

## Lesson Outline

### I The Ages and Stages of Life

**Read** 1 John 2:12-14 <sup>12</sup>I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. <sup>13</sup>I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. <sup>14</sup>I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

- A. Little Children Stage
- B. Young Man Stage
- C. Fathers Stage

### II The Childhood Stage

- A. Growth
- B. Training
- C. Education

### III Defining the Age of Youth

- A. Physically
- B. Socially
- C. Emotionally
- D. Mentally

### IV Defining Moral Accountability

- A. Concerning the Little Children
- B. Concerning Youth

### V When is the Age of Accountability?

- A. King Josiah
- B. King Jehoiachin
- C. Samuel
- D. The Little Ones That Believed

### VI The Salvation of Children

- A. The Nature of Children Should Counsel Caution
- B. The Focus in Childhood Should Be In Preparation
- C. Leading Young People to Christ

## Lesson 25 – Youth

An expression often mentioned in Bible circles, particularly in any discussion of salvation or baptism, is “The Age of Accountability.” Though not so stated in scripture, it is a term applied to the age at which someone is capable of understanding the Gospel and of making a willful decision to accept (or reject) the Lord Jesus Christ. Exactly what that age is not stated in scripture. It is somewhat nebulous.

Does the Bible teach such a thing? YES! And, there is a Biblical expression which is associated with the notation of an age of accountability. It is “from my youth” or words to that effect, and is found some 20 times in the Word of God.

**This lesson studies and explores this “age of youth” and its relationship to moral accountability.**

### I The Ages and Stages of Life

It is clear from the reading of the Bible that there are three (3) main stages, or levels of maturity, in a person’s life.

The levels are stated by way of spiritual application described in 1 John 2:12-14.

Read 1 John 2:12-14 *<sup>12</sup>I write unto you, **little children**, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. <sup>13</sup>I write unto you, **fathers**, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, **young men**, because ye have overcome the wicked one.*

*I write unto you, **little children**, because ye have known the Father. <sup>14</sup>I have written unto you, **fathers**, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, **young men**, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.*

- A. [Little Children Stage](#) (verse 12a) *<sup>12</sup>I write unto you, **little children**, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.*
- B. [Young Man Stage](#) (verse 13d) *I write unto you, **young men**, because ye have overcome the wicked one.*
- C. [Fathers Stage](#) (verse 13a, 14a)  
*<sup>13</sup>I write unto you, **fathers**, because ye have known him that is from the beginning.  
<sup>14</sup>I have written unto you, **fathers**, because ye have known him that is from the beginning.*

## II The Childhood Stage

The age of childhood obviously begins at birth and includes infants and “little ones.”

Read:

- Job 3:16 <sup>16</sup>Or as an hidden untimely birth I had not been; As infants which never saw light.
- Luke 18:15 (and more) <sup>15</sup>And they brought unto him **also infants**, that he would touch them: but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them. <sup>16</sup>But Jesus called them unto him, and said, **Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.** <sup>17</sup>Verily I say unto you, **Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.**
- Genesis 43:8 <sup>8</sup>And Judah said unto Israel his father, **Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, and also our little ones.**
- Matthew 18:3 and Matthew 18:6

<sup>1</sup>At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, *Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?* <sup>2</sup>And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, <sup>3</sup>**and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.**

<sup>4</sup>**Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.** <sup>5</sup>And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.

<sup>6</sup>**But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.**

Read Ecclesiastes 11:10 (from verse 9) *<sup>9</sup>Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.* <sup>10</sup>**Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity.** [vanity = the quality of being worthless or futile.]

This verse differentiates between CHILDHOOD and YOUTH.

The Bible also makes a distinction between Children and Adults.

Read 1 Corinthians 13:11 *<sup>11</sup>When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.*

This scripture lists three obvious areas of difference as follows:

- SPEAKING
- UNDERSTANDING
- THINKING

According to the Bible, childhood is a period of life marked by:

#### A. Growth

Read Luke 2:39-40 *<sup>39</sup>And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth. <sup>40</sup>And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.*

Read Luke 2:52 (from verse 46 for context) *<sup>46</sup>And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. <sup>47</sup>And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. <sup>48</sup>And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. <sup>49</sup>And he said unto them, **How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?** <sup>50</sup>And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. <sup>51</sup>And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. <sup>52</sup>And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.*

1. Strong in spirit (character)
2. In wisdom (mentally)
3. In stature (physically)
4. In favor with God (spiritually)
5. In favor with man (socially)

Also read in Luke 2:41-43 *<sup>41</sup>Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. <sup>42</sup>And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. <sup>43</sup>And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.*

**Note: Jesus was called a “child” at the age of twelve (12).**

**B. Training**

1. Read Proverbs 22:6 <sup>6</sup>*Train up a child in the way he should go: And when he is old, he will not depart from it.*
2. Read Proverbs 23:13-14 <sup>13</sup>*Withhold not correction from the child: For if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. <sup>14</sup>Thou shalt beat him with the rod, And shalt deliver his soul from hell.*
3. Proverbs 29:15 <sup>15</sup>*The rod and reproof give wisdom: But a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.*

Also read Proverbs 22:15 <sup>15</sup>*Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; But the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.*

4. Read Ephesians 6:4 (from verse 1) <sup>1</sup>*Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. <sup>2</sup>Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; <sup>3</sup>that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. <sup>4</sup>**And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.***

Fathers are responsible to raise their children in the **nurture and admonition of the Lord.**

**C. Education**

1. Read Deuteronomy 6:6-7 (from verse 4) <sup>4</sup>*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: <sup>5</sup>and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. <sup>6</sup>**And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:** <sup>7</sup>and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.*

**Parents are to teach the Word of God to their children DILIGENTLY.**

2. Read Galatians 4:1-2 <sup>1</sup>*Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; <sup>2</sup>but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.*

**Children learn under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.**

The expectation is that by the time someone reaches the end of normal childhood, he is disciplined and equipped to begin shouldering responsibility.

### III Defining the Age of Youth

The time between puberty and adulthood is typically referred to as “adolescent”. Today’s society generally views the adolescent a part-child / part-adult entity still to be fully discipline and equipped. This thinking has helped to produce a generation of “big kids” (many of whom do not stop beyond the teen years) – dependent, unreliable, and irresponsible.

