

Lesson Two

RESPONDING TO THE MESSAGE

from
A Time To Build
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Abridged

The Christian message, as outlined in the previous lesson, brings us to one overwhelming conclusion: Jesus Christ is Lord. He has total authority over every person and thing in the universe. When we honestly consider the holy righteous nature of God and our own sinful condition, we must conclude that we are in a bad situation. We are guilty lawbreakers with a date to stand before the unyielding righteous Judge of the universe. The awareness of our dilemma drives us to ask the same question the Philippian jailer asked in Acts 16:30, “*What must I do to be saved?*”

As we become aware of our dilemma, God allows us to respond in two ways. 1) We can continue in our state of guilt before God, or 2) we can believing in Jesus and receive the grace and forgiveness He offers. If we choose to believe and accept grace and forgiveness, there will be actions on our part that demonstrate that our faith is genuine.

Saving Faith

To Believe: Defined

The Greek term *to believe* means to be **convinced** a statement made by a person is true; to be **persuaded** of; to credit or place **confidence** in; to **rely** upon; to **trust** in or **commit** one’s profession to.

1. Answer the questions below based on Ephesians 2:8–10.
 - a. What is one thing that cannot save us from sin? _____
 - b. What are we saved by? _____
 - c. How is grace appropriated? _____
 - d. What is the expected result of being saved? _____
2. How does James describe faith that has no works (James 2:17)? _____
3. Read Hebrews 11:6 and fill in the blank below.
It is _____ to please God without faith.
4. True belief in Jesus always produces action. What action do you see in Romans 10:9–10?

Counterfeits to Saving Faith

5. Which of the following are counterfeits to saving faith?
 - Intellectual agreement with the Word of God (see James 2:19)
 - A claim to Jesus as “Savior” without repentance
 - “Trying Jesus” to see if He is true or if He will bless me
 - Good works

Repentance

Defining Repentance

6. Which of the following is not repentance?
- Feeling deep sorrow for your sin.
 - Turning and walking in the opposite direction.
 - A change of mind and will.

Feeling deep sorrow for your sin is not repentance. If that sorrow is based on right motives, it could lead to repentance, but by itself it is not repentance. True repentance results in corresponding action (Matthew 3:8).

7. Read these verses: Luke 13:3–5, Acts 17:30 and Acts 20:21. According to these verses, repentance is:
- Ideal, but not needed.
 - Essential in some situations.
 - Absolutely essential.
8. What leads people to repentance (Romans 2:4)? _____
9. What is God’s attitude toward us concerning repentance (2 Peter 3:9)? _____
- _____

The Cost of Following Jesus

10. Read Luke 9:23-26 and describe the cost of following Jesus in your own words.
- _____

Jesus commands us to deny self, take up our cross daily, and follow Him. This command embodies our identification with His death and His lordship in our new life in Him (Galatians 2:20). This includes death to wrongs, worldly attachments and all known sins. But it also includes dying to things we might consider rights. It is a willingness to go wherever He leads. Does this sound hard? It might at first, but it becomes easy when you believe He loves you and has *your* best interests in mind.

Baptism in Water

11. What is water baptism compared to in the Bible (Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12)?
- _____
12. Water baptism is an outward depiction of an inward reality. It is a visual demonstration of the gospel. In repentance and water baptism, we identify with Jesus in three things. According to Galatians 2:20 and Romans 6:4, what are these three things?
- a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
13. What happens to sins in baptism (Acts 22:16). _____

Willingness to be baptized is often an indication of the genuineness of a person’s repentance and willingness to obey God’s commands.

14. When should a person be baptized (Acts 2:41; 16:30–33; 22:16)?

Only those who are sincere about repenting and following Jesus should be baptized. Baptism is not a “formula” for salvation or a church membership ceremony. It is an act of obedience demonstrating submission to Jesus as Lord, in which He does a spiritual work in the believer’s heart. From this we can see that baptism can only be valid after a person consciously chooses to believe and submit to Jesus as Lord. This indicates that infant baptism is not part of the discussion here. There is no account in Scripture of infants being baptized. Parents should dedicate their children to God as infants and this may be done with various ceremonies. But Baptism is reserved for a time following repentance and confession of Jesus as Lord..

15. How should a person be baptized (Acts 8:38)? _____

16. Who should perform baptisms (Acts 9:17–18)?

Though church officers often perform baptisms, there is no indication that there is any qualification needed besides being a fellow Christian. It is not important who does the baptism; rather, the key issue is the understanding and the faith of the person being baptized. However, the person who does the baptizing should be an able minister of the truth and knowledgeable of the Scriptures concerning baptism to ensure proper instruction is given.

Personal Reflection

There are many responses to the gospel. We will be responding to our loving Father for eternity! However, in this study we have looked at three basic responses to the gospel. They are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Take a moment to ponder the three areas addressed in this study, and then complete the following:

1. Are you confident of your salvation, or do you have doubts? _____
If you have doubts about your salvation, seek counsel right away. God wants you to have full assurance of your salvation.
2. Did you feel any prompting from the Holy Spirit during this study concerning areas where repentance is needed in your life? If so, make note of them and deal with them as soon as possible. _____

3. Have you been baptized in water since you surrendered to Jesus as Lord? _____

If you’re answering this question in a group setting, people in the group may want to share about their baptism experience.

Answers

1. a) our own good works
b) grace
c) by faith
d) good works
2. dead
3. impossible
4. Confession/verbal testimony
5. All four are counterfeits of saving faith
6. Feeling deep sorrow for your sin.
7. Absolutely essential
8. The goodness of God
9. Patience and longsuffering
10. Total commitment or surrender to Him as Lord and Master
11. Burial
12. a) death
b) burial
c) resurrection
13. Washed away
14. As soon as possible after believing and repenting
15. Immersion is strongly suggested
16. Another believer who is able to explain baptism to the new believer.