



What We Believe ...

These are summaries of distinctive truths and answers to some of the most commonly asked questions regarding the faith and practice of Horizon Christian Fellowship.



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Table of Contents

The Bible _____ **4**

God _____ **4**

The Father _____ **4**

Jesus Christ _____ **4**

The Holy Spirit _____ **5**

Humanity _____ **5**

Salvation _____ **5**

The Worship of God _____ **5**

Future Events _____ **5**

We believe in the sacraments _____ **6**

The Lord’s Supper _____ **6**

Water Baptism _____ **6**

What about John the Baptist’s baptism of repentance? _____ **7**

Why did the Jews baptize people before John? _____ **7**

Why was Jesus baptized? _____ **7**

When did Christian baptism begin? _____ **7**

Infant Dedication and Infant Baptism _____ **7**

The Church _____ **7**

Church Attendance _____ **8**

Church Membership _____ **8**

Tithes and Offerings _____ **9**

Sin and Holiness in the believer’s life _____ **9**

What do you believe about sex outside of marriage or couples living together before marriage? _____ **9**

What if a couple who love each other want to live together until they get married? _____ **9**

Discipleship _____ **10**

Outreach _____ **10**

Prayer _____ **10**

Church Government _____ **11**

What are your views on the Baptism of the Holy Spirit? _____ **11**

Understanding our three-fold relationship with the Holy Spirit _____	11
<i>What are your beliefs on the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit?</i> _____	11
<i>What do you believe concerning Biblical counseling</i> _____	12
<i>Describe your beliefs on the Biblical basis for divorce</i> _____	12
Adultery _____	12
Abandonment _____	12
<i>Is it possible to know God's will for your life?</i> _____	13
Knowing God's will in general _____	13
Knowing God's will specifically _____	13
<i>How to use wisdom to make decisions</i> _____	13
Pray _____	13
Read your Bible _____	13
Seek wise counsel _____	13
Review your life _____	13
Non-conformity to the world _____	13
Expect divine guidance _____	13

The Bible: The sole basis of our belief is found in the scriptures of the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments. We believe that Scripture, in its entirety, originated with God and that it was given through the instrumentality of chosen men. Scripture thus, at one and the same time, speaks with the authority of God and reflects the backgrounds, styles and vocabularies of the human writers. We believe the Word of God is infallible and without error in the original manuscripts, and is the full and final rule of authority for faith and practice. There are no other writings similarly inspired by God.

We place great emphasis on the teaching of God's Word in every service. His Word is the authority and foundational tool to provide direction, to edify, equip and empower believers. God's Word is not a book among many other books, it is the Book by which all other teachings will be evaluated. (Psalm 119:9-11; Romans 10:14-15; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Peter 1:23-25)

God: We believe there is one true and living God, eternally existing in three persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, equal in power and glory; this triune God possesses unlimited power, wisdom and love. He created all, upholds all, and governs all. (Matthew 3:16-17; 28:18-20; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2)

The doctrine of the Trinity is a mystery. For centuries theologians have written thousands of books on this topic, yet as you try to explain this teaching to people, our ordinary, logical skills break down when we try to understand it.

According to the Athanasian Creed, "True Christians worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in unity, neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance." In other words, there is only one God, as Deuteronomy 6:4 says.

The teaching of the Trinity brings us face-to-face with one of the greatest mysteries of all. It is a wonderful mystery. When you embrace Jesus, you embrace God. When the Spirit moves within you, that move is no one less than your Creator moving in you.

The doctrine of the Trinity is ideal for mediation. Because we do not understand it fully we are then forced to go beyond the realm of our natural comprehension and move into the realm of faith as we seek to know God Himself.

The Father: He is an infinite, personal Spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. He desires to extend mercy and grace to all people; His love for us prompted Him to secure the way of forgiveness and restoration through Jesus Christ. He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men. He hears and answers prayer. He saves from sin and eternal death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. (Matthew 6:9; Romans 1:7)

Jesus Christ: He is the second person of the Trinity. He was born of a virgin. (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23) He is fully God and fully man. (John 1:1; Philippians 2:6-11; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1; Isaiah 9:6) While on earth He lived a life of perfect obedience to the Father and voluntarily atoned for the sins of all mankind by dying on the cross as their substitute, thus satisfying divine justice and accomplishing salvation for all who trust in Him alone for salvation. His death on the cross is the only substitutionary atonement for mankind's sin (2 Corinthians 5:21).