Youth is indeed the time of transition into adulthood. The Bible of “the days of [Israel’s] youth as the time Israel became a nation – the point in Israel’s history when:

- *They (Israel) came up out of the land of Egypt.*

Read Hosea 2:15 <sup>15</sup>*And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, **as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.***

- When God made His covenant with Israel.

Read Ezekiel 16:6 <sup>60</sup>*Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee **in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant.***

The Bible, however a somewhat different characterization of youth to that of modern-day thinking.

#### A. Physically

1. Read Proverbs 20:29 <sup>29</sup>***The glory of young men is their strength: And the beauty of old men is the grey head.***
2. The Bible implies that endurance is a quality of youth.  
Read Isaiah 40:30-31 <sup>30</sup>***Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: 31but they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their***

*strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*

3. Read Lamentations 3:27 <sup>27</sup> *It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.*

**These scripture references imply that youth are supposed to be able to perform HARD WORK.**

## B. Socially

1. Youth is time when one is still resident in the father's house.

Read Leviticus 22:13 <sup>13</sup>*But if the priest's daughter be a widow, or divorced, and have no child, **and is returned unto her father's house, as in her youth, she shall eat of her father's meat: but there shall no stranger eat thereof.***

Read Numbers 30:3 <sup>3</sup> *If a woman also vow a vow unto the LORD, and bind herself by a bond, **being in her father's house in her youth;***

Read Numbers 30:16 <sup>16</sup>*These are the statutes, which the LORD commanded Moses, between a man and his wife, between the father and his daughter, **being yet in her youth in her father's house.***

2. Youth ought to be able to keep cattle (i.e., be capable of hard work)

Read Genesis 46:34 <sup>34</sup>*That ye shall say, **Thy servants' trade hath been about cattle from our youth even until now, both we, and also our fathers: that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians.***

Read Zechariah 13:5 <sup>5</sup>*but he shall say, I am no prophet, I am an husbandman; **for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth.***

3. Youth is meant to be a time of **VIRGINITY** (in these verses, God is illustrating Israel's UNFAITHFULNESS).

Read Ezekiel 23:3 and 23:8 (from verse 1) <sup>1</sup>*The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, 2Son of man, there were two women, the daughters of one mother: <sup>3</sup>**and they committed whoredoms in Egypt; they committed whoredoms in their youth: there were their breasts pressed, and there they bruised the teats of their virginity.** <sup>4</sup>And the names of them were Aholah the elder, and Aholibah her sister: and they were mine, and they bare sons and daughters. Thus were their names; Samaria is Aholah, and Jerusalem Aholibah.*

<sup>5</sup>And Aholah played the harlot when she was mine; and she doted on her lovers, on the Assyrians her neighbours, <sup>6</sup>which were clothed with blue, captains and rulers, all of them desirable young men, horsemen riding upon horses. <sup>7</sup>Thus she committed her whoredoms with them, with all them that were the chosen men of Assyria, and with all on whom she doted: with all their idols she defiled herself. <sup>8</sup>**Neither left she her whoredoms brought from Egypt: for in her youth they lay with her, and they bruised the breasts of her virginity, and poured their whoredom upon her.**

Read Ezekiel 23:21 <sup>21</sup>Thus thou calledst to **remembrance the lewdness of thy youth**, in bruising thy teats by the Egyptians for the paps of thy youth.

4. This is the time a young man will be lead “to the wife of his youth”.

Read Proverbs 5:18 <sup>18</sup>Let thy fountain be blessed: And rejoice with the wife of thy youth.

Read Malachi 2:14-15 <sup>14</sup>Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the **wife of thy youth**, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. <sup>15</sup>And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against **the wife of his youth**.

In summary, socially, youth should be a time when:

- One is still resident in the father’s house.
- to be able to keep cattle (i.e., be capable of hard work)
- Youth is meant to be a time of **VIRGINITY**
- Finds “the wife of his youth”. (or husband)

### C. Emotionally

1. **Youth tend to fear making decisions.**

Read Judges 8:20 (Gideon speaking) <sup>20</sup>And he said unto Jether his firstborn, Up, and slay them. But the youth drew not his sword: for he feared, because he was yet a youth.

[In the Bible from the Book of Judges, Gideon is called upon to save the people of Israel by leading them against the Midianites. **In a common theme of apostasy, the people of Israel had done "what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord gave them into the hand of Midian."** The Midianites were

capturing any crops produced by the Israelites, giving them grief. When the people of Israel realized the error of their ways and cried out for help to the Lord, a prophet was sent to deliver them as they had been rescued from Egypt. Enter Gideon, while harvesting wheat and hiding from the Midianites an angel spoke to him and addressed him as a mighty man of courage. The angel told Gideon that God is sending him to "save Israel from the hand of Midian." Although at first Gideon doubts his ability to do so, he is heartened that God will be with him in this mission.]

2. People tend to doubt youth's ability and commitment.

Example: David's youthful ability and courage to fight was doubted by Saul and the Philistine.

Read 1 Samuel 17:33 <sup>33</sup>*And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.*

Read 1 Samuel 17:42 <sup>42</sup>*And when the Philistine [Goliath] looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.*

Emotionally, youth is challenged by: their own indecision and other people's doubting their youthful abilities.

D. **Mentally**

1. Read Proverbs 16:22 <sup>22</sup>*Understanding is a wellspring of life unto him that hath it: But the instruction of fools is folly.* [Because they do not have understanding] Not having "understanding" is a prominent characteristic of youth!

"Understanding is a wellspring [a source of continual supply] of understanding." (Education is going from not understanding [how things work] to understanding [how things work]).

2. Read Proverbs 7:6-9 <sup>6</sup>*For at the window of my house I looked through my casement,* <sup>7</sup>***And beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, A young man void of understanding,*** <sup>8</sup>*Passing through the street near her corner; And he went the way to her house,* <sup>9</sup>*In the twilight, in the evening, In the black and dark night:* [this passage is warning about associating with prostitutes].

