

"Am I Ready To Be Baptized?"

Introduction. It is always so joyful when a young person is baptized (Luke 15:1-10). Sometimes we can struggle with the question, "Am I ready to be baptized?" We will look at some young people who served their Lord, five facts that can help you to know you are ready to be baptized, and what you have to do once you are a Christian.

I. ***Young People Who Served Their Lord***

- A. The Bible has many examples of young people who served God.
 - 1. Joseph (Genesis 37:2, 12-28).
 - 2. Daniel (Daniel 1:1-4, 8).
 - 3. Mary (Luke 1:26-38).
 - 4. Timothy (1 Timothy 4:12).
- B. You can have the same faith, desire, courage, and integrity these young people possessed. God has always needed, and always will need, young people who will dedicate themselves to His cause. Major decisions in life are made while we are young, and this is a very important time in your life, so you need to remember God (Ecclesiastes 12:1).

II. ***What Must I Know?***

- A. I must know good and evil.
 - 1. The age one is when baptized is different for everyone. I have known young people who were baptized from 9 to 19 years old. Yet, your age is not the most important factor in becoming a Christian.
 - 2. We become accountable to God when we reach an age where we understand "right" and "wrong" (Romans 7:9). God does not consider young children to be guilty of sin (Deuteronomy 1:39).
- B. I must know that I am a sinner.
 - 1. When we are guilty of sin we become a sinner (Romans 3:10-12; 23). Now that I am a sinner, I need to be saved from my sin.
 - 2. Sin is a very serious matter because it separates me from God (Isaiah 59:2), and it can doom me to eternal punishment (Revelation 21:8).
 - 3. The accountable person understands that all people will stand in judgment before the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:10). A person old enough to be accountable will feel a sense of guilt when they sin (1 Peter 3:21). A person old enough to be accountable will also be old enough to investigate truth and realize how it applies to their life (John 8:32).

- C. I must know that I need to be saved.
 1. God does not want to condemn anyone to hell, but being a good person does not cause God to forget our sins or forgive them.
 2. Although we have sinned, God's wonderful mercy and grace is abundant towards us (Romans 5:8-9). Salvation is a free gift we receive when our sins are forgiven by God (Acts 2:38; 10:45; Romans 6:23). Christ's bloody, cruel, and horrifying death on the cross demonstrates God's great love for us (John 3:17), and it teaches us how God sees the ugliness of our sins (Isaiah 64:6).
- D. I must know if I want to follow Christ.
 1. Wanting the forgiveness of sins is a good reason to be baptized, but another reason to become a Christian is that you have decided to follow Jesus (Luke 9:23).
 2. Being a disciple means we listen to Jesus, not the world or worldly friends, and let Jesus guide our lives through His word (Psalm 119:34). We strive the best we can to obey Jesus (Matthew 7:21).
- E. I must know if I want to go to heaven.
 1. When we die, we want to go to heaven. God, Jesus, the angels, and our saved loved ones will be there! It will be a beautiful place of bliss (Revelation 22:1-5).
 2. Some people are certain that being baptized to miss hell is not a good reason to be baptized. However, hell and eternal judgment are mentioned repeatedly in the New Testament. Furthermore, every time hell is talked about in the Bible, it is presented in the worst possible terms (Matthew 13:41-42; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9).

III. ***What It Means To Be A Christian***

- A. It takes more to be a Christian than just an understanding of sin and accountability. A person must be willing to live as a Christian and not turn back (Luke 9:62).
 1. Christians act like Jesus (Matthew 10:24-25; Romans 8:29; 1 Peter 2:21).
 2. Christians worship God scripturally and appropriately (John 4:24).
 - a) They sing without instruments (Ephesians 5:19).
 - b) They partake of the Lord's supper every Sunday (1 Corinthians 11:28).
 - c) They give cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:7).
 - d) They pray fervently (Acts 2:42).
 - e) They spend time in devotion to the word (Acts 17:11).
 3. Christians obey their parents (Ephesians 6:1-3; Colossians 3:20).
 4. Christians listen and talk to God (1 Thessalonians 5:17; James 5:16; 1 Peter 2:2).

5. Christians care about others (Matthew 9:36; Mark 1:41; John 11:35; Galatians 6:10).
- B. You must understand this commitment. Being a Christian is much more than "getting baptized" (Luke 14:33). It is a new way of thinking and acting.

Conclusion. Becoming a Christian is a big step. Living as a Christian is a big responsibility. Some people fully understand the gospel and its meaning in their life. Sadly, they put off obeying Christ Jesus. There are three great reasons why you should obey the gospel now. First, you should become a Christian before you die, for no one lives forever -- even the young. Second, you should become a Christian before you become caught in a life of sin from which there is no return. Third, you should become a Christian before you make decisions that could hinder your ability to obey Christ. Search your heart carefully and pray fervently about it, and you will know when you are ready to being a Christian. Becoming a Christian is not the end of the journey, it is the beginning. Do not start unless you are determined to finish.