We believe in His miracles and teachings as recorded in the scriptures. We believe He died on the cross and was bodily resurrected on the third day, that He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God. We believe in His personal, visible return to earth to consummate history and the eternal plan of God where He will judge the living and the dead.

The Holy Spirit: He is the third person of the trinity. He came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify and empower all who believe in Christ. We believe the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Jesus Christ and that He is an abiding Helper, Teacher and Guide. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit and in the exercise of all biblical gifts of the Spirit as reflected through the fruit of that same Spirit. (Genesis 1; John 16:7-11; Acts 5:3-4)

When you pray, you are instantly in touch with God through His Spirit. When God works in your life it is by His Spirit. God's Spirit is powerful yet gentle, invisible but real, hidden yet inescapable. He is as close to you as the air in your lungs. God loves you and has sent His Spirit to live in you so that the character of Christ may be formed in you.

Humanity: We believe humanity was created innocent and pure. Adam fell through disobedience; therefore, all mankind has been corrupted in body, soul and spirit. All people are by nature separated from God and responsible for their own sin. But, salvation, redemption and forgiveness are freely offered to all, apart from works, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. When a person repents of sin and accepts Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord, trusting Him alone to save, that person is immediately born again and sealed by the Holy Spirit, all their sins are forgiven, and that person becomes a child of God. (John 3:16-17; Romans 5:1-11; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21)

Salvation: Salvation is by grace, a free gift of God apart from the works of man. Salvation requires repentance, a turning from one's own way to God's way. Salvation comes through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. You cannot believe on behalf of another. All who receive Jesus Christ are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and become children of God. True salvation will be manifested by a changed life. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

The Worship of God: We believe the worship of God should be spiritual; therefore, we remain flexible and yielded to the leading of the Holy Spirit to direct our worship. We believe the worship of God should be inspirational; therefore, we give great place to music in our worship. We believe the worship of God should be intelligent; therefore, our services are designed with great emphasis upon the teaching of the Word of God that He might instruct us how He should be worshipped. We believe the worship of God should be fruitful; therefore, we look for His love in our lives as the supreme manifestation that we have been truly worshipping Him.

We are committed to placing special emphasis on both individual and corporate worship. We practice a contemporary style of corporate worship in our services. At Horizon we worship to: Honor God, acknowledging His power and worth; to express to Him our thoughts, feelings and needs and respond in willingness to follow His will for our lives. (Psalm 29:1-2; Psalm 57:7-11).

Future Events: We believe Jesus will return to the earth to call the saints to Himself in the pre-millennial, pre-tribulation rapture of the church. (1 Corinthians 15:51-58; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-2).

There will then be a seven-year period of tribulation that will be ruled by the anti-Christ, marked by two three-and one-half-year periods. During this time, many will be saved, but many will become exceedingly wicked. (Daniel 9:27 & 12:1; Matthew 24:5-28).

The end of the tribulation period will be marked by the Second Coming of Christ. (Matthew 24:29-31; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4; Revelation 19:11-21).

Christ will physically reign on the earth for one thousand years. (Revelation 20:4-6) At the end of the one thousand years, Satan will be released from the bottomless pit and he will make war against God's people and Christ. Christ will throw the devil into the lake of fire. (Isaiah 65:11-15; Revelation 20:10)

Then will come the great white throne judgment where the living and the dead will be judged. We believe in a literal resurrection of the body. There will be a bodily resurrection of the righteous who will forever live in the presence of God's glory. Those whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life are thrown into the lake of fire for eternity. (Revelation 20:11-15)

There will be a destruction of the earth. (2 Peter 3:12-13) A new heaven and a new earth will be created. (Revelation 21:1-22:5)

We believe in the sacraments: In the Bible there are two sacraments (holy rituals) which all Christians are told to practice. The word "sacrament" does not appear in the Bible. It is a Latin word meaning "obligation" or "sacred oath" and is applied primarily to Water Baptism and the Lord's Supper. (Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24-25)

The purpose of keeping these two sacraments is to signify, through outward symbolism, what Christ is accomplishing in the believer's life through faith. As true believers, the scriptures teach and command us to keep these two sacraments as expressions of our faith in Christ.

