

Am I Ready?

*A Study of the Gospel
for Young People*

Mark Roberts



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👉 PARENTS BEGIN HERE. THIS MATERIAL FOR PARENTS' EYES ONLY. REMOVE BEFORE GIVING THIS BOOK TO YOUR CHILD.

It is the classic dilemma. For nine years Bill and Mary have been taking their son Joey to church services, reading the Bible to him at home and doing just about anything and everything possible to instill biblical values and faith in him. Apparently, it worked because Joey now wants to be baptized. Rather than being overjoyed Bill and Mary are terrified. “He’s only nine — is that old enough?” Bill continues, “Do you really think he knows what he is doing?” Mary interrupts to ask “What if we discourage him now and then later he doesn’t” She dares not finish that thought.

It is a tough place to be in. Questions swirl around us as we try to make the best decisions possible. We want our children to become Christians but only if they are really ready for that commitment. We don’t want to say “No, you’re not old enough” and thus turn a child against Christianity forever. What can be done? In some ways it is like working a jigsaw puzzle without the picture to look at. We aren’t even sure we have all the pieces!

This book was written in response to this serious problem. While there is a host of evangelism material on the market to teach the Gospel to adults (I even wrote some of it!). I know of not a single workbook designed to help young people understand the Gospel or assess their readiness to become a Christian. This book is designed specifically for young people who have grown up going to church all their lives, whose parents are Christians, and who are now thinking very seriously about becoming a Christian as well. If you and your child fit that description, then studying this workbook will give you a much better idea of your child’s readiness to obey the Gospel.

Let me explain the plan of attack that we will use in this study. There are basically three essential areas that must be covered if a person is going to render proper obedience to the Gospel. First, one must know the facts of the Gospel message. This involves learning the biblical data about Jesus’ death and resurrection, God’s grace, and of course, our response to it. Second, there must be a personal appropriation of those truths. This is done primarily through the realization that I have sinned and I am a sinner who needs salvation. Third, there is the discussion of the life of the Christian and one’s willingness to commit to that life and lifestyle.

This book tries to explore all three of these areas. You will find, however, the first area is not our primary area of concern. Most children “raised in the church” can recite the five steps of salvation backward and forward. They know what baptism is for and that one must be baptized to be saved. They have heard this all their lives and can recite (or regurgitate!) the data practically on command. *Yet, we still sense knowing the facts of the Gospel alone is not enough to qualify one to be a Christian.* Those feelings are correct. I know seven-year old children who can tell

you the five steps to become a Christian, but they are far from ready to become a Christian! This is why this book emphasizes the second area: the personal appropriation of the truths of Christianity. This is, without question, the most difficult area to gauge and measure but is without doubt one of the most important components of becoming a true New Testament Christian. To be a fit candidate for baptism, one must not only know baptism washes away sins (area one), but that it will wash away *his or her* sins. A person must have a sense of brokenness and shame for sin (note Acts 2:37; 9:9). It is this awareness of personal sin and wrongdoing that causes people to want to be saved. Without it, baptism becomes a show that gains little. Ultimately, such a person's "Christianity" will be empty because he or she never knelt at the foot of the cross in the first place. Throughout this book I have therefore tried to create "check points" where you, as the parent, can see if your child is truly aware that he or she is a sinner. These are marked with a star [★]. You will see as you examine those questions that we are looking for a sense of sinfulness, for an understanding of what sin is and the ability to say "I am a sinner." It is not enough to know "everybody sins" or "Jesus died for the whole world." Does your child know that he or she is a sinner? Do they understand that Jesus died for them personally? Are they personally convicted of sin? Do they term themselves as lost, and if so, why? This is what the marked questions look for and lead to. Watch carefully how your child responds to those questions. Obviously, no one can read the mind of another (1 Cor. 2:11), but these questions are the most important questions in the book. Many children know the facts of the Gospel and will agree to live the life of a Christian. It is this middle area ("Do they *get* it?") that is the toughest to gauge. These questions will help you get some measure of your child's thinking in this critical area.

Finally, the book discusses at length the life of a Christian (area 3). It is important no one come to Christ who does not fully understand the sacrifices and lifestyle required (Luke 14:26ff). Christians do certain things (like pay attention in the worship assembly instead of color or play with toys!) and if your child is not ready to do those things, then he or she is not ready to be a Christian.

Naturally, I cannot emphasize enough how important it is that you let your child answer these questions on their own. If you "feed" your child the "right" answers here, then you effectively short-circuit everything this book was designed to do. You might as well go dunk your child now — this book won't help you truly decide if your child is ready to be a Christian. Nothing is gained by "rigging the game" to get the results mom and dad have already decided they want. You must be honest here and admit that studying this material with your child may indicate clearly that he or she isn't ready. Are you ready for that?