3. Read 1 Kings 12:6-11 <sup>6</sup>And king Rehoboam consulted with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people? <sup>7</sup>And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever. <sup>8</sup>**But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him:** <sup>9</sup>and he said unto them, What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter? <sup>10</sup>And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins. <sup>11</sup>And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

[Note: King Rehoboam was the last monarch of the United Kingdom of Israel and the first monarch of the Kingdom of Judah after the former's split. He was a son of and the successor to Solomon and a grandson of David. In the account of I Kings and II Chronicles, Rehoboam was initially a king of the United Monarchy, but later saw his rule limited to only the Kingdom of Judah in the south following a rebellion by the ten northern tribes of Israel in 932/931 BCE, which led to the formation of the independent Kingdom of Israel under the rule of Jeroboam in the north.]

**MAP on next page...**

### Judah and Israel - 830 BC



## 1 Kings 12 SUMMARY ([an important chapter in the Bible](#))

Chapter 12 of first Kings begins with Solomon's son Rehoboam who became king of Israel in his father's place. Jeroboam, who resisted Solomon's policies, heard about Rehoboam's coronation while he was still in Egypt (remember he fled from Solomon). His supporters sent for him to address Rehoboam concerning the heavy burdens Solomon put on the nation. He returned representing the oppressed and made an ultimatum for the king of Israel. Rehoboam pondered on it for three days. **He talked to the older men who'd counseled his father, king Solomon. They advised that he listen to the people; he also counseled with the younger generation that he'd grown up with. They advised he put his foot down harder and harsher.**

**Tax Collectors Got Stoned** - Rehoboam decided to go with the young men, but this **poor decision** was given to him by the Lord. It was because of Solomon's sin and that the prophecy the prophet Ahijah had given to Jeroboam to be fulfilled. Israel then revolted against Rehoboam and wanted nothing to do with the house of David. Rehoboam attempted to keep the kingdom together, but the people stoned his tax collectors, and Israel made Jeroboam king. Rehoboam ruled over the house of Judah only, as well as Benjamin. God had a prophet tell Rehoboam this was from the Lord in order to stop a war between Judah and Israel. In the aftermath of this, the newly minted king of ten tribes of Israel, Jeroboam, became nervous that his people would return to Rehoboam.

**Unfit Leaders in the Office of Law** - He figured this would happen whenever they went up to attend a feast to the Lord. Jeroboam even thought they would kill him, so king Jeroboam decided to take matters into his own hands. He made two calves of gold and told the people these are the gods who brought you out of Egypt. This obviously became a sin to Israel. He also made a house of high places and made anyone who wanted to become priests, to have the office. It made no difference if they were trained or not. This turned away the Levites, who returned to Judah along with the tribe of Benjamin. Jeroboam ordained the eighth month a feast on the fifteenth day, something he devised on his own for the children of Israel.

Israel's 10 tribes were subsequently conquered by the Assyrian Empire - **In 721 B.C.**

**Assyria** swept out of the north (capital Nineveh), captured the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and took the ten tribes into captivity. From there they became lost to history. Assyria, named for the god Ashur (highest in the pantheon of Assyrian gods), was located in the Mesopotamian plain.

Samaritans claim they are Israelite descendants of the Northern Israelite tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, who survived the destruction of the Kingdom of Israel (Samaria) by the Assyrians in 722 BCE.

### **End of Assyria at the Battle of Nineveh (612 BC)**

Determined to end Assyrian dominance in Mesopotamia, Babylonia led an alliance in an attack against the Assyrian capital, Nineveh. The city was comprehensively sacked after a three-month siege, and the Assyrian King was killed.

## IV Defining Moral Accountability

There is a difference between little children and youth in the matter of discernment and accountability. Consider what the Bible says:

### A. Concerning the Little Children

1. All children are born with a SIN nature.
  - a. Read Psalm 58:3a <sup>3</sup> ***The wicked are estranged from the womb:***  
(Estranged = no longer close or affectionate to someone; alienated.)
  - b. Read Psalm 51:5 <sup>5</sup> *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity;  
And in sin did my mother conceive me.*  
**WE WERE CONCEIVED IN SIN.**
2. All children sin because they are sinners.
  - a. Read Psalm 58:3b *They go astray as soon as they be born,  
**speaking lies***
  - b. Read Proverbs 20:11 <sup>11</sup> ***Even a child is known by his doings,  
Whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.***
3. All children are subject to physical consequences of sin.
  - a. Read Romans 5:12 <sup>12</sup> *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*
  - b. Read Romans 5:14 <sup>14</sup> *Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.*

**Adam's transgression was willful disobedience. Infants and young children do NOT willfully sin – they naturally sin! Yet they are still subject to physical death.**

4. Young children (Little Ones) are **unable to discern** good and evil.
  - a. Read Proverbs 22:15 <sup>15</sup>*Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; But the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.*
  - b. Read Deuteronomy 1:39 <sup>39</sup>*Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day **had no knowledge between good and evil**, they shall go in thither, and unto **them will I give it, and they shall possess it.***

5. Little ones who die are **SAFE** in Jesus.

One of the most comforting passages of scripture arises out of the tragic death of the child conceived through the adultery of David with Bathsheba.

Read 2 Samuel 12:22-23 <sup>22</sup>*And he [David] said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live? <sup>23</sup>But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.*

David said of the child: *“I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.”*

God’s mercy **makes allowance** – read Jonah 4:11 <sup>11</sup>*and should not I [God] spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?*

## B. Concerning Youth [an exploration in the Bible]

### 1. Youth are capable of **WILLFUL** obedience.

- a. “All these things I have kept from my youth up.”
  - (i) Read Mathew 19:20 <sup>20</sup>*The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?*
  - (ii) Read Mark 10:20 <sup>20</sup>*And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.*

(iii) Read Luke 18:21 <sup>21</sup>*And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up.*

**Note:**

The rich young man's statement probably had a reference to his Bar Mitzvah (Son of the Commandment), the Jewish rite of passage. At this age (13), a young man is expected to accept the responsibilities of observing the commandments and becomes eligible to participate in temple worship and other legal activities. (Jewish girls have a Bar Mitzvah at age 12).

The young rich young man had faithfully kept the commandments – except the 1<sup>st</sup> commandment (Exodus 20:3) <sup>3</sup>***Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*** His wealth was his real god, as his sorrowful departure from the Lord's presence revealed!

- b. Read Ezekiel 4:14 <sup>14</sup>*Then said I, Ah Lord GOD! behold, my soul hath not been polluted: for from my youth up even till now have I not eaten of that which dieth of itself, or is torn in pieces; neither came there abominable flesh into my mouth.*

Ezekiel states he was NOT polluted because he had observed the LAW "from my youth".

