

Cleaning Tips / Baptism

Tammy: We had a letter from a woman who listens to Women of Hope. She asked us if we had any good ideas for cleaning that were cheap and work well, and don't pollute the environment. Well, we all had ideas! Please stay with us- you might learn some new tricks.

Carol: Welcome to Women of Hope. I'm Carol, and Tammy and I, and for that matter, most women, often share their housework tips and tricks. We asked some other friends, and everyone had a suggestion- often the same ideas we heard from other women. So we decided to make that our topic today.

Tammy: There were two cleaning materials that we heard about very often. One was vinegar- ordinary household vinegar, the cheapest one you can get. It cuts through grease, it disinfects surfaces... Vinegar removes mildew, grease, and wax; removes smells; it cleans windows, brick, and stone.

The other cleaner was sodium bicarbonate, or cooking soda. Washing soda is a stronger version of cooking soda. Sodium bicarbonate is quite cheap to buy in big bags.

Carol: We heard about some other common materials too. Like common salt, lemon juice, eucalyptus oil and borax. These were mentioned quite often.

Most of these are things are likely to be in our homes, or we could buy cheaply. So let's talk about how to use them in our homes. This is probably a good place to remind ourselves of our usual rules- keep all mixtures in safe bottles with lids, label them, and keep them out of reach of children and pets.

Tammy: I heard a good idea for labelling anything that might make a child sick. They might not be able to read words like 'poison' or 'do not drink' so you could draw a picture of a sad face or a child vomiting, and tell your children never to touch anything with that picture on it.

Carol: Great idea! And another rule is to always test new cleaning fluids on a small area where it won't be obvious if it happens to leave a mark.

Tammy: Let's start with general cleaning solution that is good for things like cleaning our kitchen benches and cupboards. Here is a basic recipe for a cleaning solution. Use 1/4 cup of cooking soda baking soda and dissolve it in 1200mls or 2 pints of water. You can add a squirt of liquid soap if you have it. You can use it in a spray bottle or dip your cleaning cloth in the mixture, and

use it to clean all surfaces and inside appliances like refrigerators and microwave ovens. Rinse it off with plain water. It cleans well, and gets rid of smells.

For tough stains in the kitchen, like tea-stained cups or stained benches, mix cooking soda to a smooth paste with water and rub it on the stain. When the stain lifts, perhaps after ten minutes, rinse it off. You can use this paste to clean metal objects too, like steel sinks. If your oven is really dirty and greasy, spread this mixture thickly over the base and sides of the oven and leave it overnight. In the morning wipe it out with old newspapers and then wash it out with detergent.

Carol: Here's my recipe for a creamy scrubbing mixture. Simply pour about 1/2 cup of baking soda into a bowl, and add enough liquid detergent from the store to make a stiff mixture you could spread. Scoop the mixture onto a sponge, and wash the surface. This is great for cleaning the bathtub because it rinses easily and doesn't leave grit. If you add 1 teaspoon of vegetable glycerine to the mixture and store it in a sealed glass jar, it will keep moist. Otherwise just make as much as you need at a time.

Tammy: Sprinkle dry cooking soda or cooking soda on your mats or carpet, let it sit for a few minutes, and then shake it or vacuum. The mat will be cleaner and smell fresh. You can also sprinkle dry baking soda in your sports shoes to get rid of smells. Shake it out before you wear them. It is also good in the fridge in a small open container to absorb smells - between washing out the fridge of course!

Carol: Baking soda also cleans greasy drains. Measure 1/2 cup cooking soda and 1/2 cup vinegar. Pour the soda into the drain first, followed by the vinegar. It will bubble furiously! Leave it for 15 minutes then flush it through with half a bucket of hot water. Please *do not* use this method if you have recently used commercial drain cleaners; there might be a reaction. Drain cleaners are often quite dangerous chemicals, they're expensive and they are bad for the environment, so next time try soda and vinegar.

Soda also helps you to clean a saucepan you have burnt. Put some hot soapy water in it, add a large spoon of soda, bring it to the boil then leave it to soak. The crust should come off very easily. If you add a spoonful of baking soda to your normal soap for washing dishes, it will really get the grease off.

Tammy: Here's a good tip for mopping floors. Put a slosh of vinegar into hot water and a few drops of eucalyptus oil if you have it.

