



Baptism is our public confession of obedient faith. It is imitating Christ. It is retelling the gospel. It is obeying the greatest commandment. It is our crossing over, exodus moment. The religious leaders in Jesus' day rejected the council of God by not being baptized (Luke 7:30). They wanted to stay in the shadows. They didn't want to go public. That's why, as Max Lucado says in one of his books, "baptism separates the tire kickers from the car buyers." It's time to commit. It's time to unite with Christ. It's time to accept the cross as your way of life.

These questions are intended to deepen your experience of the message. Use them for your personal or family study time, or with an open Bible as you share the good news with your neighbor.

- 1. A DIVIDING LINE.** Water appears as a dividing line in many key places in the Old Testament: between heaven & earth (**Gen 1:6-8**), between slavery and freedom (**Ex 14**), between wandering and rest (**Josh 3:7-17**). How does this backdrop help you re-imagine baptism in the New Testament?
- 2. Paul connects baptism with two dividing markers: water & blood.** Follow up: **Read Romans 6:1-6** in two different translations (suggestion: ESV & the Message). How does the Jewish and the Greco-Roman background help expand your understanding of this passage?
- 3. WHY BE BAPTIZED?** Baptism imitates the example of our Lord (Matt 3:13-17). It is the calling of the church (Matt 28:18-20). It symbolizes our answer to the greatest commandment (Mark 12:30). It demonstrates the gospel (Eph 4:4-6). It is a uniting event—with Christ (Gal 3:26-27) and each other (1 Cor 12:13).
- 4. WHY BE BAPTIZED?** Nathan claims "baptism is the appointed time and place for our crossing over experience." Do you agree? What passages support this view? How can we better understand those who might disagree? Follow up: **Read Acts 2:37-38, Rom 6:1-6 & Heb 10:19-22.**
- 5. BUT THE STORY IS JESUS.** Nathan said "in the New Testament, people respond in baptism not to a sermon about baptism, but to a sermon about Jesus." The central point in the key passages that mention baptism is Jesus Christ. Follow up: **Read again Acts 2:36-38, Acts 22:16, Romans 6 & Gal 3:26-28.**
- 6. The gospel is about Jesus Christ** (Mark 1:1). Our righteous works do not earn salvation (Titus 2:3-5). The "what," "why," and "how" of salvation is Jesus Christ, whose death, by grace, brings us life (Eph 2:6-8). Baptism is never called a "work" in the NT. *Discuss baptism in this light.*