

*(This Resource is a chapter selection out of a book about how to help your children truly become a disciple of Jesus.)*

## **Is My Child Ready to Follow Jesus**

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“Kent, can we talk to you after church, our daughter wants to get baptized and we would like to meet with you and see what you think.” I don’t know how many times I’ve had that conversation as a pastor.

Over the years, my answer and approach has slowly morphed and shifted. Actually, that question is a HUGE reason I’m writing this book. I’ve learned there is an altogether different question that needs to be asked in this situation - it’s the question I ask back to parents when they ask me about baptism. My question is this, “Are you ready to disciple your child?”

The reason I ask that question is – no matter how much your child knows or thinks they know, or you think they think they know. The reality is, they don’t REALLY know what baptism is. How do I know that? Because I don’t FULLY understand how it all works myself. I’m still learning the depth and joy of knowing Jesus and salvation in Him. So, the real question is, are we ready to disciple our children into the commitment they are wanting to embark on?

So, hopefully this book is helping you with that part of the equation. But the reality is, it still matters what’s going on in your own child’s heart, which is why the parent approached me in the first place. What I’ve found through a lot of trial and error, is there is no one better to discover the readiness of a child than you, their parent. Let me explain: when I meet with your child, I can almost guarantee you they are going to clam up and not say any of the things you’ve have worked on talking with me about. In their mind, I’m just a weird old guy who, they probably think, has some special red phone I can pick up and talk to God with anytime (which I do – but that’s besides the point). Pastors are just intimidating when you’re little – or even big sometimes, right?

So, if you are going to have a conversation with your children about baptism and salvation, how do you do it?

In the following pages you will find scriptures paired with questions/activities to help you have a dialog with your child about salvation and baptism. You will be helping your child build a theological framework as you go through these passages/questions. Be sure to give yourself appropriate time – but don't overwhelm your child. Fifteen minutes is probably plenty for a 7-10 year old. You know your child, so take it at their pace. If you don't finish a discussion from a particular day, go ahead and come back and discuss it again. If you feel like they aren't getting it, look it up in different versions. Help them learn to study God's word – don't just move on. DO NOT answer the questions for them, or move to quickly into the teaching points. Your child will need plenty of time to think on these questions, so allow them time to silently think, reword the question if you need to, or ask them something else. But let them answer. Remember, we are trying to find out if THEY are ready, not you. Finally, spend time praying for your child through the process – God has made them entirely unique and He has something incredible planned for them – you are blessed enough to get to steward them through this life, so spend time talking with Him about this process.

Ok, here we go – turn the page to get started using the 7 days of scriptures and questions with your child:

DAY 1 SCRIPTURE:

**John 3:16**

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think God gave his one and only Son to the world?
2. What does it mean that whoever believes in Jesus won't perish? Does that mean we won't die?
3. Let's write a letter to God telling him "thank you" for sending His Son to die for us. What does that make you thankful for? [Write the letter with them, give them examples of how you are thankful, but make sure and get lots of their own]

## DAY 2 SCRIPTURE:

### Romans 3:23, 25b-26 (NLT)

For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard.

25b People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past, 26 for he was looking ahead and including them in what he would do in this present time. God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he makes sinners right in his sight when they believe in Jesus.

## QUESTIONS

1. Let's underline words in these bible verses that are hard to understand and figure out what they mean [feel free to use google to look up definitions 😊. Make sure they understand what sin is and if they have ever sinned.].
2. Do you think you are a sinner? How do you know?
3. What does it mean that we fall short of God's standard? [*teaching point: talk about how none of us can live up to who God is and how our sin separates (see Genesis 3) us from God*]
4. How are people made right with God?

**OBJECT LESSON:** Get two big books, a ruler, a spoon, and a wooden spoon. Put the two books side by side on their backs so they are touching. Take the wooden spoon and tell your child, "let's pretend this is God". Take the regular spoon and say, "let's pretend this is us". Put each spoon on their own book but close to each other. Tell your child, "before we sin, we are able to be close to God, we can be friends. But when we sin, we put a great divide between us and God." As you talk about this, pull the two books apart (not too far, we will need the ruler to be able to create a bridge later on). Say, "the problem is, none of us can be good enough to get to God. So, God did something really cool. God decided since we couldn't come to Him, He'd come to us." Have the wooden spoon jump over to the other book. "When He came, He came as a man, like us. But somehow, our sin had to be dealt with, paid for. God had an idea. Because of His great love, He would die for us – to pay the price for our sin. When he did this on the cross, he made a bridge back to a relationship with Him." Lay the ruler across the divide. "Now, you and I can walk across that bridge to be friends with God again. Do you know what the bridge was? It was Jesus dying on the cross – His cross gave us a way to know God and be friends."

