The Age of Accountability

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INTRODUCTION

- We want to talk to you today about the age of accountability.
- It might not be the best of terms because age really isn't the point. Maturity is.
- Isn't there some degree of knowledge and understanding that a child needs to have? Absolutely.

1 What Jesus Had to Say About Little Children

Matthew 18:1–4; Matthew 18:10; Matthew 19:13–14

- Unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.
- See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven continually see the face of my Father who is in heaven.
- One point we can definitely get from that is that these children are not in a lost condition. They are bound for heaven at that age.
- Let the children alone and do not hinder them from coming to me, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.
- We could put all humanity into three categories. There are the saved and the lost. And then there are the safe.

2 Older Children and Teenagers

Luke 2; 2 Chronicles 34:1–3; Acts 5:14

- It does show the potential for a 12-year-old to be pretty mature and to have a pretty good amount of understanding.
- A child doesn't need to become a Christian until that child is ready to seek the Lord, until there's a change ready to be made.
- Older children and teenagers can be very capable of seeking the Lord. And therefore I think that would make them accountable before him.
- The point is, men and women are mature enough to make this decision. We simply see no examples of young children getting baptized.

3 The Requirements of Discipleship

Luke 14:26–33; Galatians 2:20; Luke 13:3

- Absolute commitment and extreme sacrifice are required to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.
- If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life. He cannot be my disciple.
- It's a lifelong commitment to the end of your life. And until a child is mature enough to be able to make a lifelong decision like that and commitment, they're not mature enough.

- Is that the point of 16 being the age? No, the point is maturity.
- Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.
- Until a child can reach the maturity to say, all right, I'm going to commit myself to the Lord because that's the Lord's will, then that child is not yet mature enough to actually be able to even truly repent.

4 The Ability to Choose for Themselves

Romans 1:20; 2 Peter 1:16; Joshua 24:15

- God has revealed himself in ways that there is powerful evidence for believing in him.
- Would they not believe in the Bible and in Jesus on the same basis that they believe in fairy tales at that young age?
- If a child is still reasoning in that way, then I do not believe they have the critical thinking apparatus to really be able to weigh the evidence.
- Joshua exhorted Israel, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve in Joshua 24 and verse 15.
- They're not emotionally equipped to choose their own path. And until they are, then I think we would all agree that they would not be accountable before the Lord.

> THE CHALLENGE
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> **Then it's just a matter of, are you going to choose to do it? And if that is you and you haven't done it, then you know what waits for you? Hell.**

MY NOTES