The Lord's Supper (also called Communion): Formal churches refer to Communion as the "Eucharist" which means to give thanks. That is what we do when we receive Communion; we give thanks to God for what He has done for us in purchasing our salvation through the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

The ingredients are bread and wine. Our church, like many others, prefers to use grape juice instead of wine. It is essentially the same elements without fermentation, thus preventing a stumbling block for some who may struggle with drunkenness. The bread symbolizes Christ's sinless body which was broken for us, and the cup symbolizes His blood that was shed on our behalf as the only sacrifice that can remove our sins.

We partake of Communion usually one time each

month during our Sunday morning worship service. It is at the Lord's table where we are reminded that we can bring our sin to the feet of Jesus. He is more than willing to forgive us and cleanse us. Our Communion is open to all believers. (1 Corinthians 11:23-34; Matthew 26:27-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-23)

Water Baptism is a spiritual rite of passage. The word baptize means to immerse, submerge, to overflow or cover with water. Baptism for the Christian was instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ. He too was baptized. (Matthew 3:1-17; 28:18-20)

We practice what is called believer's baptism. Belief is connected with baptism in the scriptures (Mark 16:16). This is why we do not practice infant baptism. We believe there must be a conscious personal choice on behalf of the person being baptized to turn from their sin and follow Jesus Christ.

Baptism publicly points to the believer turning from sin and turning to God (Acts 2:28-29; Romans 6:1-6). In baptism, we identify with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. As we approach the water, we symbolize a dying to self and the old way of life. As we are submerged into the water, this symbolizes being buried with Christ. When we come up out of the water, this symbolizes being raised with Christ.

In baptism we make a public declaration in four areas: 1) We publicly declare to ourselves we are no longer our own but now we are going to follow Christ. 2) We publicly declare to others that we are now going to follow Christ. 3) We declare to the enemy that we are no longer going to follow him but now we are the Lord's. 4) Most importantly, we publicly confess our allegiance to Jesus Christ (Matthew 10:32). If we obey Jesus in the small things, we will obey Him in the bigger things. If we disregard Him in the small things, there is a great chance that we will easily disregard Him in the greater things.

Why should you get baptized? Because Jesus says

to do it (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:28-29). We do it as an act of obedience to our Lord and Savior. It shows our love toward the Lord (John 14:15 & 21; 1 John 5:3). It is also a foundational step in the life of a believer (Hebrews 6:1-2).

Baptism does not save us. Salvation comes by faith through grace alone (Ephesians 2:8-9). Baptism is not a magical solution to all our spiritual problems. Baptism is an outward showing of an inward work that has already taken place in the heart of someone who has received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

What about John the Baptist's baptism of repentance? John's baptism was a baptism that looked forward to the coming Messiah. People turned from sin and placed their hope in the coming Messiah. Christian baptism looks back to the Messiah who came. We turn from sin and place our hope in the finished work of Jesus our Messiah.

Why did the Jews baptize people before John? Before John came baptizing people, the Jews would baptize individuals who would convert from a Gentile religious lifestyle and turn to Judaism.

Why was Jesus baptized? To show obedience to the Father. He was not converting as was the customary reason for baptism, nor did He need to repent for anything. He submitted to baptism to lead the way for His followers, showing us the path He wanted us to follow.

When did Christian baptism begin? Jesus instituted it in Mathew 28:18-20 after His resurrection (Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12).

Infant Dedication and Infant Baptism: A baby dedication is a wonderful thing. Families come before the church stating that they would like to raise their children in the truth and ways of Jesus Christ.

As a church, we do not practice infant baptism. We believe baptism is a personal choice and act of obedience each person must make on their own. We believe that as children grow and are raised in the truth and instruction of God, they will have the opportunity to make a personal choice for God themselves. We cannot make that choice for them. Until that day arrives, God asks families and His body to live their lives in such a way that these children will have every opportunity to make the choice for Christ at the earliest possible age.

