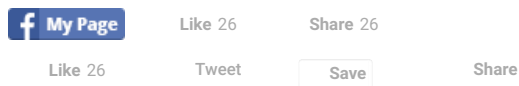


What is the Age of Accountability?



What is the age of accountability?

The term “age of accountability” is a man-made term used to describe a biblical concept, kind of like “Golden Rule” or “Great Commission.”

The Bible teaches that children are born and for a time remain sinless & innocent. Ezekiel 18:1-20 states quite clearly that we do not inherit the sins of our parents. Ezekiel 28:15 has God telling a human being, **“You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till unrighteousness was found in you,”** showing that there is a time in our lives during which we were innocent, with no unrighteousness in us. In Romans 9:10-11, Paul talked about Jacob and Esau before they were born while they were still in the womb of their mother, and stated that during that time they **“had done nothing either good or bad.”** This teaches us that children are born sinless and innocent, and during childhood we remain sinless and innocent. That’s why Jesus told adults in Matthew 18:3-4 that they had to be like little children in order to be in the kingdom.

However, the Bible also speaks of a time when we become accountable for our actions. Isaiah 7:15 speaks of a time when a young man will come to **“know how to refuse the evil and choose the good,”** in other words, become accountable. Before they became accountable, they were sinless and innocent. Paul would say in Romans 7:9 that he was **“alive,”** spiritually speaking, at that time. However, in vs. 10-11 of Romans 7 he then spoke of a time when sin entered his life and he **“died”** spiritually. When he was accountable, when he knew how to refuse the evil and choose the good and yet he chose evil, that’s when he sinned. And it would be at that point that he and all the rest of us would need God’s grace, we would need forgiveness, we would need to obey the gospel.

Is there a specific, set age for when that time of accountability occurs? No, because each person is different. When each of us becomes accountable for our actions and choices depends upon a variety of social and environmental factors. Children mature at different rates and ages as their spirits are fashioned, shaped, and molded by parents, teachers, and life’s experiences. That’s why there is no set age of accountability.



When is a person accountable?

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