

3. Christian Initiation.

When individual people have turned from their old kind of life and received Jesus into their hearts and lives, God has provided five basic steps for them all to follow. Life is hard and full of hassles and difficulties. But God has provided a basis, a foundation, on which a new Christian can live successfully throughout his long life.

This is NOT for those still belonging to Adam's race. This is only for those who now belong to Jesus' new human race.

The Bible is quite clear and is adamant – there are five basic requirements for becoming a Christian. Two are personal to you. Two are connected to a local Church. And one is directly from God.

The Unique You.

First, I must evaluate just how special each one of us is. I have pointed out already that every single human being on earth is unique. Let me tell you how God has done it.

Eph 1:4 says that *“For he (God) chose us in him (Christ) before the creation of the world”*. Before any of us were born, and before God made the universe, God knew us individually.

There is only one way in which that can be done: GOD selected ONE individual sperm from our father to penetrate ONE individual egg from our mother, at a special moment in time on earth. Every time our parents mated, there would be somewhere up to 10 million sperm available. Our Mothers have about 900 – 1000 eggs available. But only one egg and one sperm at one moment in time could produce you.

The only way that God could know any of us from before the foundation of the universe is for Him to do the selecting of our conception.

The DNA in every sperm and egg is unique, and therefore every human being is unique. You are unique. There are no duplicates. We are all “one-of-a-kind”. We were all chosen and selected to be who we are. That is part of God's Sovereignty.

God knows all things. He knows who is going to surrender to His love during their tenure on earth, and who won't. But no one is a mistake. No one is unknown. All are special. It can only be that way.

Necessity 1 Repentance.

Repentance means to turn around. We have to turn from the lifestyle we were born with – the self-centred one. We have to say to God that we are sorry for our sins and indulgences. We have to die to Adam's race and all it represents. God will not accept us on any other terms.

Necessity 2. Be Born from Above.

This is a Sovereign work of God. The ONLY people who are real Christians are those who have new birth by the Holy Spirit. Subjectively, it is an internal transformation. When God comes to live inside, your **MIND** will be transformed, your **HEART** will be transformed, your **SOUL** will be transformed, you will be filled with an illogical **JOY**, your **BURDENS** will roll away, you will know heavenly **PEACE**, and **JESUS** will become real to you.

John 3:6 says, *"Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit."* All of Adam's race belong in the Spirit. We are spiritual beings: God and Satan have complete access to us. But to be born of the Spirit is to have God's ETERNAL Life coming to live inside us, along with God the Trinity Themselves.

Necessity 3. Be Baptised in Water.

This is NOT an optional extra. It is NOT the choice of the new convert. It is the requirement of the local Church in the area in which the person lives. *"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."* (Matt 28:18-20).

What does water baptism do? It delivers us supernaturally from the World, the Flesh, and the devil inside us. It is a NT update of OT circumcision. Col 2:11-12 says, *"In him (Jesus) you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self, ruled by the flesh, was put off when you were circumcised by Christ, ¹² having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead."*

Necessity 4. Baptism and Filling of the Holy Spirit.

In NT times, baptism of the Holy Spirit was done immediately after the convert came out of the water from his water baptism. (A Baptism is the first time something happens). Thereafter, the convert is Filled with the Spirit, and starts to walk in the Spirit as Jesus did. He needs to be filled with the Spirit many times, and Eph 5:8 says, *"Be being filled with the Spirit."* Jesus said, *"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you."* (Acts 1:8).

There will be supernatural signs that a person has been filled with the Spirit. (I started to say Amen and Hallelujah in prayer meetings). There are the gifts of the Spirit in 1 Cor 12 that also become available.

The Biblical key to understanding the work of the Holy Spirit is in three Biblical prepositions: WITH, IN and ON. The Holy Spirit is WITH us to lead us to Jesus, IN us when we are born again from above, and ON us when we are filled with the Holy Spirit. (John 14:17).

Necessity 5. Belonging to a local Church.

Having been born from above, a person now belongs in God's family. That is represented both in heaven and on earth. The local Church is part of the One Body of Christ. Acts 2:47, *"And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."*

There is no place for solo Christians. Every local Church is inadequate. But still, it is the Body of Christ, and every Christian must belong inside it.

THESE FIVE NECESSITIES took place in Acts within a few days of a person becoming a Christian. So it should be here, today. Every Christian will struggle if any one of the five are neglected. They are God's provision. Don't treat God's gifts as unnecessary or rubbish.

Faith.

There is one further requirement that God generates within a Christian's heart. FAITH.

Because God is too big to be seen, and has stopped all the five senses from being the communicating link with us, He has introduced FAITH as the connection.

1. The Bible is God's written Word. Believe it.
2. The Holy Spirit is God's agent. Believe His inputs.
3. God still puts thoughts of good inside our minds. Believe that they come from God.
4. Make all our actions acts of faith in the God who lives inside us. He is quiet. Humble. He only makes suggestions. Believe in every Divine input of living.

(Dick Bell).