



The Caller

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**Confidence
Comer
John F. Board**

In this week's *Confidence Corner* we want to examine the question, "Is Baptism really that important?" In order to answer this question, I simply want to find some answers from those who lived during or close to the time of

Christ. In other words, if I asked Jesus, Paul, or Peter, what response would they provide?

First, let us examine what Jesus tells us. In Matthew 28:1-20 Jesus reveals that disciples were to be made by "baptizing them into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." In Acts 11:26, the disciples are called Christians; this indicates that making disciples is the same as making Christians. Therefore the way one makes a disciple/Christian is by baptizing them into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This obviously appears to teach that Jesus is saying baptism is important.

Consider a second, perhaps an even more clear statement of Jesus from Mark 16:16. Here Jesus says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. He that believeth not will be condemned." Notice Jesus said that a person must believe and also be baptized in order to be saved. It appears again that Jesus viewed baptism as extremely important!

When Paul is recounting what he did to become a follower of Jesus, he notes that he was told "And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Again Paul obviously viewed baptism as something that washed away his sin. I do not see how anyone could argue that Paul did not view baptism as important.

And lastly, consider Peter. In 1 Peter 3:21 Peter wrote, "The like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us..." Please realize that the passage does not say "baptism doth also NOT save us." The passage says baptism doth also NOW save us! Again it is clear Peter viewed baptism as important!

So is baptism really important? If we look to those of Jesus' day, the answer is quite clear—YES!

JFB



FALL GOSPEL MEETING

OCTOBER 13-16, 2019

with

Robert Hatfield

Sunday's Sermons:

**A.M. — God Saves Through Water
Exodus 2:1-10**

**P.M. — Deceived
James 1:22-25**

Character

Character...what exactly is it? If we look at a common definition, we find that character is “the strength of moral fiber.” Religious writers often refer to character as “the excellence of moral beings.” People of character are people who are known for their honesty and ethics. Phrases used to describe people of character include “a person of integrity” or a “man of principle.” In contrast, someone who is said to lack character is often described as one who is morally deficient. People who lack character are said to behave dishonestly and unethically.

A person’s character is made up of their disposition, thoughts, intentions, desires, and actions. Several people in Scripture are indicative of people of character (Ruth 3:11 and Job 2:3 come to mind). Daniel is often used as a positive example of character as well. Daniel 1:8 records that he “purposed in his heart not to defile himself.” Character seems then to influence our choices. Proverbs 11:3 notes that the integrity of the upright guides their choices.

In the New Testament, and thus today, when one shows character there is a consistent manifestation of Jesus in their lives. We develop our character by being like Jesus and controlling our thoughts (Phil. 4:8), practicing Christian virtues (2 Peter 1:5-6), guarding our hearts (Prov. 4:23), and keeping good company (1 Cor. 15:33). People of character will have a godly reputation that will be clearly seen by others (Titus 2:7-8).

In the Old Testament, the importance of guarding one's character was extremely important to God. So great was the need to guard one’s character that God set provisions in The Law that would make people think twice about “bearing false witness” in the legal system of the Hebrews. If they made false statements regarding a fellow Hebrew they stood to be given the punishment that would befall the person to whom the false charges were leveled. In other words, there was a protective element built into The Law to allow that only truth could be presented without consequence; such indicated that to affirm something without firsthand knowledge was an extremely serious offense. (see Deuteronomy 19:16ff and Proverbs 19:9).

But you might think, “How would anyone ever attain the type of character that Scripture requires when not one of us is perfect?” Actually, the fact that none of us are perfect factors into the concept of character. When we sin how does the person of character act? They are very honest with themselves and others regarding their sin. The person of character understands that they must examine their sin honestly. There is no effort to justify or excuse the sin in their life, rather a humble, honest admission of sin allows the person who has sinned to have that sin removed by God.

Character is built upon the foundation of love, honesty, and compassion for others. Many people have said it in a similar way but we need to be more concerned about our character than we are our reputation. Character is who we are...reputation is what others think you are. One you can control and the other you really have no control over.

*John F. Board
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