Baby dedication does not make a spiritual choice for Christ on behalf of the child. Instead it provides a spiritual blessing and covering for them. There is an automatic spiritual covering by God over every child until they reach the age of spiritual accountability. The age of accountability is the time when a child can understand spiritual matters. It is not a specific age, but instead, a time that varies in all people as to when they can understand what it means to follow God. (Mark 10:14)

The Church: There is only one universal Church made up of all those who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The church by nature is the people of God, the body of Christ. The church is not a building, but a people. Anyone who has redemption through Jesus is part of the universal church. (1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 1:22-23, 5:23-24; Colossians 1:18 & 24; 1 Timothy 3:15). The church is made of many groups, races and peoples. (Acts 10, 15:19-29; Ephesians 2:14-22; Revelation 5:9-10)

The purpose of the church is to glorify and worship God, edify the body of Christ, make disciples and reach the lost. The church is to represent God on the earth as His ambassadors. (Matthew 22:37-40, 28:18-20; 2 Corinthians 5:20; Ephesians 3:10; Hebrews 10:25)

We believe the scriptures command believers to gather together to devote themselves to worship, prayer and the teaching of God's Word (Acts 2:42-47). We believe Jesus committed two ordinances to the church: 1) baptism, and 2) The Lord's Supper. We believe in baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper (Communion) open to all believers.

As Christians gather, they are to be taught and equipped by church leadership so they may develop their spiritual gifts in order that they may be used in the service to the body and in outreach to the world (Ephesians 4:11-13). It is God's divine plan that the church be His main expression to reach the lost through the empowerment and leading of the Holy Spirit thus fulfilling the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). Jesus Christ prayed for the church to be one in Him regardless of race or denomination (John 17:20-23).

The only true basis of Christian fellowship is Christ's unconditional (agape) love, which is greater than any differences we possess.

Church Attendance: Hebrews 10:25 says, "do not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the day approaching."

We do not go to church to try to gain God's favor. Instead, we go to be part of the Christian community, to grow and learn how to be more like Christ. Going to church is more than attendance. It is belonging to the family of God.

Church attendance should not be an optional part of a Christian's life, no more than a person would consider eating meals as optional. We make the time to eat, so, too, we should make the time to fellowship with other believers and grow in Christ. No one becomes a whole person in the body of Christ while living in solitude. We believe spiritual growth happens in meaningful spiritual relationships. A great way to experience this is by joining a Home Fellowship.

Some will say, "You don't need to go to church to be a Christian." This is true! Yet, if you want to obey God and grow in the manner by which He desires you to grow, you need to be an active part of a Christian fellowship. If a person is not actively connected to a fellowship of believers their growth and effectiveness in Christ will be severely limited. (2 Peter 1:1-14)

The Bible teaches us that we all have spiritual gifts and talents given to us by God for the purpose of building up other believers in Christ and for reaching others in His name (1 Corinthians 12:7-31). When a Christian chooses to live as a "spiritual lone ranger", they suffer and so does the rest of the body of Christ. The church is the only God-given institution that Jesus left to impact the world in His name. To do this we must be united with other believers. (John 17:20-23)

Church Membership: Some would say membership has its privileges. Some churches place a high priority on getting people's names on a role. In many churches their "member" may not even attend the church at all, but they are still called a member. We believe being part of the body should be more meaningful than having your name on a list.

There are three stages to being a meaningful part of any congregation. 1) **Awareness**—this is the time spent discovering what the church is about. You speak of the church as "that church". 2) **Attendance**—initial exposure to the various levels of the ministries of the church. You begin to speak of the church now as "this church". 3) **Membership**—this means getting involved, becoming an active part, pitching in to help in some area. You speak of the church now as "our church".

The benefits to being an active, functional member of a congregation: 1) You have a spiritual family to support and encourage you in your walk with Christ. 2) This provides a place where you can discover and use your gifts in ministry, helping to build God's people and God's kingdom. 3) It places spiritual leadership in our lives as a protection and provides accountability with other members of the body. 4) It provides a place to be trained and equipped to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. You will have a family to grow with.