**2. Youth are capable of willful disobedience.**

As the prophet Jeremiah preached against the sins of Judah, he said:

- a. Read Jeremiah 3:24-25 <sup>24</sup>*For shame hath devoured the labour of our fathers from our youth; their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters.* <sup>25</sup>*We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us: for we have sinned against the LORD our God, we and our fathers, **from our youth even unto this day**, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God.*
- b. Read Jeremiah 22:21 (from verse 20) <sup>20</sup>*Go up to Lebanon, and cry; and lift up thy voice in Bashan, and cry from the passages: for all thy lovers are destroyed.* <sup>21</sup>*I spake unto thee in thy prosperity; but **thou saidst, I will not hear. This hath been thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeyedst not my voice.***

- c. Read Jeremiah 32:30 (from verse 26) <sup>26</sup>Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah, saying, <sup>27</sup>Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me? <sup>28</sup>Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans, and into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take it: <sup>29</sup>and the Chaldeans, that fight against this city, shall come and set fire on this city, and burn it with the houses, upon whose roofs they have offered incense unto Baal, and poured out drink offerings unto other gods, to provoke me to anger. <sup>30</sup>**For the children of Israel and the children of Judah have only done evil before me from their youth: for the children of Israel have only provoked me to anger with the work of their hands, saith the LORD. <sup>31</sup>For this city hath been to me as a provocation of mine anger and of my fury from the day that they built it even unto this day; that I should remove it from before my face, <sup>32</sup>because of all the evil of the children of Israel and of the children of Judah, which they have done to provoke me to anger, they, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets, and the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.**
- d. Read Genesis 8:20-21 <sup>20</sup>And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. <sup>21</sup>And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, **I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.**

### 3. Youth are held accountable for their conduct.

- a. Read Acts 26:4 (from verse 1) <sup>1</sup>Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself: <sup>2</sup>I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews: <sup>3</sup>especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently. <sup>4</sup>**My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; <sup>5</sup>which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.**

b. Ecclesiastes 11:9-10 <sup>9</sup>Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: **but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.** <sup>10</sup>Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity.

c. Ezekiel 18:1-3 and more (addressing **Personal Responsibility**)

God **will not permit** children to justify their sins by blaming their parents – **ANY GENERATION CAN COMPENSATE FOR THE EFFECTS OF THE INFLUENCE OF BAD (OR GOOD) PARENTING.**

<sup>1</sup>The word of the LORD came unto me again, saying, <sup>2</sup>**What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge?** <sup>3</sup>As I live, saith the Lord GOD, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. <sup>4</sup>Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. <sup>5</sup>But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right, <sup>6</sup>and hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, neither hath defiled his neighbour's wife, neither hath come near to a menstruous woman, <sup>7</sup>and hath not oppressed any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment; <sup>8</sup>he that hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase, that hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment between man and man, <sup>9</sup>hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; **he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord GOD.**

Visit:

<https://www.lewistownsentinel.com/news/religion/2021/04/the-fathers-have-eaten-sour-grapes-and-childrens-teeth-are-set-on-edge/>

for detailed analysis of this verse.

#### 4. Youth is the time for salvation.

- a. Read Ecclesiastes 12:1(a) ***1Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; [read the whole chapter]***
- b. A person is able to TRUST the Lord from the time of youth. Read Psalm 71:5 (from verse 4) ***4Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, Out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man. 5For thou art my hope, O Lord GOD: Thou art my trust from my youth. 6By thee have I been holden up from the womb: Thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels: My praise shall be continually of thee.***
- c. Moses took his stand for the Lord when he had come to years. Read Hebrews 11:24 (from verse 23) ***23By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. 24By faith Moses, when he was come to years [got older], refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; 25choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;***
- d. Obadiah **feared** the Lord from his youth.
  - (i) Read 1 Kings 18:3 ***3And Ahab called Obadiah, which was the governor of his house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly:)***
  - (ii) Read 1 Kings 18:12 ***12And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the LORD shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the LORD from my youth.***

#### Discussion about Obadiah:

The **Book of Obadiah** is a book of the Bible whose authorship is attributed to [Obadiah](#), a [prophet](#) who lived in the [Assyrian Period](#). Obadiah is one of the [Twelve Minor Prophets](#) in the final section of Nevi'im, the second main division of the [Hebrew Bible](#). The

text consists of a single [chapter](#), divided into 21 verses, making it the shortest book in the Hebrew Bible. **The book concerns the divine judgment of Edom and the restoration of Israel.** [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book\\_of\\_Obadiah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Obadiah) - cite\_note-1

The Book of Obadiah is based on a prophetic vision concerning the fall of [Edom](#), a mountain-dwelling nation whose founding father as [Esau](#). Obadiah describes an encounter with [Yahweh](#), who addresses Edom's arrogance and charges them for their "violence against your brother Jacob".



Throughout most of the history of Judah, Edom was controlled absolutely from Jerusalem as a [vassal state](#). Obadiah said that the high elevation of their dwelling place in the [mountains of Seir](#) had gone to their head, and they had puffed themselves up in pride. "'Though you soar like the eagle and make your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down,' declares the Lord".

In [Siege of Jerusalem \(597 BC\)](#), [Nebuchadnezzar II](#) sacked Jerusalem, carted away the King of Judah, and installed a puppet ruler. The Edomites helped the Babylonians loot the city. Obadiah, writing this prophecy around 590 BCE, suggests the Edomites should have remembered that blood was thicker than water. "On the day you stood aloof while strangers carried off his wealth and foreigners entered his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem, you were like one of them... You should not march

through the gates of my people in the day of their disaster, nor gloat over them in their calamity in the day of their disaster, nor seize their wealth in the day of their disaster."

Obadiah said in judgement Yahweh would wipe out the house of [Esau](#) forever, and not even a remnant would remain. The Edomites' land would be possessed by Egypt and they would cease to exist as a people.<sup>[11]</sup> The Day of the Lord was at hand for all nations, and someday the children of Israel would return from their exile and possess the land of Edom.