By the time you and your child have completed these lessons many of the pieces of the puzzle will be falling into place. The picture you see may be a child who is very mature, very aware of sin, and very ready to obey the Gospel. It will then be a delight to see such a child baptized into Christ. However, the picture you see after finishing up these studies (or simply losing interest in them after a few lessons) may well be the picture of a child who still isn't ready to make the kind of mature commitment to Christ that Christianity is. If so, put the book aside for a while, keep training your child and see if, in time, their heart will be better able to receive and understand all that the Gospel is.



May the Lord bless you as you raise your children to be His children. And may this little book contribute in some way to bringing young hearts to Jesus.

Mark Roberts
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Ideas for Using this Book

1. Set aside a regular time to study together. You may choose to study a lesson a day in five straight days. Better results may be achieved if some time is given between lessons for the material to “soak in.” A child who can stick with this workbook for five weeks in a row is a child determined to become a Christian! A child who cannot complete the lessons over a period of time probably lacks the maturity and desire necessary to truly be a Christian. Watch your child to see how eager and enthusiastic he/she remains in doing these studies.
2. Some ask what to do if their child cannot fill in the blanks, run the references, etc? Is it not so that if a child cannot do the rudimentary things necessary as a Christian he/she is not ready yet to be a Christian? To repeat what was said above in a slightly different vein: a child who cannot do the workbook, or who will not do the workbook, is a child who is not *that* interested in being a Christian.
3. Once it is done, keep the workbook. Years and time will pass and your child will wonder if he/she did the right thing for the right reasons. A quick glance through these pages will assure your child’s heart even if passing time has dimmed his or her memory.
4. Try to make the study enjoyable and free of a feeling of pressure. While this is very serious material your child likely will not benefit from a “final exam” kind of feeling as he/she works the lessons.



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How old do you have to be to become a Christian? What does it feel like to be baptized? Do you have to “do it” in front of the whole church? If I became a Christian how would I have to change my life? Young people have a lot of questions about becoming a Christian, don’t they? This study book will help you answer your questions about Christianity. You will learn what the Bible teaches about the Gospel of Jesus Christ and how to respond to it. You will also learn a lot about yourself, and whether you are ready to obey the Gospel and be a Christian. This is a serious study but you will enjoy working in the Bible and learning so much about such an important subject. Work closely with your parents (or the one teaching this study), and you will be able to complete these lessons and learn God’s will for your life.

Let’s begin by seeing what you already know. Answer each of these questions as briefly, truthfully, and quickly as possible.

1. True or False: The Bible teaches you must be at least 12 years old to become a Christian.

If you answered false, what is the youngest age a person can become a Christian? _____

2. What is faith?
3. If a person has some watered sprinkled or poured over their head would that be the same as immersion and count as baptism?
- ★ 4. What does it mean to repent of sin?
5. Christians are, in many ways, different from people who don’t care about Jesus. How will you be different if you become a Christian?
6. What does baptism do?
7. Does a person have to understand the whole Bible before they can be a Christian?
- ★ 8. Have you ever sinned? If so, can you list any sins you have committed?

- ★ 9. Which of the following best describes you right now:
- A. A good person who does right most of the time.
 - B. I don't do everything right but mostly I do good things and God is pleased with me.
 - C. I have done wrong and the good things I do can't make up for them.
 - D. A sinner.
10. Why do you want to be baptized?
11. Why did Jesus die on the cross?
12. What does it mean for a person to "be lost"? Are you lost?
13. Can you list the five steps of salvation?
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
- ★ 14. What is a sinner?

Now, let's move into the lessons and start learning the Bible's answers to those questions! Study each lesson carefully, using your Bible as the lessons direct. Write any questions or extra thoughts you might have in the margins. May the Lord bless you as you study His Word and obey it.

Can Young People Really be Christians?

INTRODUCTION

- A. *In the local church who does almost everything?*
1. Adults do. They do all the teaching, participate in the worship services, and make all the decisions.
 2. This can lead a young person to wonder if Christianity is for adults only.
 3. Can young people be *real* Christians, actually serving and pleasing God?
- B. **Lesson objectives:**
1. Learn it is possible to serve the Lord while young.
 2. Understand what it takes to be a servant of God at an early age.

I. BIBLE EXAMPLES OF YOUTH WHO SERVED THE LORD

- A. The Bible has many examples of young people who served God in ways that were very important.
- B. Joseph
1. Read Genesis 37:2. How old was Joseph when we first meet him? _____
 2. Now read Genesis 37:12-28. What happened to Joseph?
 3. In this difficult situation it would have been easy for Joseph to decide that to survive he would have to worship Egyptian idols or to decide that since his parents were not there to watch him he could do whatever he wanted, even sin.
 4. Read Genesis 39:8-9. Did Joseph stop doing right just because he was in a difficult situation? _____
 5. Years passed, but Joseph finally had a chance to better himself. He was given the opportunity to interpret the dreams of the Pharaoh! Did Joseph forget God (see Gen. 41:16)? _____
 6. Joseph was a faithful servant to God even far from home — and God used him to save Egypt and his family from famine.
- C. Timothy
1. Read 1 Timothy 4:12. Was Timothy old or young? _____
 2. Nothing is ever said of Timothy's father. His mother and grandmother helped him learn what was right and encouraged him to do it.
 3. What had Timothy learned even as a young boy that helped him be a faithful servant of the Lord (see 2 Tim. 3:14-15)? _____

- Timothy became one of the apostle Paul's great helpers and carried on the work of preaching the Gospel after Paul was gone. He did all this even though he was a young person.