To be a member of HCF, all you need to do is to get involved in the life of the church at some level. We don't require any more commitment than to know you support our mission and have joined us in our work. We seek to create a church structure that will allow everyone, regardless of their specific gifting or maturity, to find a satisfying place of involvement in the life and ministry of Horizon Christian Fellowship. (Ephesians 2:14-17, 4:1-16; John 13:35) When you consider Horizon your church home, consider filling out a directory information form to place your name in the next church directory.

Tithes and Offerings: Tithe means tenth —In the Old Testament we see Abraham (Genesis 14:20) and Jacob (Genesis 28:22) giving a tenth, or tithe, as an offering from the heart—not law. This shows us that tithing was a principle that was in place before the Old Testament law.

When the Law of Moses was established, the tithe was mandatory for all Jewish citizens. The tithe was to be brought to the center of worship. If the person had to travel too far, then they could convert their tithe to money. Many other nations have a record of the tithe, which was a form of tax, an obligation to give to support the government.

Four things to know about the Old Testament tithe: 1) It was an act of worship and obedience (Leviticus 27:30-33; Proverbs 3:9-10; Malachi 3:6-12) 2) It supported the workers of God, the priests and the Levites. 3) It supported the work of God. It was used to help the needy among them, and it supported outreach to the community. 4) It was used to build community among the people. It funded the large gatherings during the feasts and celebrations. These gatherings focused on God's provision.

In Matthew 6:2 Jesus says, "when you give,"...not "if" you give. We can learn about New Testament giving by reading 2 Corinthians 8-9. These two chapters tell of Paul taking up an offering for the church in Jerusalem who had been experiencing a famine. Paul points out to the Corinthians that giving should not be forced, but at the same time, God loves a cheerful giver, implying Christians should be marked by generosity, not greed (1 Timothy 6:17-19).

The New Testament principle does not do away with the tithe, but seems to go beyond the tenth principle. All that we have as Christians comes from God and is really under His ownership. We are merely stewards. Now, instead of giving merely as an obligation, we are to give from our hearts as a form of worship to the Lord.

Sin and Holiness in the believer's life: Sin means to fall short of God's intended standard. The Bible teaches us that we all sin, we have all fallen short of God's standard (Romans 3:23, 6:23). If you do not admit that you sin, you are a liar (1 John 1:8-10).

When a Christian sins, they can find forgiveness with God through Jesus Christ. Christians are called by God to live obedient lives, actively relying on God's grace and strength to help us turn away from sin (2 Timothy 2:19). The only way a Christian can live a holy life is by walking in God's strength (Romans 6:11-14). Personal holiness does not mean you are perfect. It means you are obedient (1 John 3:1-10).

The Bible teaches that when we sin (and we will sin), we are to repent (1 John 2:1-6). Repentance means to make a 180 degree turn from following our own will and way to following God's plan. It means confessing our sin to God and asking for forgiveness. When you repent and turn to God He will always forgive you (James 4:7-10).

Jesus Christ is the only remedy for sin in our lives. We have no hope of conquering sin and living in victory in our own ability. Live for God daily, obey Him daily and you will know victory in your life. (1 John 1:7; Micah 6:8)

What do you believe about sex outside of marriage or couples living together before marriage?

The Bible says that two people who have sexual relations outside of marriage are committing sexual immorality which is sin, disobedience to God's designed plan. God has established marriage as the prescribed place for the union of a man and a woman. A casual reading of the following verses clearly outlines God's will for our lives in this area, (1 Corinthians 5:9-13, 6:9-20, 10:8; Galatians 5:13-21; Ephesians 5:1-7; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; 2 Timothy 2:19; Hebrews 13:4; 1 John 3:1-10)

What if a couple who love each other want to live together until they get married? Living together outside of marriage is against God's plan for a couple. Living together is still called immorality. Along with the above outlined verses, the scripture makes it clear that we are to avoid

even the appearance of evil. That there should not be a hint of sexual immorality surrounding the life of a believer (Ephesians 5:3). People generally live together because they believe the institution of marriage is a man-made law and because their love is a “true and special” kind of love, that could mean they are married in the eyes of God anyway. Not so. No one is above God’s law. Any relationship that is based on physical attraction is doomed to suffer consequences. Following God’s prescribed plan adds true substance to marriage.

