

Study 1

What it means to follow
JESUS'
commands

And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

Matthew 10:38

You can't be born a Christian. You can't simply call yourself a Christian. You don't become a Christian because you attend a Church or wear a cross. A Christian is one who *follows* Jesus Christ.

1. What *does* it mean to follow Christ?

2. What did Jesus mean when He said that His followers must "*take up his cross*"? (Note Matthew 16:24)

One of the first things that a would-be follower of Christ must do is clearly taught in the New Testament and yet it was the one thing that Christ could not do!

3. In preparing people to be ready to follow Christ, what was the preliminary message of John Baptist? (Matthew 3:2)
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4. How does this compare with Christ's first message to all those who would follow Him? (Matthew 4:17)
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Some people feel they could never change or "clean up their act" enough in order to begin following Christ. These people haven't yet apprehended God's grace.

5. How does Acts 11:18 and 2Timothy 2:25 correct this idea that repentance is merely human effort?
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Repentance is impossible without the grace of God. Grace from God enables a person to repent. To receive the grace of God begins with recognition of our need for it.

6. How do we begin to follow Christ? (Romans 10:13; Acts 2:21)
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You may feel that you are *not* right with God, but want to be. You don't have to clean up your act or become a better person- you just have to acknowledge your need for God and His forgiveness. You are just one prayer away from beginning to have peace with God!

The Baptism JESUS commanded

Repentance leading to conversion as a follower of Christ is an utterly internal work. That is, when you become a follower of Christ you change on the inside- the way you think, the way you feel, your desires, your dreams, your goals, and hopes. But

there is an *outward* sign of what has taken place on the inside: *water baptism*.

7. Note Matthew 3:11. Why did John the Baptist say that he was baptising people?
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8. Therefore, noting Matthew 3:13-14, why was John reluctant to baptise Jesus? Circle the correct answers-
- (a) Because he had already baptised Jesus
 - (b) Because Jesus was so sinful he was beyond repentance
 - (c) Because Jesus was born and lived without sin, He had no need of repenting or baptising
 - (d) Because Jesus was his second cousin he felt it was a conflict of interest to baptise him.

9. What reason did Jesus give John for being baptised? (Matthew 3:15)
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We are to live like Jesus. If you read a statement like that and think that it means we must all become tunic-wearing, wandering, preachers, then we miss the point. We must become like Jesus who was perfectly obedient to His Father. Jesus did His father's will. So must we.

Baptism involved the total immersion of the baptised into water. It is also somewhat symbolic, for example-



1. It is a picture of being *washed* from sin
2. It is an analogy of our *death* and burial
3. It is an enactment of our *resurrection*.

Washed. Death. Resurrection.

The Apostle, Paul, enlightens us about water baptism in Romans 6.

10. Note what Paul says in Romans 6:1-4 about the significance of water baptism. Why did he think water baptism was important based on this passage?

He makes the assumption that everyone in the church have been water baptised. It was reasonable to assume this because water baptism was the first public demonstration of a person's commitment to follow Christ- and it still is. If you are yet to be water baptised since following Christ, this is your next significant step of public obedience in your walk with Christ.

Following Christ's commands and water baptism...

1. Baptism speaks of repentance.
2. Christ was baptised as an example to His followers.
3. Christ commanded that His followers be baptised.
4. It was assumed that every believer in the early church was water baptised.
5. Water baptism is a picture of washing, death and resurrection.
6. Water baptism does not save the follower of Christ- but it was commanded by Christ.