While Christ is well able to save sinners of all age up to the point of death, statistics show the vast majority of believers come to Christ before they reach their adult years – before the bitterness of life kicks in. Read Ecclesiastes 12:1(b) ***1Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;*** [read the whole chapter]

## 5. Youth still need guidance and teaching.

- a. **Youth is a teachable age.** Read Psalm 71:17 (and verse 18 for fun) ***17O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: And hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. 18Now also when I am old and greyheaded, O God, forsake me not;***
- b. The scriptures below speak of the “guide of youth” – in the context of unfaithfulness to God. Read Proverbs 2:17 ***16To deliver thee from the strange woman, Even from the stranger which flattereth with her words; 17Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, And forgetteth the covenant of her God. 18For her house inclineth unto death, And her paths unto the dead.***

Also read...

Jeremiah 3:4 ***4Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth?***

## 6. Youth are well able to make their lives count for Christ.

- a. Read Psalm 127:4 (read verses 3-5) ***3Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: And the fruit of the womb is his reward. 4As arrows are in***

*the hand of a mighty man; So are children of the youth.* <sup>5</sup>Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: They shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.

Well-raised children are like *arrows are in the hand of a mighty man;*

- b. Read Psalm 144:12 <sup>12</sup>That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; That our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude [**likeness**] of a palace:

Well-raised children are like plants (sons), and polished corner stones (daughters).

Note: Consider the relevance of these verses in light for recent and new state abortion laws!

- c. Read 1 Timothy 4:12 (verses 11 through verse 13) <sup>11</sup>*These things command and teach.* <sup>12</sup>**Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.** <sup>13</sup>*Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.*

Although he may have been beyond his teenage years at the time, Timothy was enjoined to:

- (i) Let no one **despise thy youth**
- (ii) Be an example of the believers

Youth is a time for surrender to the work of God. SO often we lower expectations for our young people – or have other, more worldly ambitions for them – so that by the time they reach adult years, they are lost to what might have been.

## 7. Youth are well able to stand against evil and the Evil One.

- a. Read All of 1 Samuel 17 (**David Slays Goliath**)

**From verse 31:** *<sup>31</sup>And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed them before Saul: and he sent for him. <sup>32</sup>And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine. <sup>33</sup>And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth. <sup>34</sup>And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: <sup>35</sup>and I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. <sup>36</sup>Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. <sup>37</sup>David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee.*

- b. **Read 1 John 2:13-14** (from verse 12) *<sup>12</sup>I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. <sup>13</sup>I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. **I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one.** I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. <sup>14</sup>I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.*

In this anthology [a collection] of Christian maturity values, the young men **have overcome the wicked one.**

**Summary** of “Concerning Youth” in the **Defining Moral Accountability - Section V:**

1. Youth are capable of WILLFUL obedience.
2. Youth are capable of willful disobedience.
3. Youth are held accountable for their conduct.
4. Youth is the time for salvation.
5. Youth still need guidance and teaching.
6. Youth are well able to make their lives count for Christ.
7. Youth are well able to stand against evil and the Evil One.

## V When is the Age of Accountability?

**There is no set age.** It has much to do with one's physical and mental maturity and one's spiritual upbringing.

The concept of there existing an "Age of Accountability" is seen in John 9:21-23 (from verse 18). *<sup>18</sup>But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. <sup>19</sup>And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? <sup>20</sup>His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: <sup>21</sup>but by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself. <sup>22</sup>These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. <sup>23</sup>Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him.*

The Lord Jesus had healed a beggar who had been blind from birth. When questioned about this miracle, by the Pharisees, the blind man's parents stated:

***"<sup>21</sup>... he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself."***

For most, we suppose the age of accountability will be reached some time between mid-to-late childhood or early teen years. For some it may be earlier while for others it may be later. For those affected by a severe mental handicap, it may never come! The age of Accountability is not a physical age but rather a cognitive age.

Read Nehemiah 8:2 *<sup>2</sup>And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month.*

Ezra read the LAW before the congregation of both men and women, and all that ***"could hear with understanding,"***

## Additionally, consider the following four (4) scriptural EXAMPLES:

### A. King Josiah - Read 2 Chronicles 34:1-3

[Josiah - whose literal meaning is "healed by Yahweh" [or Jehovah heals] 64 was the 16th king of Judah. He instituted major religious reforms by removing official worship of gods other than Yahweh. Josiah is credited by most biblical scholars with having established or compiled important Hebrew scriptures during the "Deuteronomic reform" which probably occurred during his rule. Josiah became king of the Kingdom of Judah at the age of eight, after the assassination of his father, King Amon. Josiah reigned for 31 years, from 641 to 610 BC.

The prophetic activity of **Jeremiah** began in the reign of Josiah; he was a contemporary of his relative the prophetess **Hulda** and of his teacher **Zephaniah**. These three prophets divided their activity: Hulda spoke to the women and Jeremiah to the men in the street, while Zephaniah preached in the synagogue.



When Josiah became king of Judah in about 641/640 BCE, the international situation was in flux.

The [Assyrian Empire](#) was beginning to disintegrate, the [Neo-Babylonian Empire](#) had not yet risen to replace it, and [Egypt](#) to the west

was still recovering from Assyrian rule. In this power vacuum, [Jerusalem](#) was able to govern itself for the time being without foreign intervention.]

**Josiah** was the 16th king of Judah. According to the Hebrew Bible, he instituted major religious reforms by removing official worship of gods other than YAWEH

Father: [Amon](#)

Predecessor: [Amon](#), his father

House: [House of David](#)

Successor: [Jehoahaz](#), his son

**2 Chronicles 34:1-3**

*<sup>1</sup>Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem one and thirty years. <sup>2</sup>And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left. <sup>3</sup>For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images.*

1. Josiah was “eight years old when he began to reign,”
2. Josiah was 16 yoa “he began to seek after the God of David his father”
3. When Josiah was 20 yoa “he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images.”

**Josiah is an example of a very young man not only being able to shoulder the responsibilities of royalty, but also act righteously with great deliberation and purpose.**

**B. King Jehoiachin - Read 2 Chronicles 36:9-10**

*<sup>9</sup>Jehoiachin was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem: and he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD. <sup>10</sup>And when the year was expired, king Nebuchadnezzar sent, and brought him to Babylon, with the goodly vessels of the house of the LORD, and made Zedekiah his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem.*

1. Jehoiachin was eight years old when he began to reign,
2. Jehoiachin reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem:
3. He did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD.