God, not man, instituted the design of marriage (Genesis 2:24-25). Christians are called to honor Christ in their lives in this area. God loves each person and is more than willing to forgive and help a person recover from living in immorality, yet He fully expects us to turn away from all forms of evil. (Romans 6:1-14; 2 Timothy 2:19)

Many people think living together is a common sense proving ground before marriage. Many will say, “This allows us to find out if we are compatible for each other. We will live together for awhile then we will get married.” Statistically it is shown that over 70% of all marriages that begin by living together before marriage end in divorce. The divorce rate is 20% higher than the national average for those who live together. Even if it were not this way, it is still wrong, simply because God says it is. Living together is like “playing being married”. People say they love each other, but they really are not ready for the commitment. Biblical, God-honoring love means commitment. You cannot have true love without real commitment. We should not flippantly tell someone we love them unless we are willing to be committed according to God’s prescribed plan.

If we really love God we will honor Him with our lives by avoiding every appearance of evil. If we love another person, we will honor them and not take advantage of them by pursuing sexual relations or by living together outside the bonds of marriage. God knows what is best for us in this area. He invented marriage. He loves us and only wants our good, so it makes sense to follow His plan. As we follow His plan, a solid foundation for marriage and love will be established and real trust will develop with the person with whom we intend to spend the rest of our lives.

Discipleship: A disciple is a follower of Jesus Christ. All Christians are called by God to follow Christ, yet many do not. We are not asked to be merely selective followers of Jesus, doing what we want in our own good time. Instead, He is to be our Lord and Master, the One who gives the directions by which we seek to live. We are to commit our whole lives and all that we are and ever will become to serving and following Him.

At Horizon, we are committed to equip Christians so they can grow in their understanding of God, His Word, the church and in knowing where they can be used by God, in order that each disciple can reach their fullest potential in the body of Christ. (Mark 8:34-38; Ephesians 4:1-16; John 13:35)

Outreach: We are committed as a congregation to fulfill the Great Commission by reaching out to those who do not know God through the love of God and the Good News of the Gospel. We are committed to reaching out locally, The Gospel. We are committed to reaching out locally, nationally and internationally. We believe that **every** Christian should be part of God’s plan to reach the world with His love and truth. (Matthew 29:18-20; Acts 1:8)

Prayer: We are committed to prayer and its essential part in the life of the believer and in the life of the church as a whole. When people plan, people move. When people pray, God moves. We are committed to teaching people how to pray and providing a forum for believers to gather and pray for each other and for the needs of others. (1 Timothy 2:1-4; Philippians 4:6-7)

Church Government: There are three main types of church government: Presbyterian (Committee or elder led), Congregational (body led) and Episcopal (leader or pastor led): our church follows the Episcopal form of church government. We have set our church structure to follow the pattern of Calvary Chapel Outreach Fellowships with whom we are affiliated. We have elders, deacons and deaconesses who help with the leadership providing accountability, structure and balance. We are also open to input from the members of our congregation. We believe that all decisions regarding the church are to be based in prayer, and follow the principles that are taught in the Word of God. On major decisions counsel is often sought from other leaders who are part of the Calvary Chapel Outreach Fellowships.

What are your views on the Baptism of the Holy Spirit?

Baptism means to dip, to immerse, to submerge a vessel; to cleanse by dipping or submerging, to make clean with water; to overwhelm. We believe Baptism with the Spirit is a separate, distinct experience from regeneration. It is one thing to be born of the Spirit and is yet another to be baptized with the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:13 says, "We are baptized by one Spirit into one body". This is our introduction into Christ and the body of Christ. (John 20:22)

"The Baptism with the Holy Spirit" implies a definite occurrence, subsequent to salvation when the Third Person of the Trinity comes upon a believer to anoint and energize them for spiritual service.

1. Luke 24:49—The disciples first received the spirit.
2. Acts 1:8—The disciples were baptized in the spirit.
3. Acts 4:31&19:1-7—The disciples were refilled with the spirit.

Understanding our three-fold relationship with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit will be with in, in us and come upon us (John 14:15-21).

With you — (*para*) - coming alongside. He is the one who brings conviction prior to conversion. He draws us closer to God.

In you — (*en*) - dwelling within you (John 20:21-22).

