

LIKE CHILDREN

This past Wednesday, I spent some time with some awesome 3rd-6th graders studying the Word of God, and I have to admit I had a blast! I was impressed with their eagerness to discuss the story (Mark 10:46-52) and encouraged to see them reread it quickly after I asked a question, looking for the answers. They happily volunteered to participate in active learning to grasp the concepts. Their example was an encouragement to me.

When you hang out with kids like that, you feel young again. You wish you could bottle up their energy and intrigue of life. When you raise them, their preciousness is so great that you wish you could make time stand still so they would stay young forever.

However, we know this isn't possible. We must all grow up and mature physically, emotionally, and spiritually (1 Peter 2:1-3, Hebrews 5:11-14). This is why Jesus' words in Matthew 18 seem like a contradiction, but they really aren't. The reality is unfortunate. Because of our broken nature, we only leave the foolishness of childhood to get caught up in the foolishness of adulthood. Jesus addressed this with his disciples, who were plotting and posturing in a make-believe contest to see who was going to be the most important disciple in this new Kingdom Jesus was instituting. You would think the most appropriate thing for our Lord to shout would be "GROW UP!" Instead, he does something different.

Matthew 18

Who Is the Greatest?

1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" 2 And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them 3 and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

5 "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, 6 but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

Jesus' message isn't an exhortation to return to the immaturity and foolishness of childhood. His illustration points them towards the purity and humility of a child. He is calling them to return to the child-like vigor to seek higher things, to seek the things of God that are eternal with eagerness, knowing how much we need them instead of acting like we already have everything figured out. It is this pure humility that stands in opposition to man's vain "know-it-all" thoughts and behaviors and repositions them to a seeking heart that looks to the Lord for all things.

We can learn a lot from kids.

James 4:10

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

Eyes up!

Ryan