

**LIBERTY BIBLE CHURCH
BAPTISMAL CANDIDATE'S
TESTIMONY**

NAME

ADDRESS _____ **CITY/STATE/ZIP**

TELEPHONE _____ **BIRTHDAY**

HEIGHT _____ **WEIGHT** _____

Why do you desire to be baptized?

Write out a brief testimony of your faith in Jesus Christ:

1. My life before I came to know Christ.

2. The circumstances that led to my coming to Christ as my Savior.

3. How God has changed me since I came to know Christ.

Why should I be baptized?

Baptism is a part of discipleship. Read Matthew 28:18-20.

a. Who is speaking in these verses?

b. Who is being addressed? (see v. 16)

c. These verses, called The Great Commission, describe the basic purpose of the church – to help people from every nation become disciples of Jesus Christ. What activities does Jesus identify as crucial components of making disciples? (see v. 19)

d. Look at the following passages to see what you can learn about being “baptized in/into” the Lord.

Romans 6:3 *“Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?”* (NIV)

I Corinthians 1:13-15 *“Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul? I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, so no one can say that you were baptized into my name.”* (NIV)

Galatians 3:27 *“...for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”* (NIV)

Baptism involves identification. Baptism as a Christian means you have committed your life to Jesus. This is why Liberty baptizes only those who have expressed a personal faith in Christ.

e. The other component of making disciples, according to Matthew 28:19, is teaching

others to observe all that Jesus commanded. Christianity involves more than knowing the truth. It includes living the truth. Why would Jesus emphasize this? (see John 14:23, 24) How do you plan to carry out this part of your discipleship?

f. There are other reasons to be baptized. It offers an opportunity for you to declare openly your faith in Christ, so baptism offers an unique setting to be a witness. As you are baptized, you will also serve as an example to other Christians to obey the teaching of the Bible about baptism.

Is Baptism Essential for Salvation?

Some teach that baptism is a requirement for salvation. There are a few verses in the Bible that might appear to teach that, but not if they are properly understood. Here is one example:

Acts 2:38 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." (NIV)

Some Christians have read Acts 2:38 and concluded that a person must be baptized to experience forgiveness. The proper interpretation hinges on the meaning of the word "for". It could be used in a couple of different senses here:

- (a) "In order to obtain" (Compare a modern example, "I am going to the store for milk.")
- (b) "As a result of" (Compare a modern example, "He is going to prison for murder.")

How can we know which is the sense of Acts 2:38. The best way to find out is to compare how the phrase is used elsewhere in the Bible. Matthew 3:11 offers a good parallel. In that verse, John the Baptist declares, "I baptize you with water for repentance." Which is the more likely understanding of John's words—that his baptism produces repentance (as in (a) above) or that his baptism recognizes and symbolizes the repentance which is already present (as in (b) above)?

Perhaps the clearest way to refute the idea that baptism is essential for salvation is to look at the passages of the Bible which describe the plan of salvation and how Jesus and the apostles viewed baptism. How do the following verses help complete your understanding of baptism?

John 4:1, 2 *"The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John, although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples."* (NIV)

1 Corinthians 1:14-17 *"I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gains, so no one can say that you were baptized into my name. (Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else.) For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel — not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of*

its power. " (NIV)

Galatians 3:6-9 *"Consider Abraham: 'He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.' Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: 'All nations will be blessed through you.' So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith." (NIV)*

To summarize, baptism is not essential for salvation but it is a vital part of discipleship.

What if I was baptized as a baby?

The practice of infant baptism goes back fairly early in church history, so there is some historical precedent for it. The churches that baptize infants today don't always do it for the same reasons.

- a. Some believe baptism is an essential part of salvation. We have already seen that this is not a correct understanding of Scripture. It is only by faith that we are made right with God.
- b. Others baptize children because they feel that baptism is a New Testament equivalent of circumcision in the Old Testament. The New Testament does not make an explicit correlation between baptism and circumcision. In fact, the general tenor of the Scriptures indicates that baptism is a decision made by a person who has already believed in Christ, not something which happens apart from faith or before faith. In biblical times, baptism often took place at the time a person trusted in Christ or shortly after.

If you were baptized as an infant, it is important to understand what that baptism signified and to see if it represents the clear teaching of Scripture on the matter. If it doesn't match what the Bible teaches, then you have good reason to consider being baptized as a response to your faith in Christ.

Other Things to Know

Is there anything else I need to do?

Today you will receive a baptism application if you haven't already filled one out. After you have filled it out and turned it in, one of the pastors will schedule an appointment with you to review your application and answer any questions you may have.

What should I bring?

- Please wear light colored shorts/pants and a light-colored tee shirt. We will provide a white robe for you to wear over this.
- A towel
- Dry clothes to change into after the baptism.
- A hair dryer, unless you wish you to use the hand dryer in the bathroom.
- A plastic bag to put your wet clothes and towel in.
- A copy of your testimony

When and where do I get ready for the baptism?

Use the restrooms in Fellowship Hall to change. Meet the pastor who will conduct the baptisms outside the restrooms. Please allow ten to fifteen minutes before the baptism begins to get ready.

The pastor in charge will lead you up to the baptism area. Please be careful getting in and out of the baptismal tank. While in it, don't touch the microphone. One of the worship ministry team members will be there to help if you have any needs. Remember the floor is slippery when wet.

If you have any questions, please call the church office (926-3038).