

"WHAT ABOUT BAPTIZING YOUTH?"

By Dr. Hoyt W. Allen, Jr.

A question often comes to a Pulpit Minister from parents of young people. It often goes like this. "Preacher, our eight year old youngster is asking about being baptized. How can we know when he or she is ready for such a step?"

Concerning baptizing a child, each one must be taken on an individual basis. I suggest that a parent, preacher, or teacher should require a young student to complete a Bible Course prior to baptism.

When I was a located Pulpit Minister and the subject of baptism came up concerning a young person, I would tell them that in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) Jesus taught that one must be taught and then baptized, and then continue to be taught. Thus, if a young person took the Bible Lessons home, which I provided, and tossed them upon the dresser and forgot about them - it was a good indicator to me that they were not ready for baptism. However, if they completed them quickly and said, "Are there any others?"; this indicated that I needed to talk to them further.

I have baptized youth at age eight, but these were exceptional children. They were from families who were very active in the church and thus was constantly hearing about Jesus, so this was very natural for them to desire baptism.

However, many times in my ministry I have had adults approach me and say that they had been baptized at a young age because they had a parent or youth leader to push them into it. Then, some said that they had been baptized due to their friends doing it and it seemed like it was the right thing to do. However, now they were questioning their sincerity.

Many folk think that water baptism is just a formality. **Baptism is more**, according to the Bible. It is the action in which a believer is repentant of sins and desires to be changed from a lost person to a saved person, according to Acts 2:38, which states one has their sins forgiven at baptism.

If we have not been properly baptized, we should take care of this immediately, shouldn't we?

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