Introduction: Start the thinking process.

Ask you’re your group what the word “baptism” means to them. Allow time for 2-3 people to share their insights.

Point 1: Help your group members connect with the major theme.

Preparation is an important part of life. Have your class divide into 2 or 3 groups and ask one group to list what is necessary to prepare to go on vacation and have the other group list what is necessary to prepare to get a job. Give them a few minutes to discuss their answer and then have a representative from each group speak.

Point 2: Engage using the “Think-Pair-Share” technique.

Show your group members the video clip “I Surrender to Your Will” (1 minute, 57 seconds) from the movie Bruce Almighty. This clip is available on Wingclips: http://www.wingclips.com/movie-clips/bruce-almighty/i-surrender-to-your-will

Think-Pair-Share: As your group members watch the video, ask them to choose two statements that stand out to them. Give the following instructions: “Think for 30 seconds on the two statements. Why did you choose them? Discuss these in pairs with a person on your left or right who is not your spouse.” (Pause for 60 seconds.) Call on three or four pairs to share one idea.

Point 3: Stimulate your group members by examining an article.

Divide the larger group into smaller groups of 2-3 people and give each a copy of the following article:
“Lessons of Obedience”

*This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.* —1 John 5:3

When young Kofi came home after Sunday school, his mother asked him what he had learned that morning. His quick reply spoke volumes: “Obedience … again!”

Although I’m many years older than Kofi, I agree that obedience to God is a lesson that we must, sometimes reluctantly, learn over and over again.

Oswald Chambers wrote: “The Lord does not give me rules, but He makes His standard very clear. If my relationship to Him is that of love, I will do what He says … If I hesitate, it is because I love someone I have placed in competition with Him, namely, myself.”

When we are obedient, we show God that we love Him and have more faith in Him than we do in ourselves. Arthur W. Pink said that love is “a principle of action, and it expresses itself … by deeds which please the object loved.” To obey God means to relinquish what we want and to choose to do what He asks.

God requires the obedience of His followers, and Jesus placed great importance on it. He asked, “Why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46). And He issued this challenge: “If you love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15).

To say we follow Jesus Christ
Without attempting to obey
Reveals our lack of faith that He
Will lead us right in every way. —Sper

*Obedience to God is an expression of our love for God.*
In this point, we see Jesus obeying the Father and the Father praising the Son for His obedience. Ask each group to discuss how the article reinforces the concept that keeping God’s Word is a sign that we belong to Him and love Him. Allow 2-3 people to share their thoughts on the article with the group.


Conclusion: Challenge for application.

Throughout this session, we have been challenged to examine ourselves with regard to the application of the Word of God in our lives. John the Baptist and Jesus wholeheartedly called for repentance. The concept and practice of repentance is based on applying the Word of God to our lives in specific ways. As you read the Bible this week, ask God to give you one specific area of your life that He wants you to change through the application of His Word and then do it!

Teaching Tip of the Week

One of the easiest ways to help group members learn has to do with the classroom layout. Most classrooms are set up for lecture. There is a podium up front and the chairs are placed in straight rows. Try setting up in a U shape. This is an all-purpose setup that allows flexibility in teaching. You can lecture, break into groups, have group members participate in face-to-face conversations, distribute handouts, and use visual media easily from this arrangement. Don’t be afraid to experiment. You and your group members might be surprised at the results.