D. Mary

- Read Luke 1:26-38.
- We do not know how old Mary was when the angel appeared to her. We do know that in biblical times Jewish girls married very early. Luke 1:27 says she was "betrothed" or "engaged" to Joseph. This was usually done between the ages of 14-16.
- The message of the angel meant great changes in Mary's life. Being the mother of Jesus Christ was a huge responsibility! Mary also must have thought about Joseph — how would he react to what was happening?
- Read Luke 1:38 again. Did Mary make excuses, protest or try to get out of doing what God wanted her to do? ____ What was her attitude?
- Mary was very young when she was selected by God for special service. She was a faithful servant to the Lord.

E. Daniel

- Read Daniel 1:1-4. Was Daniel old or young? _____ How did Daniel come to be in Babylon?
- Do you think Daniel was afraid, since he was taken captive to a foreign land? ____ Do you think he missed his home and his family? _____
- Like Joseph, Daniel could have decided things were just too tough to keep serving God. He could have chosen to act like the pagan people around him and serve their false gods. Read Daniel 1:5-21. Did Daniel quit serving God?
- Read Daniel 1:8. What was Daniel's secret to faithfulness? "*But Daniel _____ in his heart*". This means he made up his mind to do right!
- The book of Daniel records many more of Daniel's adventures. He was a faithful servant of God all his life — and he started while he was young!

F. The Bible makes it clear: young people can serve God!

- 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. This is a very important time in your life.
- Read Ecclesiastes 12:1 and fill in the blanks: "*Remember now your _____ in the days of your _____.*"

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These examples help us see that young people really can serve God. Serving the Lord is not just for adults!

II. WHAT DID THESE YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE IN COMMON?

A. As we think about the lives of Joseph, Timothy, Mary, Daniel and other young people found in the Bible we need to ask: What was it about them that caused them to be such fine servants of God?

B. Faith

1. We will learn more about faith in lesson three.
2. But, at this time it is vital for you to understand faith's importance. Read Hebrews 11:6. Can anyone please God without faith?
3. Write out what you think faith is:
4. Bible heroes like those we have studied genuinely believed in God and were determined to obey Him. You must do the same.

C. Willingness to obey God.

1. Most people live for themselves, doing what they want when they want to.
2. This is called self-centered living, because life is centered on selfish needs and desires.
3. The Christian life is built on doing what God says.
4. Read John 14:15. If we really love God, what will we do?
5. You must decide if you are going to do what pleases you, makes you happy, or makes you feel good, or if you will do exactly what God says to do because you believe He is God and must obey Him.

D. Courage

1. It is not always easy to obey God. Many people in the Bible were hurt or even killed because they obeyed God instead of men. This is called *persecution*.
2. Read Daniel 3:14-15. Do you think Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego wanted to be burned to death in Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace? _____
3. Read Daniel 3:16-18. No matter how afraid they were or how much they wanted to avoid a terrible death, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego wanted to obey God even more. Did they worship the idol or did they do right? _____
4. If you decide to become a Christian and serve God, what will you do if your friends make fun of you, ask you to do things that are wrong, or laugh at you because you do what is right?
5. It is important that you understand that Christianity is not always easy. Sometimes being a Christian is extremely hard. Are you ready to obey God no matter how difficult or unpleasant it is? _____

E. Integrity

1. Integrity is who we are and how we act when no one is looking.
2. Sometimes it can be easy to do what is right when everyone is watching but when we are alone we may find it much harder to keep doing right.
3. Joseph is a great example of integrity. His parents had no way of knowing what he was doing. They thought he was dead. Joseph was on his own. Did Joseph do right any way? _____
4. If you become a Christian you will need to serve God at all times and in every place *because you are serving the Lord in your heart*. Are you ready to do this? _____

III. CAN YOU SERVE GOD AS A YOUNG PERSON?

- A. Yes, you can! You can be like Daniel, Joseph, Mary and Timothy. What do you need to do?
1. You need to learn why you need to be saved.
 2. You need to learn God's plan to save you.
 3. You need to learn what the life of a Christian is like, so you can decide if you are willing to do what Christians must do.
- B. Are you ready to learn this important information so you can become a Christian? _____
- C. Lesson two will help by showing why you need to be a Christian.