The Spirit comes to reside in the believer at the point of salvation. At this point we have the Spirit and we are in relationship with God. We now must learn how to walk in the Spirit and grow in God. We are taught by the scriptures that we can choose to walk in the Spirit or walk in the flesh.

Upon you — (*epi*) - overflowing from you. Out of the lives of Christians the power of the Spirit will flow. This coming upon is called the Baptism with the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:16; John 7:34-39; Acts 1:4-8).

What are your beliefs on the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit? We believe all the gifts of the Spirit are available to the church and are active today. The Holy Spirit gives these gifts; He imparts supernatural giftings to His church empowering believers to be His witnesses to the lost and ministering agents to build the body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 11:7-11, 27-31; Romans 12:6-8; 1 Peter 4:10-11)

We believe there is to be order in the assembly of believers as is outlined in 1 Corinthians 14; the goal is to edify the body of Christ when any gift is exercised. We do not worship the gifts but the giver of the gifts. The gifts are not to be the focus, but growing closer to God is the focus. (1 Corinthians 2:1-5; 1 Thessalonians 1:4-6, 5:19-22)

There can be a tendency to get out of balance by moving in one of two different extremes. One extreme says you must be afraid of allowing the Holy Spirit to move within the church. Those who teach this claim the gifts of the Spirit are not for today. Then there are some who only primarily focus on the Holy Spirit's gifts, making the manifestation of the "gifts" the central focus, even at the expense of God's Word being taught. These services tend to primarily be emotionally-based and can become a breeding ground for false teaching. We believe such an overemphasis can teach people to become feeling-based rather than truth-based. People can become subjective in their approach to

God rather than objective. People will come to church expecting some sort of new “thrill or goose bumps”. When that wears off, they will try something else to get the thrill. We believe both of these views are out of balance.

We believe the teaching of God’s Word should be the central focus of a service. As the Word of God is ministered, the Holy Spirit will touch lives. We believe Christians should pray for each other at church and their individual, everyday lives knowing that God answers prayer. God must be the focus of our attention, not miracles He may or may not choose to display.

What do you believe concerning Biblical counseling: in The truth of the Bible should be the basis for all counseling. Nothing can supersede the truth of the scriptures. The Bible does not need to have anything to compliment it as such. The Word of God stands alone in its ability to counsel and direct the life any individual. Any form of pastoral counseling we seek to give at Horizon is biblically based.

Describe your beliefs on the Biblical basis for divorce. We believe God hates divorce. He hates the situation the world is in today with the divorce rate being so high. (Malachi 2:6; Matthew 5:31-32) Divorce should always only be the last resort when everything else has failed. (Matthew 19:8) We believe there may be a time when separation may be necessary, but the ultimate goal is reconciliation. (1 Corinthians 7:11)

We believe there are only very specific reasons that can stand Biblically as to why a person could ever get a divorce.

Adultery—(Matthew 5:31-32, 19:3-9) Marital unfaithfulness, which would be physical or sexual intimacy with someone who is not your spouse.

Abandonment—When a spouse deserts and forsakes their responsibility in the marriage and refused to return in spite of Biblical intervention. (1 Corinthians 7:15)

In the Old Testament it was an eye for an eye when there was physical abuse (Exodus 21:24) which is no longer practiced. This applies in cases of physical abuse. In such case, when a spouse refuses to get help and change, separation is permissible. The New Testament does not mention this because it is common sense that the church cannot allow physical abuse to go unchecked. The spirit of the scriptures stands directly against this. Matthew 18:15-17 shows how church discipline can be exercised in this type of scenario.

There are some today who say verbal and mental abuse should also fall into this category. Anyone could then use this as a “blank check” reason to be divorced. We believe divorce should always only be viewed as a last resort, after all other means of intervention have been exhausted. There may be a place for separation until problems are worked out.

We believe any of the above instances can take place and reconciliation can still happen. Our advice will always be to seek the path of reconciliation regardless.

If a person moves toward divorce and has Biblical grounds, we believe the church should be there for them as spiritual support to help them seek God’s perspective as they move on with life. We believe too many churches treat those who have divorced like they are lepers. There is too much pain involved in the situation without the church adding to the problem. We are to be ministering agents of grace and love seeking to bring healing to each person.

