



ASK, SEEK, KNOCK

Answering your questions about
life, the Bible, and God



**Various questions and
concerns regarding age
and baptism...**

FIRST THINGS FIRST

- Any time somebody chooses to put on Christ in baptism we should be rejoicing right along with the angels (Luke 15:10). While our concerns might be valid, and there is a long road ahead for a young Christian, we should not let forthcoming challenges dampen the joy of the moment (Ac. 8:39).
- We are fortunate to even have this conversation! That our young people are asking, and that we even have the luxury of exploring salvation with them, is a true blessing! Jesus is still (and always will be!) a factor in young people's lives. We must support them as they wrestle with difficult questions, social pressure, and the many temptations they will face.



How old should a young person be before they are ready to be baptized?



IS THAT THE RIGHT QUESTION?

- While it might *seem* nice to have a clear-cut number given in the Bible, we must accept the silence God offers on the question of age.
- The lack of a specific age requirement, however, doesn't mean God has not given information for our consideration. The Bible might not say "how old" a person should be, but it does give a thorough description of what makes one ready!

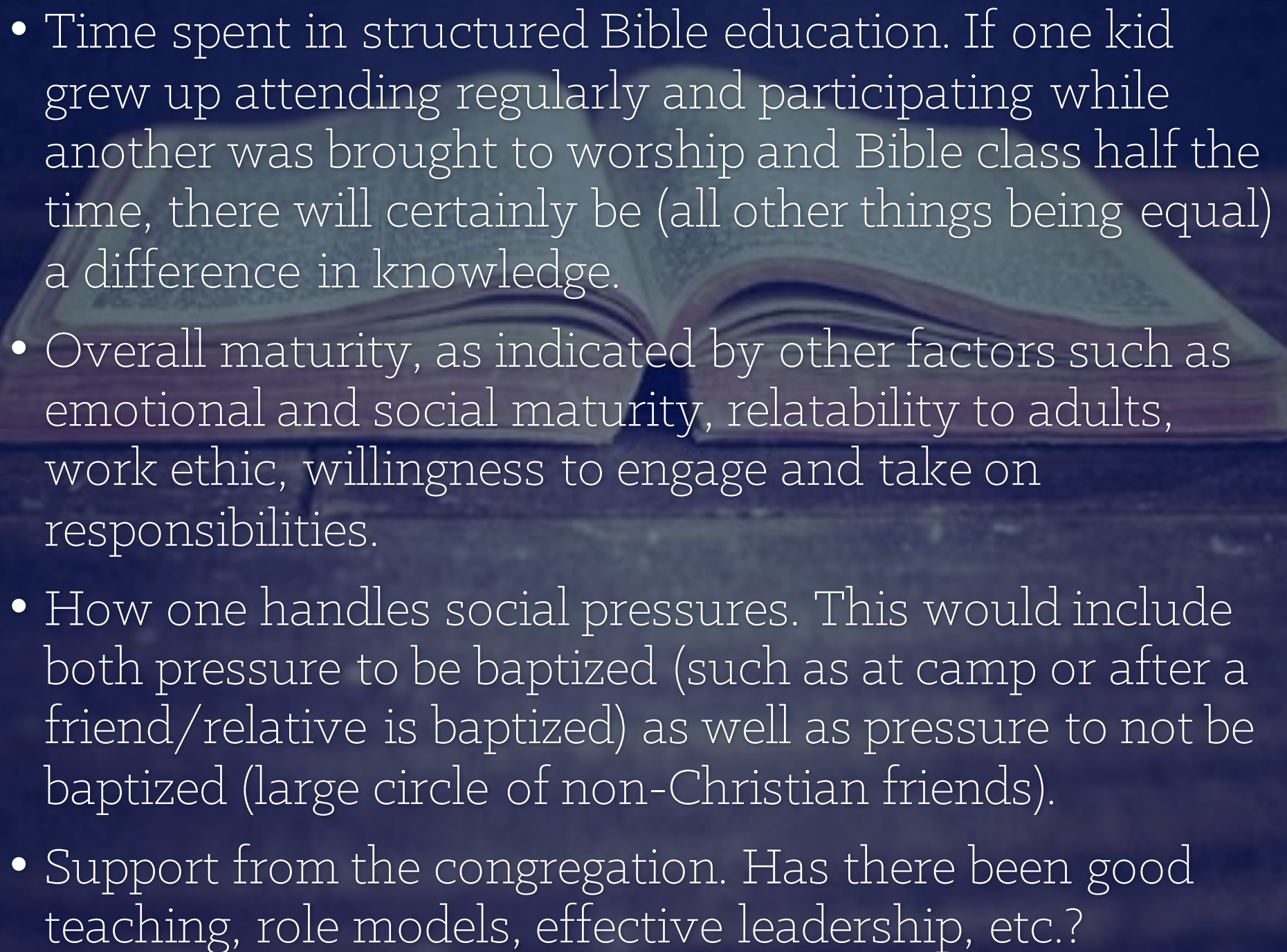
YOU'RE READY WHEN...

- You are fully aware of your sinfulness (Acts 2:38, 22:16, 1 Cor. 6:11, Titus 3:3ff, Rom. 6:5-6) and ready to repent. The only caution is that having a vague sense of guilt is not necessarily the same thing as coming face-to-face with the depth of your depravity. Even little children know what guilt is, yet they are morally innocent (1 Cor. 14:20, Matt. 18:1-3).
- You have come to both a rational and emotional decision to follow Jesus Christ – both the mind and heart must be engaged by the gospel (Eph. 4:17-24, Ac. 2:36-37, 17:2-3, 11).
- You can explain the gospel, at least on a basic level, and defend *why* you want to become a Christian (1 Pet. 3:15, Ac. 8:37, John 3:1-21, Matt. 16:13-20).



Factors that effect how “ready” a person is...

(Or, why do some kids seem ready at ten, while others take a lot longer to even ask about it?)

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- Time spent in structured Bible education. If one kid grew up attending regularly and participating while another was brought to worship and Bible class half the time, there will certainly be (all other things being equal) a difference in knowledge.
 - Overall maturity, as indicated by other factors such as emotional and social maturity, relatability to adults, work ethic, willingness to engage and take on responsibilities.
 - How one handles social pressures. This would include both pressure to be baptized (such as at camp or after a friend/relative is baptized) as well as pressure to not be baptized (large circle of non-Christian friends).
 - Support from the congregation. Has there been good teaching, role models, effective leadership, etc.?

BIBLE EXAMPLES

- Acts 16:29-34 – Remember, the jailor’s kids must have been old enough to listen and understand, since they believed (verse 34).
- 2 Timothy 1:5 – His faith is described as “sincere”, which means he did not simply become a Christian to please his mother and grandmother or to maintain his family tradition. Sometimes children of Christians feel pressure not to disappoint believing relatives, but this cannot be the ultimate motivation.
- 1 Timothy 4:12 – Youth is no excuse for dismissing tough questions or scriptures that challenge us. Even a young mind can grasp amazing truths (Matt. 19:14).
- Remember Samuel, Daniel, Josiah, Jeremiah.