

In search of...

Truth & Right

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Child-Like Faith

Mark 10:13-16 reads, "And they were bringing children to Him that He might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, He was indignant and said to them, 'Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.' And He took them in His arms and blessed them, laying His hands on them."

This passage, and the passages parallel to it, are often referenced for several reasons: one is to show Jesus' compassion and humanity, that He did not consider Himself too important or too busy to spend time with children. People also talk about these verses because they illustrate just how precious and important children are, which is something we need to be reminded of all too often. But of course most bring up this event in the life of Jesus to talk about what I am writing about today: the greater message for us as

pertains being like children. The ways in which this is worded vary, but usually it all boils down to the same thought: we must have faith like that of a child.

Young children possess an innocence that is very rare in the world. To them, everything is new, interesting, and exciting; they do not make assumptions or suspect ulterior motives (unless they are sadly taught to do so). Psalm 131 says, "O LORD, my heart is not lifted up; my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me. But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me. I Israel, hope in the LORD from this time forth and forevermore." Understanding this is at the heart of what Jesus was saying. As with all Scripture, we must take what He said in context and read it thoroughly, so that we are careful not to read into it something that our Savior did not really say.

With that in mind, let's look again at what Jesus said- "...whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." So, was Christ saying that we must be child-like in all circumstances? No, that was not His statement. Was He even saying that our faith must always remain "child-like," as some readily preach? No! Jesus was talking specifically about receiving the kingdom, and entering it. He meant that we must have the humility of a child to receive the gospel and obey it. Children hear and believe without question or ego; pride can and does keep people from being obedient to the truth.

Yes, we must be humble like children, not thinking of ourselves, and willing to do all that God commands us- but I want to ask you- what else can be said of children? As a father (albeit a new one), I can directly relate to the fact that children are a blessing from God, "Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate." (Psa. 127:3-5)

However, with all of that being said, children are NOT a perfect bed of roses. Whether you yourself have children or not, you should be able to relate because, after all, you were once a child yourself. Children are impatient; they are often ruled by their emotions and, as we all know, they are unlearned, inexperienced, and

immature. Please, don't misunderstand: Vivianna is one of the greatest blessings in my life and I wouldn't trade her for anything. I simply say this to make my overall point: according to God's Word, we are NOT to behave like children.

As I said, children are impatient (ever heard the phrase, "Are we there yet?"). Patience is a virtue that comes with time, and so children are not expected to be patient all on their own- they must be taught. But an adult is different, and a Christian is to be very different, "Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand." (James 5:7-8)

Little children, as lovable as they are, can also be ruled by their emotions in very negative ways. How would you describe a temper tantrum? Childish, right? Well then, why do we see so many adults, Christians even, who yell, stomp, and give the silent treatment over petty squabbles? Certainly not from anything the Bible says. "Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger," (Eph. 4:26) "Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God." (James 1:19-20)

No one expects a five year old to name all the states, their capitals, and their state birds

(you'd probably be hard pressed to find anyone who could do all that); the point is, they haven't learned it all yet. There's a reason the Bible refers to new converts as babes in Christ. No one comes up from the waters of baptism knowing how to walk perfectly as a Christian. Thus the Scriptures say, "You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen." (2 Pet. 3:17-18)

I could go on. 1 Cor. 16:13 says, "Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong." Heb. 5:12-14 says, "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil."

In short, I do not disagree with what Jesus said in Mark 10 at all. Far from it! We must receive the kingdom like a child. We must be humble, open-minded, and obedient like a child. But the similarities are to end there. Do not put up with childish behavior from someone who is old enough to know better, and be an adult yourself! Take responsibility for your sins, your faith, and your growth!

Jarred Currence

Happy Moments,
Praise God.

Difficult Moments,
Seek God.

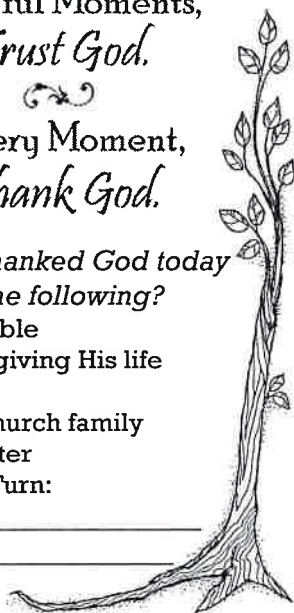
Quiet Moments,
Worship God.

Painful Moments,
Trust God.

Every Moment,
Thank God.

*Have you thanked God today
for any of the following?*

- The Bible
- Jesus giving His life for us
- Our church family
- Laughter
- Your Turn:



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WELLSBURG CHURCH OF CHRIST

92 Rose Cottage Lane
Wellsburg, WV 26070
304-737-1422

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BIBLE Trivia!

DIRECTIONS: After searching through your Bible, circle which answer is correct.

1. Who, with Paul, penned the First Letter to the Corinthians?

- a) Apollos
- b) Sosthenes
- c) Theophilus
- d) Alexander

2. What book says that the divine voice sounds like a waterfall?

- a) 2 Thessalonians
- b) Hebrews
- c) Genesis
- d) Revelation

3. This prophet predicted the outpouring of God's Spirit upon all people.

- a) Joel
- b) Jeremiah
- c) Joshua
- d) Nahum

4. What city did King Jeroboam use as his capital when the northern tribes split from the southern tribes?

- a) Tyre
- b) Tirzah
- c) Samaria
- d) Shechem

5. Which Gospel records Jesus' parable of a king's wedding feast for his son?

- a) Mark
- b) John
- c) Matthew
- d) Luke

6. According to Bildad, what fragile thing is a godless man's trust like?

- a) A spider web
- b) An egg
- c) A piece of glass
- d) A silk cloth

7. Who told Roman soldiers to be content with their pay and to avoid taking money by force?

- a) Jesus
- b) Peter
- c) John the Baptist
- d) Paul

8. Where did Jonah board a ship bound for Tarshish?

- a) Caesarea
- b) Tyre
- c) Sidon
- d) Joppa

9. Who advised young Christians to stop thinking like children?

- a) Paul
- b) John
- c) Peter
- d) Barnabas

10. What army man was given a feast when he joined the side of David?

- a) Abishai
- b) Joab
- c) Asahel
- d) Abner

LAST MONTH'S ANSWERS & VERSES:

- 1) C, Reference: Luke 5:29
- 2) A, Reference: Ezekiel 8:5
- 3) D, Reference: Luke 5:29-32
- 4) A, Reference: Genesis 19:30-38
- 5) B, Reference: Matthew 2:18

- 6) D, Reference: John 3:30
- 7) C, Reference: Nehemiah 12:35-36
- 8) B, Reference: Mark 14:51-52
- 9) C, Reference: 2 Samuel 14:28-33
- 10) A, Reference: 2 Corinthians 12:14