**Jehoiachin is an example of a very young man being held accountable by God for the character of his reign.**

### C. Samuel – 1 Samuel 3

**Back ground:** Samuel is a figure who, plays a key role in the transition from the period of the biblical judges to the institution of a kingdom under Saul, and again in the transition from Saul to David.

Samuel, the son of Ephraim and [Hannah](#), was born in answer to the prayer of his previously childless mother. In gratitude she dedicated him to the service of the chief sanctuary of [Shiloh](#), in the charge of the priest Eli. As a boy Samuel received a divine oracle in which the fall of the house of Eli was predicted (1 Samuel 1–3). When he became an adult, Samuel inspired Israel to a great victory over the [Philistines](#) at Ebenezer (chapter 7). The proposal of the elders of Israel to install a king was indignantly rejected by Samuel as infidelity to [Yahweh](#), the God of Israel (chapter 8). By the revelation of Yahweh, however, he anointed [Saul](#) king and installed him before all Israel (chapters 9–10). Saul was [vindicated](#) as king by his leadership of Israel in a campaign against the Ammonites (chapter 11); after this, Samuel retired from the leadership of Israel (chapter 12). He reappeared, however, to announce the oracle of Yahweh rejecting Saul as king, once for arrogating to himself the right of sacrifice (chapter 13) and a second time for failing to carry out the law of the ban—a primitive institution by which persons or objects were devoted to the deity, normally by destruction—against the [Amalekites](#) (chapter 15). By the oracle of Yahweh, Samuel secretly anointed [David](#) as king (chapter 16). He then faded into the background, appearing at the [sanctuary](#) of Naioth (chapter 19). He died, and his ghost was evoked by a necromancer, or sorceress, at the request of Saul; he then announced a third time the rejection of Saul (chapter 28).

*<sup>1</sup>And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision. <sup>2</sup>And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see; <sup>3</sup>and ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep; <sup>4</sup>that the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I. <sup>5</sup>And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down. <sup>6</sup>And the LORD called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again. <sup>7</sup>Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him. <sup>8</sup>And the LORD called Samuel again the third time.*

*And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child. <sup>9</sup>Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place. <sup>10</sup>And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth. <sup>11</sup>And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. <sup>12</sup>In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. <sup>13</sup>For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. <sup>14</sup>And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever. <sup>15</sup>And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel feared to shew Eli the vision. <sup>16</sup>Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he answered, Here am I. <sup>17</sup>And he said, What is the thing that the LORD hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide any thing from me of all the things that he said unto thee. <sup>18</sup>And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good. <sup>19</sup>And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. <sup>20</sup>And all Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the LORD. <sup>21</sup>And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.*

- 1.** Verse 1: *<sup>1</sup>And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision. As a child Samuel ministered unto the LORD.*
- 2.** Verse 7: *<sup>7</sup>Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him. Samuel did this (ministering) even though he did not know the Lord at this time.*
- 3.** Verse 15: *<sup>15</sup>And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel feared to shew Eli the vision. Samuel first met the Lord though a dream in a night.*

4. Verse 19-20: *<sup>19</sup>And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. <sup>20</sup>And all Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the LORD.*

The child Samuel was “established to be a prophet of the LORD.”

**Note:** Jeremiah was **ALSO** called to preach when he was child.

Read Jeremiah 1:4-9 [The Prophet's Cal]

|  
*<sup>4</sup>Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, <sup>5</sup>Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and **before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.** <sup>6</sup>Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. <sup>7</sup>But the LORD said unto me, **Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.** <sup>8</sup>Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD. <sup>9</sup>Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.*

#### D. The Little Ones That Believed – Matthew 18:1-14

This is one of the most misunderstood or misapplied passages in the Bible. It is the perennial favorite of the “baby sprinklers” who use it to justify infant baptism – a remarkable conclusion given that there is no mention of baptism anywhere in the passage.

The key to understanding the Lord’s teaching is the use of the little word “as” in verse 3. The word is “as” [like], not “when”! For anyone to be converted, they must “come to Christ” with child-like faith (humility) NOT with self-righteous pride. Read verse 4 below spoken by Jesus: ***<sup>4</sup>Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.***

Nevertheless, the Lord spoke of these “little ones” who **believe in me.**  
**The fact is CHILDREN CAN BELIEVE.**

**Matthew 18:** *<sup>1</sup> At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? <sup>2</sup> And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, <sup>3</sup>and said, **Verily I say unto you, Except***

*ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. <sup>4</sup> Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>5</sup> And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. <sup>6</sup> But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. <sup>7</sup> Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh! <sup>8</sup> Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. <sup>9</sup> And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire. <sup>10</sup> Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. <sup>11</sup> For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. <sup>12</sup> How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? <sup>13</sup> And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. <sup>14</sup> Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.*

1. The child in question was old enough to hear, respond by walking over to Jesus who had called a little child unto him. (verse 2: *<sup>2</sup> And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,*)
2. This is in contrast to the incident recorded in Matthew 19:13-15

*<sup>13</sup> Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. <sup>14</sup> But Jesus said, **Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.** <sup>15</sup> And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.*

Here, these little children were:

- a. Brought unto Him by others.

- b. Specifically called infants Read Luke 18:15 *<sup>15</sup>And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them.*
  - c. Children small enough to be held in the arms of Christ. Read Mark 10:16 (from verse 14) *<sup>14</sup>But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, **Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.** <sup>15</sup>Verily I say unto you, **Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.** <sup>16</sup>And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.*
  - d. Children not brought for salvation, but for Jesus to lay His hands on them and pray for these children. Read Matthew 19:13 *<sup>13</sup>Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. <sup>14</sup>But Jesus said, **Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.** <sup>15</sup>And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.*
3. It is the will of the Heavenly Father that not one of these children should perish. Read Matthew 18:14 again: ***<sup>14</sup>Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.***
  4. Read Matthew 19:14 *<sup>14</sup>But Jesus said, **Suffer [don't hinder the] little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.***

#### In Summary...

For anyone to be converted, they must “come to Christ” with child-like faith (humility) NOT with self-righteous pride. Read verse 4 below spoken by Jesus: **<sup>4</sup> Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.**

## VI The Salvation of Children

Surely the greatest desire of any Christian parent is to see each of their children to come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. In this pursuit, these parents would echo the experience and cry of Hagar in Genesis 21:16 (from verse 14)

[Hagar was an [Egyptian](#) slave, a handmaiden of [Sarah](#) (then known as *Sarai*), whom Sarah gave to her own husband Abram (later renamed [Abraham](#)) as a wife to bear him a child. Abraham's firstborn son, through Hagar, [Ishmael](#), became the progenitor of the [Ishmaelites](#), generally taken to be the [Arabs](#).]

