

## Q & A—IS IT WRONG TO BE RE-BAPTIZED?

This question, by itself, can be difficult to answer without a context. The possibility of one being “re-baptized” depends upon whether their original baptism was legitimate or illegitimate. We can know if our baptism was legitimate if it is in keeping with the precedent Jesus Christ and His apostles laid as the church was established.

Baptism was for penitent believers in Jesus. Mark 16:16 says, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.” In Matthew’s Great Commission account, baptism was administered only after disciples were taught (Matthew 28:18-20). Thus, if you were baptized as an infant, or without sincere belief then your baptism was not “the answer of a good conscience” as 1 Peter 3:21 requires.

In addition, baptism was “for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38; see also Acts 22:16). If baptized as an infant, you had no sins to wash away

(Matthew 19:14). Some denominations claim baptism is an “outward sign of an inward grace” and merely a symbol of sins already washed away. No Bible passage teaches this denominational cliché. Baptism is “for the remission of sins” and is an act God has commanded that “saves us” (1 Peter 3:21).

Also, we read that “we were all baptized into one body” (1 Corinthians 12:13). Thus, at baptism we automatically become members of the body, or church (see Colossians 1:18). If you were baptized simply as a ceremonial act to be added to a denomination’s membership then you were baptized for the wrong purpose. According to Scripture, when you are baptized you are in the body of Christ, you do not need to be baptized again to become a part of any official denomination (Galatians 3:27). Such scenarios were unheard of in the first century, when only one body of Christ existed.

In Acts 19 Paul came upon several God-fearing people in Ephesus who were not baptized correctly. They had only been baptized “into John’s baptism” (19:1-4). Yet, after the ascension of Jesus Christ they needed to be baptized by the authority of Jesus Christ (19:5). These good disciples were sincerely trying to do God’s will, but they were sincerely wrong. They were “baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (19:5).

Some feel as though they must be “re-baptized” if they sin after their conversion to Christ. This is not true. In such a situation, we are commanded to confess our sins and turn from them (Acts 8:21-22; 1 John 1:9). God’s law of pardon to the alien sinner includes baptism “for the remission of sins.” God’s law of pardon for the erring Christian is to “confess our sins” and “He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins” (1 John 1:9).

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## “FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT” LOVE

Galatians 5:19-23 contrasts the “works of the flesh” to the “fruit of the Spirit.” Before our conversion, we may have engaged in the “works of the flesh” listed in verses 19-21. Yet, after conversion, “those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (5:24). What must we do after we “crucify” the “works of the flesh?” The answer is found in verse 25: “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”

Some confuse the idea of “walking in the Spirit.”

They believe it is a “religious experience” or a whispery voice from within that guides us. Yet, the Spirit has a “law” (Romans 8:2). This law has been revealed through the Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16-17). 1 John 5:6 mentions “the Spirit is truth.” With this in mind, if we follow the words of the Spirit, the truth, found in the Bible we will bear “the fruit of the Spirit.”

The first “fruit of the Spirit” mentioned in Galatians 5:22 is “love.” Our “love” must be shown both to God and our fellow man (Matthew

22:37-38). This is the first and second great commandments. Pages could be written on the importance of love. Perhaps the most eloquent summary of its character is in 1 Corinthians 13.

How much greater influence would Christians have with all of these attributes of love? How much sweeter would the world be if such love were always on the forefront of our minds? Follow God’s Word and you will steady your influence and help change the world.

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***“BUT THE  
FRUIT OF THE  
SPIRIT IS...”  
(GALATIANS  
5:22-23).***