Carol: Oh yes, eucalyptus oil is great for moving tough stains like shoe scuffs on the floor. It gets greasy marks out of clothes. Use a rag with eucalyptus oil on it and rub the spot gently. Then leave it for a little while before washing in your usual way. Lemon juice is also good for whitening and removing stains on clothes. Rub it on, leave for a little while then wash as usual.

Tammy: I hate cleaning out the rubbish bins, don't you? If you line the bin with old newspaper, ferns or banana leaves each time you empty it, it will be easier to clean. You could use some soda or vinegar in hot water to clean the bin, and then sprinkle half a cup of borax in the bottom to keep bacteria and insects away.

If you live in an area with a lot of minerals in the water you might get lime stains around your taps. Try using a cloth with vinegar to clean them off.

Carol: Vinegar is good for cleaning windows, too. Here's the recipe. Use 3 big spoonfuls of vinegar and just $\frac{1}{2}$ a teaspoon of liquid detergent to 2 cups of water. Put all the ingredients into a spray bottle, shake it up a bit, and spray it on the glass. Then wipe it off with paper or a cloth that doesn't shed fluff.

Tammy: vinegar is a great natural and safe cleaner.

Carol: It is, but it will strip wax off. Use it to get rid of an old wax layer, but don't use it on waxed furniture or computer screens as it could remove the protective surfaces. Don't use vinegar on stone countertops, it might damage the stone. If you want to use vinegar to clean pots and pans, it's ok on stainless steel and enamelled cast iron cookware. Don't use it on aluminium or cast iron as they will react with it.

Vinegar is very safe, but here's a warning- never mix it with bleach. It would become a dangerous chemical.

Tammy: You can spray vinegar as a weed-killer. Boiling water kills a lot of weeds too, and it's very cheap and won't hurt animals. Just pour it straight out of the kettle.

There are many more recipes we could share, but you probably won't remember any more. Can I encourage you to try some of these simple methods, talk about them with your friends, and find out what simple natural cleaning methods they use. You'll find you save a lot of money compared with buying cleaning products, and you won't be hurting your family or the environment.

Carol: Why don't we just repeat those basic recipes again and you might like to write them down. The cleaning spray mixture was $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of cooking soda, two pints or 1200 mls of cold water and a

little liquid soap if you have it. The creamy scrubbing mixture was half a cup of soda, mixed into a paste with liquid detergent from the store, and a teaspoon of glycerine to keep it moist.

Tammy: And the window cleaner was 3 big spoonsful of vinegar and just ½ a teaspoon of liquid detergent to 2 cups of water.

Carol: And my favorite for cleaning your drains: A cup of soda then a cup of vinegar, then watch it fizz! Don't forget to flush it with water after 15 minutes. Have fun with these safe, cheap cleaning tips.

Now that we have all swapped our cleaning recipes, let's take a few minutes with a cup of tea to hear from one of our good friends, Fran. She is here again, and she's going to talk about a Christian practice called baptism. Welcome Fran.

Fran: Thank you Carol, and hello, my friend. I wonder if you have heard of baptism. If you don't come from a Christian tradition, it might seem quite strange. Why do we pour water on a person's head, or lower them right into the water with the words 'I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit'? Why do we think it is important? And when a person from another religion, or a family with no belief, decides to follow Jesus, why do they face so much opposition when they get baptized? After all, it's just water!

So today we'd like to explain what baptism is about. And right away, there is a problem, because different Christian groups talk about it in different ways. Some think it's very important to go completely under the water. Some think babies should never be baptized, only adults. But behind all these differences, there are some very important things that we all believe, so we'll focus on these.

Let me start with a story from God's word, the Bible. Jesus Christ was a young man, maybe about 30, and he was not famous yet. But his cousin was quite famous. His name was John and he was known as John the Baptizer.

John was a preacher, a holy man who lived in the desert. He called people to repent from their sins and turn to God to forgive them, and warned them that God would judge their wrong behavior. Many were baptized, as a sign that they were ready to change and to live godly lives. John warned them that they had to truly repent. That meant they needed to change their lives, not just get wet!

Jesus went down into the river Jordan to be baptized. God showed John who Jesus really was; John said 'Look, here is the Lamb of God who will take away the sins of the world'. John didn't want to baptize him; he knew Jesus was better and more important than he was. But Jesus said he wanted to do the right thing, to be one of the godly people who were on God's side.

So John baptized him. As he was praying, the Holy Spirit came down on Jesus in the form of a dove and a voice from heaven said 'You are my own dear son, I am pleased with you.' (Luke 3:21-22, Matt 3:11-17)

So what did baptism mean then? Yes, it was a sign that you were truly sorry for your sins, that you wanted God to forgive you and you were ready to change your ways. And though Jesus was perfect, God's own Son, he stood with these people. Baptism still means that- it's a sign that you have repented and depend on God.

