

# **Baptism**

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**Integration Question:** *Explain your understanding of baptism in terms of Romans 6:1-6.*

### Theological Statement

Baptism is a whole person, live transforming, Holy Spirit regenerating gesture. Not only did Jesus get baptized Himself, but He calls His followers to get baptized and commanded them to baptize the people they lead to faith in Him. Baptism does not save a person but rather, serves as an outward expression of what has taken place in one's heart, mainly, repentance that leads to faith in Jesus. Baptism embodies the expression of our faith that roots us in Jesus. In Roman Six, Paul offers one of the most beautiful descriptions of baptism and its spiritual relevance in a Christians life.

Paul depicts that just as Jesus submitted himself to the Father, died for our sins, and was buried, we too die to our old self symbolized by fully submerging under water (Romans 6:3-4a). And just how Jesus was raised to life by God's Spirit, we too come up out of that water, believing in the new, transformative life through the indwelling of Holy Spirit (Rom. 6:4b-6). Paul see's that baptism represents the fact that followers of Jesus are slaves to righteousness, not to sin (Rom. 6:18). As New Covenant followers of Jesus, we get to be partakers in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus by experiencing baptism. Baptism is a Christ ordained participatory act that expressing our commitment to Him and our identification with Christ and His body and renewed life. It is the proclamation that we believe that every ounce of our old self has been put to death, buried, and every ounce of our new life is meant to be found, lived, and experienced with Jesus through His wholly indwelling Spirit. When one goes under that water, they are not professing to come up as a better version of themselves. Rather, they are professing they are brand new creations, governed not by our flesh, but by His indwelling Spirit (Gal. 2:20).

### Ministry Application

The practical application of knowing and understanding Romans Six in light of baptism is that it should only be done by people who have put their faith in Jesus. While there is no age restriction, it does maintain that the person is old enough to realize their sin, accept the forgiveness of Jesus, and put their faith in Him. Said plainly, it is not for infants. Nor is baptism about being seen as a participant of a community. Instead, baptism is truly the outward expression of what spiritually, Jesus and Holy Spirit have done inside the person. It is solely about a person's confession of faith and regeneration. Another important application of Romans Six is that baptism would always be done by full immersion in the water. Because Romans Six describes a whole life experience, full immersion seems like the most practical and logic kind of baptism.

Another application in light of Romans Six is that people cannot just theoretically walk in freedom of sin, they can actually be partakers of the freedom that comes with putting their faith in Jesus, being indwelt with Holy Spirit, and living dead to their flesh but made alive in Jesus. This is what baptism spiritually represents. While the act of baptism can never save them, it is a public declaration that they can imprint in their heart as a remembrance of the life that Jesus now offers them. Too often people get baptized and try to live the Christian life as a better version of their old self, rather than realize that when they went under the water, there old self died. They wholly proclaimed that their new life was now purely found with and in Christ's very life. This is the power of what baptism and Romans Six mean.