If a person who is currently part of the Horizon Fellowship divorces non-Biblically, the steps of Matthew 18:15-17 will be taken, seeking repentance and restoration for the person.

If a person has a divorce in their past and comes and desires to be involved at Horizon, they will be treated as any other person. We believe the sin of divorce should be treated as any other sin. The old things have passed away and all things have become new (2 Corinthians 5:17). Divorce is not the unpardonable sin. It is sin like any other. It is wrong, but God’s grace still covers it. Justification in Christ means a person is pardoned, their sin is no longer counted against them and they are given full rights as joint heirs in the kingdom of God.

Is it possible to know God's will for your life? Wouldn't it be great if God would just call us on the telephone every day with specific details for our lives that day? It would be great, but obviously that's not the way God has chosen to work in our lives. He asks us to seek Him primarily through His Word and through prayer.

Knowing God's will in general—God has taken a lot of guess work out of knowing His will. For instance, His commandments define right and wrong behavior. All His laws can be reduced to two commands, "Love your God with all your heart and love your neighbor as yourself". (Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18; Mark 12:20-31)

There are also specific Christian behaviors we know God wants us to adopt. The Bible says, "It is God's will that you should be sanctified, and that we should avoid sexual immorality." We are told to be joyful always, pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 4:3, 5:16-18) Christians are told, "not to be foolish but to understand what the will of the Lord is." (Ephesians 5:17) God's Word has many specific and clear instructions for us to follow that are all designed to help us and bless us. Remember, God loves us and always knows what is the best for us. He literally wrote the book on humanity.

Knowing God's will specifically—According to the Bible, each person has a calling or a destiny. God's calling gives every human life a purpose, but that calling also involves us in being in some kind of service to other people. Having a calling doesn't mean God tells us verbally the exact career we are to choose, what company we are to work for, or how to spend our retirement years. The Bible stresses the importance of using wisdom to make sound decisions. The responsibility of making sound choices lies in our hands. This is why it is crucial to walk daily submitted to God's Spirit.

For most of us God's will is not something we know from birth, instead it unfolds as we go through life. Even if we have a good idea of what He has designed us to be, there are still many questions that are only answered as we follow and obey Him.

The key to knowing and fulfilling God's specific will for our lives is to do that part of His will that we know for certain, those things are clearly outlined in the scriptures. As we obey the general things from the Bible and submit to the leading of His Spirit, God will guide and direct. He will open doors that no one else could open and He will also protect you by closing doors that you should not walk through.

How to use wisdom to make decisions - The best decisions are made when we have a balanced view of our whole life. The Book of Proverbs frequently tells us to look at the consequences of issues before we step into them. Use the following steps to help you get a whole-life balanced perspective:

Pray—This opens the connection with God. Communicate with God daily. (Colossians 1:9)

Read your Bible—God speaks to us primarily through the scriptures. We learn about God and ourselves and life through this divinely inspired Book. God's Word promises to be a light to our feet. Most times we will not know the next twenty steps. God may only show us the next step. (Psalm 119:105; 2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Seek wise counsel - Listen to people you know who are godly and care about you. God tells us we are to be wise and seek to learn from others. It is better to learn from someone else's mistakes than to learn from our own. (Proverbs 11:14, 12:15)

Review your life—What do you enjoy? What do you do well? What are your gifts and talents? What are important turning points in your life and where may they be leading you?

Non-conformity to the world—God calls us to conform to Christ's ways and not to allow ourselves to be polluted by the world. Stay pure. Sin is always against God's will. (Romans 12:1-2)

Expect divine guidance—The Holy Spirit will lead you in God's will as you submit to Him. God can and will orchestrate events in your life according to His plan for you. (On the other hand, don't try to read God's will by every detail of your circumstances....remember, we live on a fallen planet inhabited by fallen people who are being influenced by Satan.) God loves us and promises that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to

his purpose.” (Romans 8:28)

Living in God’s will is more important than knowing every detail of it (which we can’t know anyway because we are human). As long as we submit our lives to His control and obey His commandments, we will successfully do His will. (2 Peter 1:5-11) A simple daily prayer might be, “God, I surrender to your will today. Please guide my steps and direct my life”.