

Timothy ... will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.

Paul - 1 Corinthians 4:17 (NIV)

In Christ

Or don't you know that all of those who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death...burial...and resurrection.

Paul - Romans 6:3-5 (NIV)

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Obey the five commands listed below and experience your life "in Christ."

Experience the abundant life through living by grace.

Notice that each command is either to believe something or to choose to do something.

THE FIVE COMMANDS

Believe

Romans 6:11

Reckon (believe) yourselves to be dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord

Choose

Romans 6:12

Do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey it in its lusts

Choose

Romans 6:13a

Do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin

Choose/Believe

Romans 6:13b

Present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead.

Choose

Romans 6:13c

[Present] your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

We can and should obey each of these commands because Romans 6:3-5 teaches that all believers have been baptized into Jesus and as a result all believers have been baptized into his death, burial, and resurrection.

Show Them How

The Instructional Purpose of Believer's Baptism

By Dr. Jerry Halbrook

Dr. Jerry Halbrook is Pastor of the Parkway Baptist Church of McKinney, Texas. He is a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary with two degrees. For many years he has understood and experienced his union with Christ. With this article he brings new and fresh understanding of the message.

If you trusted Christ as a child, you might not remember much about your baptism. I heard the gospel in an evangelistic meeting when I was only eight. I understood the basic truths concerning how my sin separated me from God, concerning Christ's death and resurrection, and concerning my need to repent and believe. But after my salvation experience I don't think anyone explained to me the meaning of my baptism. I waited another seventeen years to learn that. To say, "I could have used that information" would be a profound understatement.

Both Jesus and Paul contribute to our conviction that we should use water baptism to teach the new believer how to live the Christian life. Our Lord commanded us to baptize new disciples (with water), and from Paul we learn that the Holy Spirit baptizes believers into Christ. Our water baptism symbolizes what the Holy Spirit does when we believe. We need to understand our union with Christ in order to live the Christian life.

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In Romans 6:1-11 Paul teaches that the Holy Spirit baptizes the believer into union with Christ in death, burial and resurrection.

Paul introduces this lesson with a rhetorical question: "What shall we say then, are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?" As he answers this challenge to his preaching of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone Paul taught us not only who we are in Christ, but also *how* to be empowered through that vital union.

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The Apostle informed his readers that sin entered the world through the one man Adam (5:12), but that God gives grace, righteousness and life to those who unite with Christ through faith. In Romans 6:1-11 Paul contrasts being "in" the last Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45) with our being "in" the first Adam (Romans 5:12-19). He hinted at this "first-Adam / last-Adam" contrast in Romans 5:14 where he says that the first Adam was a type of "the one who was to come." The "one who was to come" is Jesus, the last Adam.

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We must keep in mind that in Romans 6:1-14, Paul is

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not discussing how a lost person can be saved, but how a saved person can obey his Lord. The question is, "Shall we *continue* in sin (after salvation) that grace may abound?" Paul not only explains *why* we should not continue in sin (because we are in Christ rather than in Adam), but *how* we can have victory over sin (by virtue of being in Christ rather than in Adam).

Paul not only explains why we should not continue in sin (because we are in Christ rather than in Adam), but how we can have victory over sin (by virtue of being in Christ rather than in Adam).

Believer's baptism teaches the practical significance of our oneness with Christ in the crucifixion and burial of the old man, as well as in the vivification and resurrection of the new man. This is how disciples are to see themselves now that the Holy Spirit has baptized them into Jesus (Romans 6:11). Water baptism teaches Christians how to be filled with the Spirit. It teaches them *how* to live the Christian life.

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One has to ask where Paul got the idea that the Holy Spirit baptizes the believer into union with Christ in death, burial and resurrection (1 Corinthians 12:13; Romans 6:1-10). In Galatians 1:12 Paul says he gained his understanding through a revelation of Christ. If Jesus revealed to Paul that the Holy Spirit baptizes the believer into union

with Christ, Romans 6:1-11 (which teaches Spirit baptism) gives us a better understanding of our Lord's Great Commission, which commands water baptism.

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In the Great Commission Jesus taught his followers to make disciples . . . baptizing them . . . teaching them to obey all that He commanded them (Matthew 28:19-20). Paul's explanation of Spirit baptism in Romans 6 suggests that we should use water baptism to teach new disciples *how to obey*.

You might remember Jesus' disciples asking Him, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1). They wanted Him to teach them *how to pray*. Similarly, when Jesus told his followers to teach new disciples to obey all that He had commanded, He wanted them *to teach* new believers *how to obey*. Paul's understanding of the Holy Spirit's baptism does just that. It teaches not only *why* we must not continue in sin now that we are united with the Last Adam, but *how* we can have victory over sin by virtue of our oneness with Christ in death, burial and resurrection.

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A few weeks ago I baptized two teenagers and two eight-year-old children. Before the service I read to them from the fifth and sixth chapters of Romans. I taught them who they once were in Adam and who they now are in Christ. And I encouraged them to spend

the rest of their Christian life seeking to interpret and apply this truth.

I don't expect any of these young people to fully comprehend the wonderful truth of our oneness with Christ as it applies to daily living. Indeed I myself am still learning. But in fulfillment of the Great Commission I will use believer's baptism to *teach new disciples how to obey all that Christ commanded*. To say that they need this information is a profound understatement.

EXCITING NEWS FROM SOUTH CAROLINA

For many years Brother Luther Price has been sharing the message of living by grace in the area where he lives in South Carolina and beyond.

In recent months, many other pastors in the area have been teaching their churches the message of living by grace. God is moving in those churches. They share with us testimonies of what God is doing.

The most recent testimony came this week and it is like the others. The pastor has been teaching "Our Oneness With Christ" to his church and lives have been changed. He added that they will never be the same again. His church will continue their study of the life of grace by working their way through "Here's Life."

Also this week, Brother Price called to order books for his church and as we talked he said, "It is amazing at what is happening in this area." We rejoice with these churches and pray that their influence will reach far beyond their area.

PRAYER OPPORTUNITY

This ministry has shipped books on the theme of living by grace to practically every state in the nation and almost 40 foreign countries. We pray for God to use them to bring people to grace. We invite you to join us.

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