<sup>14</sup>And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beer-sheba. <sup>15</sup>And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs.

**<sup>16</sup>And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bowshot: for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lift up her voice, and wept.** <sup>17</sup>And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. <sup>18</sup>Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation. <sup>19</sup>And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink. <sup>20</sup>And God was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer.

Read Proverbs 23:24-25

*<sup>24</sup>The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: And he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him.*

*<sup>25</sup>Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, And she that bare thee shall rejoice.*

In these verses, we are told the parents of the righteous [saved] shall greatly rejoice.

Yet there exist some serious problems in Baptist homes and churches today in the matter of childhood professions of faith - problems such as:

- Multiple professions of faith – often made at a very early age, then again later years.
- Copy-cat professions – made because one’s peers are / have made professions of faith.
- Aggressive child ministry workers – some times caught of in the numbers game of attaining a large number of “saved” children.
- Assurance of salvation based on the fact the one “remembers praying a prayer” (faith is not to be found in a prayer but in a the Person of Jesus Christ!).
- Assurance based upon the say-so of a parent – “I know because my mom told me what I did (or said) when I was X years old.”

The all-to-often sad outcome of this is people depending on false hopes for salvation, or professing Christians abandoning Christ, His Church, Biblical morality, etc. in their later years.

**Great caution is needed lest we ‘offend one of these little ones’ by leading them into a false hope or profession of faith.**

**A. The Nature of Children Should Counsel Caution.**

Read Ephesians 4:14 (verses 11 through 15 for context)

*<sup>11</sup>And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; <sup>12</sup>for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: <sup>13</sup>till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: <sup>14</sup>**that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;** <sup>15</sup>but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:*

The illustration using children in Ephesians 4:14 highlights the fact that children are:

1. Fickle – **“tossed to and fro,”**
2. Easy to **deceive;**

It is very easy to lead a child along. Anyone who has worked with children can testify that it would be easy to get multiple “decisions for salvation” through simple manipulation.

Children have a desire to please adults, especially their parents – who in turn have a desire to see their children saved.

A child has a limited vocabulary, and may not be able to properly express their real understanding (or lack thereof) of the plan of salvation. On the other hand, children who are raised in a godly Christian home and in a sound Baptist church, may have learned “pat” Christian answers.

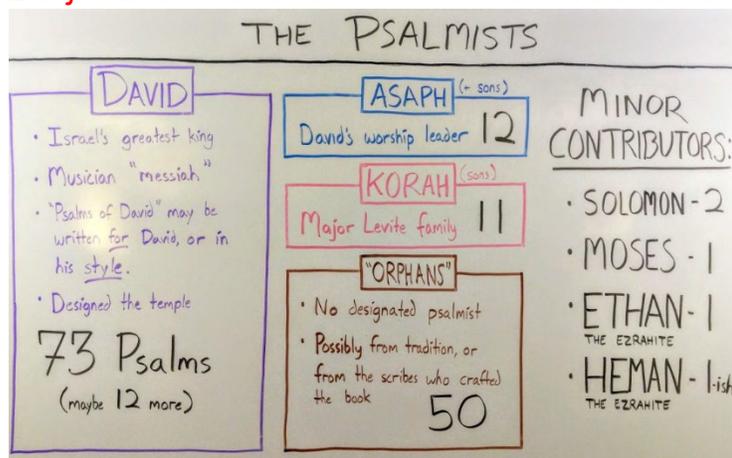
**The question is: “Do they really comprehend what they are saying or doing?”**

- B. Correspondingly, from Ephesians 4:14 in Part A just read above:

**The Focus in Childhood Should Be in Preparation to Accept Jesus as the “Christ, the Son of the Living God.”**

**Read Matthew 16:16** *16And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 17And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.*

1. According to Psalm 34:11 **“Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the**



**fear of the LORD**, children can to fear (love and respect) the Lord).

True Christians "...should have a reverential fear of God, just as Jesus expressed a reverential fear of His father but it was rooted upon a strong loving agape relationship, founded upon mutual respect and unconditional love for one another. We should worship God as the majestic creator of the universe and harbor a sober respect for Him because of His limitless capabilities and our best means to express our love for Him is to obey His commands. To obey Him, is to express our love for Him."

[<https://carljosephministries.com/podcast/the-fear-of-the-lord/>]

2. Read Psalm 78:1-8:

*<sup>1</sup>Give ear, O my people, to my law: Incline your ears to the words of my mouth.*

*<sup>2</sup>I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old:*

*<sup>3</sup>Which we have heard and known, And our fathers have told us.*

***<sup>4</sup>We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come, The praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.***

*<sup>5</sup>For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, Which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children:*

***<sup>6</sup>That the generation to come might know them, Even the children which should be born; Who should arise, And declare them to their children:***

***<sup>7</sup>That they might set their hope in God, And not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments:***

*<sup>8</sup>And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; A generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God.*

According to this Psalm 78, the praises of the Lord, His strength, and His wonderful WORKS [salvation thru Jesus the Christ] should not be HIDDEN from the children.

