

## What Hinders You?

“And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?” (Acts 8:36).

**A**cts 8 tells the amazing story of a deacon and his desert road rendezvous with an African big man; a royal officer to the queen. He was reading God’s Word in his chariot, and could not understand what it meant. God arranged a preacher. Philip jumped aboard, and preached Jesus to Him. The Ethiopian eunuch gladly received the Gospel, understood it, and embraced it. He asked, “Look. Here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?” He was not willing for anything to stop him from responding to the Word of God. However, many people allow hindrances and hang-ups to prevent them from being baptized.

In this lesson we will take the question the officer asked and apply it to others, “What hinders you from being baptized?”

### Unbelief

Belief is a requirement for baptism. “And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him” (Acts 8:37-38).

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16).

“[Therefore beware] brethren, take care, lest there be in any one of you a wicked, unbelieving heart [which refuses to cleave to, trust in, and rely on Him], leading you to turn away and desert or stand aloof from the living God” (Hebrews 3:12, *AMP*).

The people who came out of Egypt, the land of bondage, were not permitted to enter the Promised Land because of their unbelief.

“So we see that they were not able to enter [into His rest], because of their unwillingness to adhere to and trust in and rely on God [unbelief had shut them out]. [Numbers 14:1-35.]” (Hebrews 3:19, *AMP*).

“...They could not enter in, because of unbelief” (Hebrews 3:19).

Unbelievers will not enter heaven. Sinners will not be there.

### Rejection

Some reject the Gospel and therefore do not get baptized. If you reject Christ, He will one day reject you!

“But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him” (Luke 7:30).

John’s baptism was unto repentance (Matthew 3:11; Acts 19:4) and pointed to the baptism introduced in Acts 2:38.

### **Ignorance**

The Ethiopian was willing to admit his lack of knowledge and to be enlightened. God does not excuse our lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6).

“Such [former] ages of ignorance God, it is true, ignored and allowed to pass unnoticed; but now He charges all people everywhere to repent ( to change their minds for the better and heartily to amend their ways, with abhorrence of their past sins)” (Acts 17:30, *AMP*).

“But how are people to call upon Him Whom they have not believed [in Whom they have no faith, on Whom they have no reliance]? And how are they to believe in Him [adhere to, trust in, and rely upon Him] of Whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher?” (Romans 10:14, *AMP*).

In Acts 19:1-5 the Apostle Paul taught the Ephesians concerning the correct mode of baptism. They cheerfully accepted.

### **Lack of Teaching**

Perhaps, like the Ethiopian, some are asking, “How can I understand this unless someone teaches me?” Teaching is important in the Great Commission and concerning baptism (Matthew 28:20).

“Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet.”Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked. “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him” (Acts 8:30-31, *NIV*).

Many do not realize the importance of water baptism. False teaching, which minimizes baptism, is largely responsible for this lack of water baptism.

“Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day” (Psalms 25:4-5).

### **Tradition**

One African student wrote, "Our old customs and other beliefs have encouraged people not to accept baptism. People think baptism is just a ceremonial ritual. They think believing in tradition is enough. Tradition cannot save mankind."

Another student wrote, "many hold to what they were taught as infants and are not ready to change their minds. This prevents thousands from baptism. People are bold enough to say, 'I understand your teaching but I want to hold on to what I was taught in my church.' It is time for us to take a stand and break customs." Customs and traditions are usually wrong only when they violate or oppose God's Word.

"Jesus replied, "And why do you, by your traditions, violate the direct commandments of God?" (Matthew 15:3, *NLT*).

"Thus you are nullifying and making void and of no effect [the authority of] the Word of God through your tradition, which you [in turn] hand on. And many things of this kind you are doing" (Mark 7:13, *AMP*).

Many will perish because they held to manmade traditions they were taught, refusing to adjust to God's Word.

### **Fear**

There are some who neglect baptism because they are afraid of the water. God has not caused this type of fear and will help a person overcome it.

### **Procrastination**

Some tend to put things off until tomorrow. Procrastination is the thief of time. Tomorrow may be too late. The Ethiopian took the first opportunity for baptism. He said, "See, here is water" as if he was looking for the first sign of water so he could obey God's Word. Obviously, Philip had instructed him that baptism was the proper response to the Gospel.

"For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2).

"And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (Acts 24:25).

Baptism is essential and urgent (Acts 2: 36-41, 8: 35.). This is why when people heard the gospel and believed it, they were immediately baptized (Acts 16: 33).

### **Peer Pressure**

It's hard to break away from tradition, culture, and friends who do not want to obey God's Word. Peer pressure causes a person to wonder, "What will my friends and family say?" Do not worry about that. Worry more about what God's Word says.

### **Lack of Repentance**

Belief and repentance precede baptism (Acts 2:36-38; Romans 10:9-10). Without it a person is not prepared for baptism.

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19).

Repentance comes from the Greek word *metanoia* which means to "change mind." Change your mind and ways today. Start walking the opposite direction—toward baptism.

### **Pride**

"God sets Himself against the proud and haughty, but gives grace [continually] to the lowly (those who are humble enough to receive it)" (James 4:6, AMP).

Some hate to admit that they were wrong and that they need to be baptized in Jesus name. They want to cling to other modes and formulas of baptism because of their pride.

Quick obedience to God's commands is important. Samuel said, "To obey is better than sacrifice" (1 Samuel 15:22).

Do not allow any of the above hindrances keep you from obeying God's Word.

I like the words of this song:

"When we walk with the Lord,  
In the light of His word,  
What a glory He sheds on our way!  
While we do His good will,  
He abides with us still,  
And with all who will trust and obey!  
Trust and obey, for there's not other way  
To be happy In Jesus, but to trust and obey!"

Trust and obey! Be baptized in Jesus name today!

**Study Questions**

1. Prove that belief is a requirement for baptism. \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. List five things that could hinder a person from baptism in Jesus name. \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. How does tradition keep a person from obeying the command to be baptized in Jesus name? \_\_\_\_\_  
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4. What does peer pressure cause a person to wonder? \_\_\_\_\_  
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5. What is repentance? \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Additional Notes**

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