DAY 3 SCRIPTURE:

**Acts 2:38-39**

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

QUESTIONS

1. What does the word "Repent" mean? [**teaching point:** *repent has a similar meaning to the idea of deciding to switch from one team to another. In the bible, it means you jump from a team that's all about you and what you want to being on God's team and doing the things He wants you to do.*]
2. Peter told the people in this verse that if they got baptized their sins would be forgiven and they would get the gift of the Holy Spirit. How would you explain that to one of your friends? [**teaching point:** *the Holy Spirit is God's spirit. God's promise was NEVER that everything would be "ok" after becoming a Christ Follower – His promise was that He would be with you through the gift of His Spirit. Talk to your child about how followers of Jesus are never alone. This is why they can go through such difficult situations and still follow God – maybe use a difficult situation from your own life and talk about how God brought you through it.*]
3. If you are forgiven of your sins, does that mean you won't sin anymore? [**teaching point:** *talk to your child about how Jesus forgives us and changes our thinking about sin. Christ Followers realize that sin separates us from God, and because of that – they don't think it's fun anymore, but sometimes they still mess up and sin. But Jesus is right there to forgive us if we will repent again.*]
4. Let's end by "calling on the Lord" like Peter talked about at the end of that verse. If you could tell God one thing about your sin and you wanting to know Him, what would you tell Him? Let's actually do that by praying to Him tonight.

## DAY 4 SCRIPTURE

### 1 Peter 3:21

and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ

## QUESTIONS

1. What is a pledge? [**teaching point:** a pledge is kind of like a promise you make]
2. What is your conscience? [**teaching point:** a conscience is the quiet voice in your head that tells you right and wrong things you do. Give them an example of a time your conscience has impacted a decision you made.]
3. Do you think the water they use for baptisms is special or is what you are doing the special part? Explain to me. [**teaching point:** there is nothing special about the water used in baptism. The special thing is that your child is saying to God, "I want to have a heart and mind that is clean like you are." God saves them not through the water – but through them identifying with Christ in the baptism. Baptism is really a physical way to show the faith they have.]

## DAY 5 SCRIPTURE

### Romans 6:3-8

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. 5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— 7 because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. 8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

## QUESTIONS

1. When a person gets baptized what does the book of Romans say they are baptized into? *[teaching point: Christian baptism is being baptized into Jesus' death. It's why we have them go under the water and come back up. When they go under it's like they are dying to their old life and being buried. They can leave all of that old behind as they come up out of the water.]*
2. What bad stuff in your life would you like to "die" to, or in other words – get rid of?
3. The bible also says when we come out of the water we get Jesus' resurrection. Did you know Jesus rose from the dead? Why is it important that He rose from the dead? *[teaching point: Jesus raising from the dead is important because it proves He has the power to keep His promise to raise us from the dead and to give us a new life in Him when we repent from our old sinful life.]*
4. Let's write our sins [be sure to participate with your own sins] on a piece of paper and crumple them up to put in a trash can.

[after the exercise] When you get baptized, God is going to take all your sins and crumple them up and get rid of them and give you a new life, isn't that exciting?! Let's pray and thank Him for such a gift!

## DAY 6 SCRIPTURE

### **Romans 10:9-11**

If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. 11 As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame."

## QUESTIONS

1. When a person gets baptized they are asked if they believe Jesus is the Christ (this is an old word that means King of everything)? Do they believe He is the Son of the Living God? And if they want to make Jesus their Lord and Savior (this means that Jesus gets to be boss of everything in their life and they want to live to please Him).

Why do you think they ask those questions?

2. Do you believe God raised Jesus from the dead? Why?
3. Do you want Jesus to be your boss? Why?
4. Can I pray for you tonight and the big decision you are making about following Jesus?  
*[pray over your child a sincere prayer. Think about their character and personality and pray for the future of how God wants to use those things]*

## DAY 7 SCRIPTURE

### Matthew 28:18-20 (NLT)

Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

## QUESTIONS

1. What do you think the job of a follower of Jesus is after they have been baptized?
2. When people run a race, there are two lines, a starting line and a finish line. Which line do you think baptism is for a Christian? *[teaching point: talk to your child about how baptism is just the starting line for a Christian, now they get to join Jesus in His mission to help more people know and love God! They get to start looking for who's next. They will need to start focusing on their relationship with God as a major priority in their life – ensure them that you will help with this]*
3. Who are some people you would love to see start following Jesus? Let's write down their names and start praying for them every night.

## The Big Question:

### [A simple script]

*"[Say] We've spent a whole week studying about Jesus and baptism.*

*What do you think?*

*Do you want to spend the rest of your life following Him?*

*It's ok to wait if you aren't sure you are ready. And even if you decide to get baptized, you need to know that as you get older, you are going to go through things that will make you realize more what it meant to get baptized – it doesn't mean you have to get baptized again, it just means you understand more."*

You know, I had originally planned on putting this chapter as almost an introduction to the book, but I decided to put it as the second chapter because the real key to this chapter is you being solidly determined to be the kind of parent who is willing to lead your children to a Jesus YOU know personally. I'm hoping that as you read through this chapter and worked through these scriptures and activities with your children that you were challenged personally on your commitment to Christ. That you will realize you were never intended to be a slave to sin. Rather, as Galatians 4:4-7 says, you are now a child who can call out Abba or Daddy to God because His love has redeemed you from the sin you used to be caught in.

If you keep your fire for Jesus burning hot. Your children will want to as well!