

Read: Romans 6:1b-11

My Baptism Helps Me to Put God First

Romans 6:1-4

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Listen carefully to the following:

First, is Joey. Joey peeked around the corner. No one was looking. He quickly grabbed two candy bars and stuffed them into his pockets. "What are you doing?" Sydney asked. "No one saw me," Joey said, "And it's OK. God will forgive me anyways."

Second is Quincy. Quincy knew that his mom wouldn't be home for another 30 minutes, so he quickly got on the computer to use it for things that were wrong and sinful. "Mom would be so mad...but at least God will love me," he told himself.

Third is Deanna. Deanna just *loved* to talk about other people. When she was little she always liked to "tell" on her friends at recess. Now in high school, she loved to talk badly about people at lunch or in text messages. One time, a friend said, "But aren't you a Christian?" Deanna replied, "Yes I am. That means I'm forgiven, and it doesn't matter."

Do you see how confused Joey, Quincy, and Deanna are? They think that because God is loving and forgiving, they can do anything they want—including sinful things. Because they thought their actions didn't matter, they started putting worldly things and sinful desires in front of God in their hearts.

Today the apostle Paul helps us to think clearly about this. He asks, "Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?" In other words, should I keep doing sinful things because God will forgive me anyways? His loud and clear answer is, "By no means!" Absolutely not!

The reason Paul tells us that we don't live this way is because of something special that has happened. We are baptized! When we were baptized, God connected us to Jesus who lived and died for us. That means all our sins were washed away! But God also connected us to Jesus's resurrection when we were baptized. That means that just as Jesus rose to life, he gives us a new life as his dear children when we are baptized.

If God loves us this much and has given us so many blessings in Jesus, should we just sin some more and do whatever we want? By no means! Instead, we show thanks to God for his love by *living* as God's children. That means we live "a new life," a life of love for him and for other people. What a joy to be God's child! He gave his life for me, now I can live my life for him!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for Younger Children

- As a family, talk about your baptisms. What were they like? What memories do you have? What made them special?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- What makes us want to live a life of love for God and for other people?
- What is it that makes baptism so powerful?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Evaluate this statement: Now that I am forgiven and freed from sin, I can live however I want.
- Identify all the ways that baptism is similar to or different from the concept of adopting a child into a family.

Closing Prayer:

Dear Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, I am so thankful that I have been baptized into your name. In love, you made me your own dear child. Now help me to live my life in love for you and for others. Amen.

Hymn: CW 391:1,4,5 – God Loved the World So that He Gave

God loved the world so that he gave His only Son the lost to save
That all who would in him believe Should everlasting life receive.

Be of good cheer, for God's own Son Forgives the sins that you have done.
You're justified by Jesus' blood; Baptized, you are a child of God.

Glory to God the Father, Son, And Holy Spirit, Three in One!
To you, O blessed Trinity, Be praise now and eternally!