

The background of the slide is a light blue surface covered with numerous small, clear water droplets of varying sizes, creating a textured, dewy appearance. The droplets are scattered across the entire frame, with some appearing more prominent than others.

The Age of Accountability

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- The scriptures teach the principle of accountability
 - Acts 10:34-35 - “Then Peter opened his mouth and said: In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. 35 But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.”
- Accountability does not occur at birth
 - Ez. 18:20 - “The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.”

The Age of Accountability

- When does one become accountable?
- Is there a certain chronological age?
- If there is no certain age, how can one know when he is held responsibility for his sins?

Understanding Good And Evil

- Deut. 1:39 - “Moreover your little ones and your children, who you say will be victims, who today have no knowledge of good and evil, they shall go in there; to them I will give it, and they shall possess it.”
- There is a period in the development of a child that they do not know to choose good and refuse evil
 - Isa. 7:16 - “For before the Child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that you dread will be forsaken by both her kings.”
 - Matt. 18:3 - “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Capable Of Obeying The Gospel

- Belief requires intellectual and volitional abilities
 - John 8:24 - “Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.”
 - Acts 8:36-37 - “Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized? 37 Then Philip said, If you believe with all your heart, you may. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”

Capable Of Obeying The Gospel

- Rom. 6:17 - “But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.”
- Rom. 10:9-10 - “that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

Capable Of Obeying The Gospel

- This implies several things:
 - Sufficient maturity to comprehend the Bible
 - Sufficient maturity to understand himself
 - Sufficient maturity to understand and distinguish between spiritual and mythological matters

Men And Women Responded During The First Century

- Acts 5:14 - “And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women,”
- Acts 8:12 - “But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.”
- Implies that the respondents were mature enough; this is not a function of age

Well Meaning, But Misguided Solutions

- Some say when a child reaches twelve years of age, they are accountable
 - Arbitrary - based on our recognition of the beginning of the teen years, the general start of puberty, and even the Jewish bar mitzvah
 - Individuals reach the age of accountability at different ages, as each mature differently.
 - Accountability is a function of responsibility, not age

Well Meaning, But Misguided Solutions

- “If a young person can answer and explain the facts of salvation, they have reached the age of accountability.”
 - Nearly anyone can recite a list (a digital recorder, a parrot).
 - Listing the facts no more indicates one has reached the age of accountability than reciting a recipe makes one a chef
- There is no scripturally stated age when one becomes responsible; each person must be considered on an individual basis.

What Can Be Stated With Certainty?

- One must be able to obey the doctrine from the heart, every part of it.
- Hearing - Do you listen attentively to the sermons and prepare your Bible class lessons diligently?
- Believing - In your mind, is God and Jesus as real, perhaps more real, than the things you encounter with your five senses?

What Can Be Stated With Certainty?

- Repenting - How strongly do you want to change your life? Are you willing to give up all things that are sinful?
- Confession - Do you want your friends at school and in the neighborhood to know your confession? Would you be willing to say it to them and not just in the church building?
- Baptism - How much do you know about what baptism does for you? How much do you understand about what it took to make baptism effective?

Stages Of The Spiritual Development Of Children

- Interest
 - Young children see that there is a larger collectivity than their family. They are aware it is a group to which it is good, honorable, and reward to belong. They are also aware that they are not a part of it. They can intellectually grasp and repeat the steps to becoming a part of the group.

Stages Of The Spiritual Development Of Children

- Desire
 - Children over time increase in interest to the point that it becomes consuming. They no longer want to be outside and strongly desire to belong, even to the point of being insistent. Beginning to have a more mature sense of guilt for sin.

Stages Of The Spiritual Development Of Children

- Understanding
 - Children have an understanding of the kingdom, the requirements for entrance, the reasons why one should become a Christian, and a have a stronger sense of personal guilt, fear of perdition, and desire to be saved.

Stages Of The Spiritual Development Of Children

- Commitment
 - No person, child or adult, should obey the gospel until they reach this point. They realize that this is a lifetime decision and are aware that they can never walk away from this choice. It is more than just intellectually acknowledging that it is for life, it is being fully convinced that they cannot escape this decision.

What Should You Do Or Say?

- When they are in the early stages:
 - Praise their interest and encourage them to continue to grow
 - Be more proactive in helping them learn, not just the facts
 - Let them see your example as a faithful, happy Christian
 - Help them develop responsibility

What Should You Do Or Say?

- When they are ready:
 - Get out of the way.

What Should You Do Or Say?

- Do not:
 - Pressure them or deliver ultimatums
 - Use their desire to become a Christian as a disciplinary tool
 - Manipulate them with what they will be missing as a Christian
 - Act in such a way as to discourage them
 - Set a bad example - lying, backbiting, etc.
 - Tell them no

What Should You Do Or Say?

- If you do ought that prevents your child from ever becoming a Christian, prepare to spend eternity in hell.
 - Matt. 18:2-6 - “Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, 3 and said, Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me. 6 But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”