Now here's another story, from the time just before Jesus went back to heaven. Jesus was crucified, killed on a cross, and what John said was true; he was like a sacrificial lamb who took away the sins of the world. Then he came back to life, showing that God accepted his sacrifice (Acts 17:31).

Soon the time came for him to go back to heaven, and he had some last words for his followers. He said 'I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Go then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age.' (Matt 28:18-20)

There is so much in this story, but I want us to notice that Jesus gave this command, that his followers should be baptized and obey his commands, and that he would always be with them, even though they couldn't see him. So obviously it's important as a sign, to show that we believe and obey him.

Those first disciples did what Jesus said. In the power of God's Holy Spirit they preached the good news of forgiveness through Jesus, and they baptized everyone who believed. There's another story about the first time the message was preached in public. The preacher, Peter, finished by saying 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off- for all whom the Lord our God will call.' (Acts 2:38-39) About

3000 people believed- and they were baptized. (Acts 2:41) Every time people accepted this good news, they were baptized. It marked the beginning of a new life in Jesus, and a new identity as one of his followers. These were adults confessing their faith but sometimes whole households embraced this belief and were baptized together (Acts 16:33-34). They seem to have usually been baptized under the water but the amount of water was not the main thing.

The Bible writers taught about baptism. I'll just try to sum up the main things that all Christians believe.

All Christians believe in one baptism, though they perform it and understand it in slightly various ways that reflect different aspects of the Bible's teaching.

We all believe that it is not a magic ritual. Baptism cannot save us by itself, we need to repent and put our faith in God's grace and the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus.

In baptism, we act, and God also acts. The Bible often uses the word 'baptism' as a short way of talking about the whole event. It speaks of the covenant or agreement of grace God has made with us. This is where God saves us, and we repent and put our faith in God's grace when we accept Jesus as our Lord. God forgives us and gives his Holy Spirit to live within us. So we enter into the Christian life, and mark it by baptism. It's all one package.

As a symbol, what do you think it symbolizes? You might guess that it's a picture of *washing*-washing us clean. That's quite right, because God does wash away our sins. It's also a picture of *dying*, being buried, and rising again to new life. So we share in the death and resurrection of Jesus. It's described as dying to sin and rising to new life in God. (Romans 6:3-8)

Baptism is also a sign that we are part of the church, which is made up of all Jesus' followers throughout the world. All the things that divide us are set aside by baptism. The Bible says 'All of us, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether slaves or free, have been baptized into the one body by the same Spirit.' (1 Cor 12:13) Baptism is like an initiation, a mark that we belong to *this God, this faith*, and not another. For many believers it's a dividing line where they declare that they belong to Jesus Christ, and there is no going back.

When children are baptized their parents or guardians bring them into the community of the church and ask for God's blessing. The parents have faith, not the child, so when the child is old enough

to understand and have their own faith, they usually confirm it in some way. Some churches have a service of confirmation where the young person confesses their own faith.

I hope you understand what I've been saying. It's always complicated to talk about signs and rituals, but the basic message is very clear. The Christian churches baptize people because Jesus did it and commanded it as a sign that we identify with him as our Lord.

You might believe in Jesus as your Lord and Savior, but maybe you haven't had a chance to be baptized. God will still accept you; don't worry that you will be condemned. But if you have the opportunity, think about it very carefully. It can be a very special time when you tell the world you belong to Jesus Christ and he has saved you.

Carol: Thank you Fran.

I was baptized as a young woman – I was 25. I was raised in a church that never talked about baptism of believers – so this was very strange to me. I met with our Pastor and a few other believers as he taught us from the Bible, much of what Fran talked about today and I decided that I would be baptized to show my friends and others that I was a follower of Jesus Christ. It was a very special day for me.

Tammy: Well, it's time for us to go. Please contact us if you would like to ask any questions, or share your story so we can pray for you. You can contact us in care of this station or at TWR Women of Hope. The email address is TWRWomenofHope@twr.org. That's TWRWomenofHope@twr.org.

If you have missed a program or would like to hear one again you can do that on our website TWRWomenofHope.org or by visiting us on our Facebook page.

We'll leave you with our love, and a prayer than God will bless you and your family this week.

Fran: Goodbye, see you again.

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