



# BEACON

Vol. LV / No. 30

July 27, 2026

**A Publication of Bellview Church of Christ**

4850 Saufley Field Road; Pensacola, FL 32526  
850-455-7595

## Amenability?

*Michael Demory*

When should my children obey the Gospel?" "At what age are my children considered sinners by God?" "My child has been asking questions about baptism, is she/he old enough to obey the Gospel?" "My son/daughter has been sitting in Bible classes all their life; I believe that he/she knows what is required to become a Christian." Preachers and elders have heard these and many other statements from parents who have accepted the tradition of men that children are viable candidates in God's plan of salvation. I must admit that my wife and I had fallen into this line of thinking when our son and daughter began reaching that ripe old age of teen-hood.

We had witnessed countless parents encourage their children to prepare for the day when they should obey the Gospel, whether at summer camp, during some youth meeting, or congregational services. It is only natural that we should want to be viewed as caring parents who made sure that their children did the right thing once they reached that magic young age for baptism. To our surprise as well as joy, one Wednesday night our son (at the ripe old age of 13), responded to the invitation I had offered after my devotional. Having been unaware of his desire, we discussed a few fundamental issues to make sure that he knew what he was doing, after which we both walked to the back to prepare for his baptism into Christ. Our daughter on the other hand required some manipulation, when we felt it was

time for her to obey the Gospel. Discovering we were getting nowhere, my wife and I asked a friend to study with her, after our attempts failed. No matter how much we encouraged her to obey the Gospel, she refused and would not give us a reason why.

It was discovered during a study with our friend that our daughter was afraid to go under the water. It was not until my first work as a Gospel preacher, during a lady's class that my wife was teaching, that our daughter decided (at the age of 13) that it was time and wanted to be baptized immediately. Working with a small congregation that had no baptistery, we drove 30 miles to another congregation and baptized her that night. My wife and I were overjoyed that we had finally been successful in getting our children to obey the Gospel and become New Testament Christians, brothers and sisters in Christ.

I am sure that many parents have had similar situations with their children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews. It is only natural, that as parents, we want our family members to become Christians so our relationships will be eternal, and not just earthly. As a Gospel preacher, I have learned that most parents believe their children should become Christians if they can tell you the steps of salvation. Most believe that the age to obey the Gospel is anywhere from ten to twelve years, with the occasional thirteen-to fourteen-year-old. I have heard of some who would go as

far as baptizing eight-year olds if they thought the individual knew what they were doing.

It is understandable for parents to desire the best for their children, particularly when it comes to their soul's salvation. The question my wife and I have been asking ourselves for several years now, is, "are we as parents pushing our children into a situation, they (and we as parents) are not really prepared for?" Obeying the Gospel is not something any of us should take lightly, because it is much more than simply knowing the steps and being immersed, it is a **commitment**. A commitment that most adults are not ready or willing to accept. Jesus said of discipleship that we must first "count the cost" (Luke 14:26-33).

It is that time of year again when summer camps and youth meetings build the emotions of our children, which immersions are witnessed by Facebook and church website postings. The question is—did they count the cost before doing so? Were the parents prepared for what it would cost them in terms of treating their child as a brother or sister in Christ?

My wife and I wrestled with these questions for some time before concluding that our son and daughter had been manipulated into baptism, rather than it being their personal conviction. We must admit that the Scriptures speak of "men and women" being baptized, but never children (Acts 5:14; 8:12; 17:12). What if your eleven-year-old told you he/she wanted to be married, would you let them? Of course you would not, because you as a parent and mentally mature would know they were not prepared to make such a commitment. Yet is that not what we do when we make the choice to obey the Gospel? Are we not marrying Christ, becoming His bride (Rev. 21:2, 9)?

"No matter what a man says in the church, you know what kind of religion he has when you know what kind of company he keeps."

*Author Unknown*

Are children accountable to God for their sins, or are they not? There is no certain age at which a person becomes accountable for their sins, as everyone is different based upon their environment, and mental maturity. Society has set the age of 18-21 as "adulthood," a time when it believes children have reached the capacity to discern right and wrong (Isa. 7:16). Parents treat their children differently at the age of 18 when they have graduated from High School and move on to college. They will tell them, "You are an adult now," meaning, we believe you have the mental ability to know how to act in society:

When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a **man**, I put away childish things (1 Cor. 13:11).

The key for any person being accountable to God and truly obeying the Gospel is (1) Confession (commitment, conviction, cost counting), (2) Repentance (godly sorrow for a sinful LIFE); (3) Baptism (washing away a LIFE of sin), (4) Have the eyes of their understanding been enlightened (Eph. 1:18)? Let us not allow curiosity to be confused with conviction. Just because a child says they want to be baptized because they are afraid of hell, does not mean they are convicted. Remember, they have been taught this in Bible Class. There is a timeframe when children are not accountable to God's Law, and then when it begins to apply (Rom. 7:23-24). We should not push anyone into becoming a Christian, particularly our own children.