3. Read 2 Timothy 1:5 (from verse 1) *<sup>1</sup>Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, <sup>2</sup>To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.*

### **Timothy, the Beloved**

*<sup>3</sup>I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; <sup>4</sup>greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; <sup>5</sup>**when I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.***

4. Read 2 Timothy 3:15 (read 13-17 because scripture is so power) *<sup>13</sup>But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. <sup>14</sup>But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; <sup>15</sup>**and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.** <sup>16</sup>All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: <sup>17</sup>that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

The preparation of a child's heart is so very important. It will take more than a short conversation to win a young person to Christ. Here are some suggestions to parents:

- Pray, pray, pray for your children – privately and in public and often
- Live the Christian life – don't give salvation by your sour attitude and/or disobedient living/life style. Your faith must be visibly real to your children! Read Proverbs 23:26 (thru verse 28) for context:  
*<sup>26</sup>My son, give me thine heart, And let thine eyes observe my ways.  
<sup>27</sup>For a whore is a deep ditch; And a strange woman is a narrow pit.*

*<sup>28</sup>She also lieth in wait as for a prey, And **increaseth** the transgressors among men.*

[**Note:** starting with verse 27, people are warned against the effects of sexual sins which lead greater transgressions (sin) which, of course applies to males and females especially in modern society]

- Teach your children diligently – ask questions, answer questions, and acknowledge God’s divine providence in your lives.
- Teach your children the importance of reverence to God’s Word (Holy Scripture – the Bible).
- Have your children memorize scripture! Quote/read it to them often and make scripture application part of your daily interaction with your children.
- Always encourage your children toward Christ. Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 19:14 *<sup>14</sup>But Jesus said, **Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.*** Never discourage your children and always answer their questions biblically.
- NEVER, NEVER push them into a decision into accepting Christ.

### C. Leading Young People to Christ

There are two (2) points to keep in mind:

- There is no separate plan of salvation for children.
- Salvation is not complicated!

#### 1. Look for evidence of **CONVICTION**.

Never assume a child is ready for salvation. If ANYONE says “I want to be saved,” the proper response is “WHY?”

If they don’t know why they want to be saved, they are not ready to be saved. Don’t be afraid to lovingly send the child on their way. If there is true Holy Spirit conviction, they’ll usually not let you. **Trust God’s promises regarding children.**

When a child is under conviction, they will express a sense knowing they are a sinner. **They will express a sense of the weight of their sins.** Remember, the work of the Holy Spirit.

Read John 16:8-11 (from verse 7) <sup>7</sup>Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. <sup>8</sup>And when he is come, **he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:** <sup>9</sup>of sin, because they believe not on me; <sup>10</sup>of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; <sup>11</sup>of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

The Holy Spirit is to reprove (convict) a person of:

- SIN
- Righteousness
- Judgement

## 2. Look for evidence of **COMPREHENSION**

Never put words into the mouth of a child. Avoid asking questions which require a simple “yes” or “no” answer.

Any intelligent person can understand the Gospel intellectually. TRUE comprehension comes when:

- a. Truth is not just revealed by flesh and blood (i.e., man), but by the Heavenly Father.

Read Matthew 16:16-17 <sup>16</sup>And Simon Peter answered and said, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.* <sup>17</sup>And Jesus answered and said unto him, ***Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.***

- b. One is taught of God.

Read John 6:45 (from verse 44) <sup>44</sup>***No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the***

*last day. <sup>45</sup>It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.*

**A wise parent or child's minister will permit God to work in the heart of a child.**

Require a child professing faith in Christ to give a verbal testimony of their faith. Don't expect a child to speak after the manner of an adult, but look for an articulation of what they have experienced.

Always pray with a child whether they are ready to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ or not. Never treat salvation (or a precious child) with disparagement.

**3. Look for evidence of CONVERSION**

Do not tell a child they **are** saved. Do not tell them they are **not** saved either. That is the task of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God. Instead, assure children that when anyone is truly saved, God does wonderful work in their heart and life. Things are going to happen in their life.

There can be nothing worse for a child (or anyone else for that matter) to say a prayer, get baptized, and join a church – then **try** to live right.

Babes in Christ do not evidence their salvation by becoming theologians. They will not be perfect. The real evidence will be evident in their:

**a. Desire for Christ.**

Jesus said my sheep hear and follow me.

Read: John 10:27 *<sup>27</sup>My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:*

**b. Disdain for sin.**

“Ye turned to God from idols.”

Read: 1 Thessalonians 1:9 *<sup>9</sup>For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;*

#### 4. Look for evidence of **COMMITMENT**

This is somewhat difficult for a child to realize in his or her life, partly due to their natural immaturity and partly because they are under the full authority of their parents, and are not at liberty to make significance life choices. **Scriptures give some requirements for discipleship.**

Read Luke 14:26-33 (To a Wayside Crowd)

*<sup>25</sup>And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them,*

***<sup>26</sup>If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.***

*<sup>27</sup>And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.*

*<sup>28</sup>For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?*

*<sup>29</sup>Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,*

*<sup>30</sup>saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.*

*<sup>31</sup>Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?*

*<sup>32</sup>Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.*

***<sup>33</sup>So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.***

Following the statement that we must “hate” our father and mother, Jesus relates a metaphor about a man who builds a house without first counting the cost ([Luke 14:28–30](#)). The man finds that he cannot follow through with what he set out to do. He leaves the house unfinished because he cannot pay what is required. Jesus’ illustration helps explain His difficult statement about hating our mother and father—namely, we must count the

cost of being a disciple. There is a cost, and that is the point of the passage.

**Analysis of this difficult passage from:**

<https://www.gotquestions.org/hate-father-mother.html>

In order to be a disciple, we must be willing to give up everything for Jesus. [Following Jesus](#) requires commitment and faithfulness, even if our parents choose not to follow the Lord. If and when we are faced with the painful choice of loyalty to family versus loyalty to Jesus, we must choose Jesus. Even if our family members disown us—or worse—for being Christians, we must follow Christ. It is in this sense that we are “hating” our family. Jesus’ command to “hate father and mother” requires us to prioritize our relationship with Jesus over our relationship with parents, siblings, and other family members.

Of course, it is right to love our family members, and we want them to love and follow God. Elsewhere, Jesus confirmed the [fifth commandment](#) that we honor our fathers and mothers ([Mark 7:9–13](#)). And Paul sternly warned that “anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” ([1 Timothy 5:8](#)). Jesus’ statement that we “hate” father and mother must be seen in relation to the whole of Scripture. His point is not that we are to be heartless toward our families, only that we must love Him more.

Children are not in position to engage in such a calling. For this reason, **attitude is more important than action.**

Time will tell as the child develops physically and intellectually. Continuance [continuing interest in knowing / obeying Jesus] is a key indicator of true indicator of conversion.

In John 14:21 (from verse 15). Jesus states:

***15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.** <sup>16</sup>And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; <sup>17</sup>even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. <sup>18</sup>I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. <sup>19</sup>Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. <sup>20</sup>At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.*

***21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me:** and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.*

**Memory Verse:**

**ECCELESIASTES 12:1** ***Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, **I have no pleasure in them;*****