a brief update on what the Lord has done in your life since you came to Christ in faith, is helpful both to you and to those who walk with you.

***See Page 27 For Helpful tips on Preparing Your Personal Testimony.** If you require help writing your personal testimony please contact any Valley View Pastor. You may also speak to any Elder for assistance.

PREPARING YOUR PERSONAL STORY

It should be our desire to present Christ in such a clear manner that those who hear will not only want to know Him, but will also know how to know Him personally. Careful preparation and dependence upon the Holy Spirit are therefore essential.

THINGS TO DO

- Ask the Lord to give you wisdom and guidance as you write (James 1:5,6)
- Follow a three-point outline:
 - Life before knowing Christ
 - How you came to know Christ
 - Life after you received Christ (Changes He has made, what He means to you now). (Emphasize point “three” above if you became a Christian as a small child)
- Write in such a way that others will feel associated with you in past and present experiences
- Give enough details to arouse interest (do not generalize too much)
- You may use one or two Bible verses to strengthen what you are saying
- Edit and rewrite carefully until the final draft is reduced to one double-spaced page and use at least a 12 pt. font size

- Emphasize that having received Jesus Christ as Saviour, and enthroning Him as Lord and King has made the difference in your life.
- Be realistic. Christ does not eliminate all the problems of life, but enables you to live and work them out with the confidence that He is with you and helping you
- Be positive, not negative, from start to finish
- In the “How I Came To Christ” section, communicate the gospel clearly and briefly
- In the “After I Came To Christ” section, briefly include two or three benefits of having become a Christian (ex. felt God’s love, forgiveness, fulfillment, peace of mind, membership in God’s family, new outlook on life, freedom from fear of death, fear of living, fear of people, assurance of eternal life, purpose for living, counsel from the Word of God, fellowship, inner strength, power for witnessing, understanding for others, fruit of the spirit, freedom from self. Make this your own, not what you think others expect you to say)

THINGS TO AVOID

- Making statements, which reflect negatively on any former church and other organizations or people
- Mentioning denominations, especially in a derogatory way
- Preaching at people. This is a testimony, not a “preachimony”. Please say “I” and “me”, rather than “you” or “we”
- Telling all the “gory” details of your sinful past life. The major emphasis must be on what God has done for you since you have placed your faith in Christ.

HOW TO SHARE YOUR TESTIMONY

- Share your testimony with loving enthusiasm in the power of the Holy Spirit. (Eph. 5:18)
- Speak clearly in a natural, relaxed tone of voice
- Avoid mannerisms such as rubbing your nose, swaying back and forth, clearing your throat, using “uh’s” , “um’s” and “ah’s”
- Memorize your testimony and/or practice it until it becomes natural.

SAMPLE TESTIMONY

Before I received eternal life, my life was full of chaos and bitterness. I lived only for myself and did not care who I hurt to get to the top. Material success and public recognition were my top priorities.

I did extremely well in my business, but I wasn’t happy. With every new challenge and subsequent success there came a feeling of emptiness.

I felt there had to be more to life than making money and having a good time.

Then I received eternal life. One day, a friend who cared very much about my life talked to me about the love of God. She explained how man is separated from God because of sin and pollution in our lives. Then she explained how Jesus Christ was sent from heaven to die upon the cross and pay the penalty for my sin. From the Bible, she showed me that I could have eternal life and be forgiven by accepting Jesus Christ as my Saviour.

That very afternoon I got on my knees and asked for God’s forgiveness and invited Jesus Christ to take control of my life.

Now I experience peace and joy on a daily basis.

I know that I have been forgiven by God, and I know I have the gift of eternal life. God has given me a deeper purpose for living, and I want most of all to be recognized as a faithful servant of the Lord. A verse of Scripture that has become a favorite of mine is found in Prov. 3: 5-6. It says, *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, Lean not on your own understanding, In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your path”*.

Today I want to be baptized because Jesus said this is what I should do, and I want to obey Him and follow him forever.

AFTER YOUR BAPTISM

Your Baptism is a significant life event. It is common for people to celebrate their baptism with family and friends after. Be sure to talk about this with your family.

It is also a loud declaration to the World, both the physically seen & spiritually unseen world, that you have committed to following Jesus. There is a significant ongoing spiritual conflict in our world incited by created spiritual beings that are pursuing rebellion against God. (Eph 6:12) It is also their desire to hurt God where it matters most, his beloved children (1 Peter 5:8.) In your baptism you have made an open declaration to stand with God, by the gift of His Son Jesus, and He has sent His Holy Spirit to secure us in this journey.

Following your baptism, you may discover new spiritual gifts (1Cor 12; 1Cor 14; Eph 4, Rom 12) God has released in you, or new desires to serve or care for the needs of others. You may also find yourself struggling with new or old questions about your faith. You may struggle with doubts about faith and the questions of God still lingering that you may have assumed you would be finished with after being baptised. You may even be tempted to act on old distractions or habits, or face new temptations you may not feel prepared for.

Many people have been overcome by growing distractions, and not known how to walk on a different path. Often after baptism, the challenges of life and consequences of our previous choices may catch up to us, especially those that we have been ignoring while we were on our journey of faith.

In addition, the enemy of God will target us out of spite for our bold spiritual declaration - a rejection of sin and evil, and an honouring of God, His promise we received in Jesus and the new presence of His Spirit in our life. All of these obviously infuriate our spiritual enemy. He would love nothing more than to undermine our testimony by dragging us back into sin. It is through these times that our faith can grow to help us overcome our spiritual challenges, or carry us through our physical or daily challenges with a new source of hope (Romans 8:37-39.) We can have confidence that God will watch over us
(2 Thessalonians 3:3.)

It is also not uncommon for some individuals to consider their faith 'locked in' and forget that it's still a daily commitment and discipline. It is our experience as 1Peter 5:9, 10 teaches, that we can live in this truth...

"Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.
(1Peter 5:9, 10)

There are some practical steps you can take to support your own growth in faith.

- At Valley View we offer the "Set Free" retreat, and the "Hearing God" seminar both twice a year.
(John 10:27-28; John 15).
- Finding a good Small Group will build consistency into your Christian life as you journey together in community.
(Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 10:24,25)

- Pray yourself ready each day. Pray through the Armour of God (Eph 6:10-18) as you prepare for the day ahead.

While the church is part of your spiritual journey, only you and God are accountable for your spiritual life, and as the saying goes, 'You can do it, we can help.' Let us know when you are ready for a next step, or if you are struggling with questions or temptations, there are many here at Valley View who are always willing to pray with you and offer some support and spiritual direction.

Above all, know that we are already praying that God will provide you with a new awareness of His presence each day as you listen for His voice.



800 DAVIS DRIVE
NEWMARKET
ON L3Y 2R5
905.830.9619
OFFICE@VVAC.CA