It should be left up to the individual when they feel the need to obey the Gospel from the heart (6:17). And then, as adults, we must be willing to accept them as brothers or sisters in Christ who have the same responsibilities as us. If we are not going to treat them as such, then we really do not believe they were mentally ready to be married to Christ. Let us stop rejoicing over every baptism of a child but consider whether they were truly accountable to God for a life of sin.

*Mexico, MO*

# Two Ways of Learning What to Do

*S. H. Hall*

It is clearly affirmed that the Holy Scriptures were written for our learning; hence, we should ever be interested in the study of the same. "Seek ye out of the book of Jehovah, and read," is the command in Isaiah 34:16. "Give heed to reading" is Paul's statement to Timothy (1 Tim. 4:13), and then the oft-quoted statement: "Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). Then, what David says about the man who is "blessed" or "happy" should not be forgotten:

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night (Psa. 1:1-2).

But we should remember that when we learn what the devil wants us to do, we have also learned what God wants us to do; for God's will is ever the very opposite of what the devil wants done.

Doubtless some of our readers remember that one of the things that made Alvin York's name almost immortal to Tennesseans was his quickness to find his way back to the American lines by going in just the opposite direction to what a German officer advised him. In the melee York lost his bearings, and all his men had been killed or wounded; so, when he had got the German prisoners rounded up and was ready to start back to his own camp, he had forgotten the way. But as soon as he noticed the eagerness and quickness with which one of his prisoners—a German officer—would help him out of the difficulty, he got the right direction by turning and going just the opposite of what the German advised.

There should be a genuine pleasure in our doing what the devil does not want us to do, and we can rest in the thought that when we know of a certainty that what we are doing is contrary to

the will and wishes of Satan we are in Jehovah's way. It is well to have a consciousness that we are pleasing God, and to rejoice because of this consciousness, but it is better to have a consciousness that we are pleasing God and are displeasing the devil at the same time. Establish the character of delighting just as much in displeasing Satan as you delight in pleasing God. The consciousness that you are doing both in the one act will greatly increase your joy.

*Deceased*

## He Went That Way

*William T. Ellis*

One of the delusions of immaturity is that its experiences are unique, whereas wisdom knows that what befalls anybody has happened a myriad of times before. For the Christian, there is a special significance in this truth because Jesus has first been over the road we are traveling.

Does our path lead over dark and difficult experiences?—He went that way.

Are we burdened with cares and problems and sorrows as we walk?—He went that way.

Are we lonely, misunderstood, and criticized?—He went that way.

Have friends failed us and even hurt us by betrayal?—He went that way.

Is life's pack of troubles and mysteries weighing down our souls?—He went that way.

Whatever befalls a Christian first befell Jesus; so, He walks beside us and before us, a sharing, sympathetic friend.

*Deceased*

### Website

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com>

### Sermons

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/sermons.html>

### Bible Classes

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/classes.html>

### Gospel Meeting

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/meeting.html>

### Defender

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/defender.html>

### Beacon

<https://www.bellviewcoc.com/beacon.html>

### Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/BellviewCoC>

### YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/BellviewChurchOfChrist>

Michael Hatcher's YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/52MichaelH>

"The events of our lives are not accidents; they are a part of God's plan for us, and will work out for good, if we meet them with courage and faith. No real harm can come to those who, amidst the vicissitudes of life, trust God utterly."

*Author Unknown*

### Sick

#### Remember in your prayers:

Bill & Peggy Crowe

Nancy Travis

Linda Worley

Carla Burleson

Bill & Pam Busch

Linda Parks

Sheila Myrick

### Please Remember

July 29

Fifth Wednesday Singing at 7:00 p.m., in the auditorium.

### Defender and Beacon

#### Available Via Email

Send your email address to:

[bellviewcoc@gmail.com](mailto:bellviewcoc@gmail.com)

### Weekly Services

#### Sunday

Bible Classes for all ages — 9:00 a.m.

Morning Worship Service — 10:00 a.m.

Afternoon Worship Service — 1:00 p.m.

#### Wednesday

Bible Classes for all ages — 7:00 p.m.

### Beacon

Bellview Church of Christ

4850 Saufley Field Road

Pensacola, FL 32526

850-455-7595

Michael Hatcher, Editor

[bellviewcoc@gmail.com](mailto:bellviewcoc@gmail.com)



### Bellview Church of Christ

#### Bishops:

Paul Brantley

Michael Hatcher

Bill Busch

#### Minister:

Tim Cozad