



Baptism Readiness Guide

Personal Reflection Instructions

Before you attend the Baptism class, we would like you to take some time to reflect. We prepared this guide so that you would understand your experience of the Holy Spirit's work in your heart and life in light of the Bible's teaching about salvation and baptism. Please write your personal answers, thoughts or questions on a separate page to discuss in class or at your baptism interview.

- 1. From the two accounts below, what do you see the two men doing that led to Jesus granting them salvation and entrance into paradise?**

Account 1: Jesus gives salvation to a tax collector (Luke 19:1 – 10 - ESV).

¹He entered Jericho and was passing through. ²And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. ³And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small in stature. ⁴So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way. ⁵And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today." ⁶So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. ⁷And when they saw it, they all grumbled, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." ⁸And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold." ⁹And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham." ¹⁰For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Account 2: Jesus grants entrance to paradise to one of the thieves (Luke 23:39 – 43 - ESV).

³⁹One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" ⁴⁰But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? ⁴¹And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." ⁴²And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." ⁴³And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

2. In the story below, the younger son repented (stopped ruling over his life and returned to allow the father to rule over his life) and confessed his sin (look at what he said) which led to his father granting him forgiveness and grace. What evidence of repentance and confession do you see in your life? Have you come to Jesus like the younger, humble, broken and clearly seeing your sin, or are you like to older brother and in your heart you truly feel like God should accept you because you've tried to live a decent life or be a good person?

The Parable of the Forgiving Father (Luke 15:11 – 24 - ESV)

¹¹ And he said, "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.' And he divided his property between them. ¹³ Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. ¹⁴ And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

¹⁷ "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! ¹⁸ I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants." ' ²⁰ And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. ²¹ And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²² But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. ²³ And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. ²⁴ For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate.

²⁵ "Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. ²⁷ And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.' ²⁸ But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, ²⁹ but he answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!' ³¹ And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.' "

3. What evidences of faith in Jesus do you see in your life? Consider the evidence from the verses below to guide your thoughts.

1 John 2:1 – 6 – Living Bible, Paraphrased

My little children, I am telling you this so that you will stay away from sin. But if you sin, there is someone to plead for you before the Father. His name is Jesus Christ, the one who is all that is good and who pleases God completely. ²He is the one who took God's wrath against our sins upon himself and brought us into fellowship with God; and he is the forgiveness for our sins, and not only ours but all the world's.

³And how can we be sure that we belong to him? By looking within ourselves: are we really trying to do what he wants us to?

⁴Someone may say, "I am a Christian; I am on my way to heaven; I belong to Christ." But if he doesn't do what Christ tells him to, he is a liar. ⁵But those who do what Christ tells them to will learn to love God more and more. That is the way to know whether or not you are a Christian. ⁶Anyone who says he is a Christian should live as Christ did.

1 John 3:14 – 19 – Living Bible, Paraphrased

¹⁴If we love other Christians, it proves that we have been delivered from hell and given eternal life. But a person who doesn't have love for others is headed for eternal death. ¹⁵Anyone who hates his Christian brother is really a murderer at heart; and you know that no one wanting to murder has eternal life within. ¹⁶We know what real love is from Christ's example in dying for us. And so we also ought to lay down our lives for our Christian brothers.

¹⁷But if someone who is supposed to be a Christian has money enough to live well, and sees a brother in need, and won't help him—how can God's love be within *him*? ¹⁸Little children, let us stop just *saying* we love people; let us *really* love them, and *show it by our actions*. ¹⁹Then we will know for sure, by our actions, that we are on God's side, and our consciences will be clear, even when we stand before the Lord.

1 John 4:7 – 8 – Living Bible, Paraphrased

⁷Dear friends, let us practice loving each other, for love comes from God and those who are loving and kind show that they are the children of God, and that they are getting to know him better. ⁸But if a person isn't loving and kind, it shows that he doesn't know God—for God is love.

1 John 5:1 – 5 – Living Bible, Paraphrased

¹If you believe that Jesus is the Christ—that he is God's Son and your Savior—then you are a child of God. And all who love the Father love his children too. ²So you can find out how much you love God's children—your brothers and sisters in the Lord—by how much you love and obey God. ³Loving God

means doing what he tells us to do, and really, that isn't hard at all; ⁴for every child of God can obey him, defeating sin and evil pleasure by trusting Christ to help him.

4. What evidence do you see of the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life? Consider the evidence from the verses below to guide your thoughts.

Galatians 5:19 – 24 - Living Bible, Paraphrased

¹⁹But when you follow your own wrong inclinations, your lives will produce these evil results: impure thoughts, eagerness for lustful pleasure, ²⁰idolatry, spiritism (that is, encouraging the activity of demons), hatred and fighting, jealousy and anger, constant effort to get the best for yourself, complaints and criticisms, the feeling that everyone else is wrong except those in your own little group—and there will be wrong doctrine, ²¹envy, murder, drunkenness, wild parties, and all that sort of thing. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

²²But when the Holy Spirit controls our lives he will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control; and here there is no conflict with Jewish laws.

²⁴Those who belong to Christ have nailed their natural evil desires to his cross and crucified them there.

Romans 8:1-17 - Living Bible, Paraphrased

¹So there is now no condemnation awaiting those who belong to Christ Jesus. ²For the power of the life-giving Spirit—and this power is mine through Christ Jesus—has freed me from the vicious circle of sin and death. ³We aren't saved from sin's grasp by knowing the commandments of God because we can't and don't keep them, but God put into effect a different plan to save us. He sent his own Son in a human body like ours—except that ours are sinful—and destroyed sin's control over us by giving himself as a sacrifice for our sins. ⁴So now we can obey God's laws if we follow after the Holy Spirit and no longer obey the old evil nature within us.

⁵Those who let themselves be controlled by their lower natures live only to please themselves, but those who follow after the Holy Spirit find themselves doing those things that please God. ⁶Following after the Holy Spirit leads to life and peace, but following after the old nature leads to death ⁷because the old sinful nature within us is against God. It never did obey God's laws and it never will. ⁸That's why those who are still under the control of their old sinful selves, bent on following their old evil desires, can never please God.

⁹But you are not like that. You are controlled by your new nature if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that if anyone doesn't have the Spirit of Christ living in him, he is not a Christian at all.) ¹⁰Yet, even though Christ lives within you, your body will die because of sin; but your spirit will live, for Christ has pardoned it. ¹¹And if the Spirit of God, who raised up Jesus from the dead, lives in you, he will make your dying bodies live again after you die, by means of this same Holy Spirit living within you.

¹²So, dear brothers, you have no obligations whatever to your old sinful nature to do what it begs you to do. ¹³For if you keep on following it you are lost and will perish, but if through the power of the Holy Spirit you crush it and its evil deeds, you shall live. ¹⁴For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

¹⁵And so we should not be like cringing, fearful slaves, but we should behave like God's very own children, adopted into the bosom of his family, and calling to him, "Father, Father." ¹⁶For his Holy Spirit speaks to us deep in our hearts and tells us that we really are God's children.

5. Why do you want to be baptized?