

## *A Childlike Faith*



### ***Key Scripture:***

*“People were also bringing babies to Jesus to have Him touch them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. But Jesus called the children to Him and said, “Let the little children come unto Me and do not hinder them, for the Kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the Kingdom of God like a little child will never enter in.” Luke 18:15-17*

*“At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who then is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?” Then Jesus called a little child to Him and set him in the midst of them, and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven” Matt. 18:1-4*

### ***Portion for the Journey:***

The Word has made it clear that without faith, it is impossible to please the LORD. The two key scripture passages above tell us that unless we become like little children, we will not enter the Kingdom of God. The context of both of these verses are centered about the qualities of deep humility required of those who will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. The disciples were concerned with who would be the greatest in heaven, hoping they would hold a seat of prominence in God’s throne room. Jesus made it clear that character and integrity is far more important in His Kingdom than those seeking status or recognition.

The LORD’s intention is that we should know Him as Our Father and that the foundation of our relationship with Him would be based solidly on the relationship of a Father toward His child. The Greek words for “child” used in the passages above refer to a young child, an infant, little child, the least. This is an age where the heart of the child is still very innocent and tender and not yet hardened by sin and imperfections of this world.

The Word makes it clear that such children have a very special place in the heart of God:

- He has hidden these things from the wise and learned...and revealed them to little children. Luke 10:21
- Their guardian angels always see the face of God. Matt. 18:10

- Those who cause a child to stumble or fall away from the Lord will be dealt with very harshly. Matt. 18:6
- Whoever receives one little child like this in His Name receives Him. Matt. 18:5
- The Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these. Luke 18:16

**What is childlike faith?** “The intimacy with Christ we long for is based on a childlike understanding and response to the Word of God. Do we have the courage, faith and will to seek out, discover and obey the Word in this manner?” (Facts of the Matter: Daily Devotionals.)

The Word makes it clear we are to grow and mature in our faith, so childlikeness is not to be linked with immaturity or naivety, or childishness. All of the characteristics of the young child’s relationship with his parent can be summed in his unwavering trust of his parent. Not all parents are worthy of this childlike trust, but our Father will exceed our expectations in every aspect. Hannah Whitall Smith has a chapter entitled “Like Little Children” in her book, “The Open Secret.” A number of her observations are included in the list below.

**Characteristics of a childlike walk with the LORD include the following qualities:**

1. **Wonder and joy:** Young children are filled with wonder and completely unashamed to show their joy and delight. God does not want us to lose our sense of awe or ability to take joy in Him and His creation. So many in our world today are jaded, not easily impressed or able to find joy in the world around them.
2. **Contentment:** A very young child accepts its lot in life without question. He sleeps as sound in a laundry basket as the most lavishly attired cribs, he plays with cardboard boxes with as much enthusiasm as an advanced computer system. Rom. 9:20; 1 Tim. 6:6-8; Ex. 17:1-3; 7; 1 Cor. 10:10-11; Phil. 4:6,11-12; Heb. 13:5
3. **Not Ashamed:** Young children are not ashamed of their unabashed enthusiasm and joy. It is a sad day when teenagers believe themselves to be too sophisticated to express their joy and delight in gifts or experiences. Young children are not ashamed of their parents or being seen with their parents. They love to boast about the greatness of their parents. David exhibited this lack of shame or embarrassment in his exuberant worship of the LORD as the Ark of the Covenant was brought into Israel. Ps. 34:1-3; Ps. 44:8; Ps. 33:1-3; Mark 5:19-20; Isa. 63:7; 2 Sam. 6:14
4. **Humility:** This is one characteristic Jesus mentioned specifically when He exhorted His disciples they must become like little children. Humility is the lack of exaltation of self, to realize one’s dependence and need for the Lord. Children are unaware of self. They delight in their accomplishments without pride. Matt. 18:4; Deuteronomy 8:12-14, 17. Deuteronomy 9:4; Isaiah 10:12-14; Daniel 4:28-33; 2 Corinthians 4:7; Galatians 6:14
5. **Accepted in the Beloved.** A young child comes boldly into his parent’s embrace. He does not doubt that he will be accepted A small child never doubts or questions the parent’s love for them. 1 John 4:16-18; Heb. 10:19-23; Eph. 3:12; Heb. 4:15-16; Heb. 13:6; Mat. 6:30; Mark 4:35; Ps. 78:19-24; Matt. 16:8-10; John 14:1-3

6. **Teachable:** Children have a built-in insatiable hunger to learn. They are curious and love to ask questions. The LORD longs to teach us and show us the way in which we are to go. Children ask questions openly and trust the person to answer truthfully. Jer. 33:3; James 1:5-7; John 14:26; Prov. 3:3-6; Prov. 13:1; Ps. 119:103-104; John 16:12-13; Prov. 12:1; Ps. 119:97-102; John 14:26
7. **Accept Discipline:** Children have tender hearts and respond to correction with godly sorrow. Their desire is to please their parents. A small child accepts the discipline of the parent and are subdued and softened when disciplined. Discipline includes the whole gamut of training, and is related to the cultivation of the mind and morals. Many strategies are employed in this training, commands, admonitions, teaching, reproof and punishment. The words planted in a child's heart when they are young tend to be remembered for the rest of their lives. Rev. 3:19; Job 5:17-18; Heb. 12:5-6; Ps. 94:12; Heb. 12:7-11
8. **Dependency:** A child has no desire to be independent of his parents. He knows his place in the family and is content to depend upon them for their protection and care. He allows the parent to help him to get dressed, to eat. He has no image of his life as it could be without his parents.
9. **Provision:** A child shows no anxiety regarding whether his needs will be provided for by the parent. We are to leave all care for our needs to the provision of the Father. A child asks for what it wants and in joyous confidence of being heard and answered. 1 Peter 5:7; Matt. 6:25-26; 31-33; Phil. 4:6; John 15:7; Mark 11:24; Matt. 7:7-11
10. **Simplicity:** The simplicity and devotion of a child is pure and transparent. They love ardently and without reciprocation. ! Cor. 10:3-5
11. **Service:** Children love to help their parents and take great joy in working at their jobs. Every parent knows it would be easier to do the task themselves, but the child's evident satisfaction with doing what they see the parent do is worth the extra time to see them a perform a job that may not be perfectly done! Ps. 119:32; 59-60
12. **Without guile:** Small children are notorious for their complete honesty and willingness to admit what they have done, only later do they learn to hide their sin and lie to cover it up. Every parent can recall an uncomfortable situation where their young child's blunt honest challenged the parent's social graces. Children ask honest questions, not to challenge or undermine another but because they want to know the truth.
13. **No fear for tomorrow:** A child lives in the present moment and trust their future to the parents' hands. They are not anxious for their needs. Children do not worry about what will happen in the future. They live in the moment. Matt. 6:30, 34; 1 Pet. 5:7
14. **Comfort:** A young child runs to his parent when they are afraid or has need of comfort, whether it be a skinned knee or bad dream. The child's first person to run to is their parent. Isa. 66:12-13 (AMP); 2 Cor. 1:3-4

15. **Protection:** A child looks to his parents for protection and deliverance from all their enemies. They run to their parents as a place of refuge and fear nothing in their presence. They do not worry whether the doors are locked at night or whether the shingles will stay on the house in a storm. Children expect their parents to fight all of their battles for them, and are confident their parent will always be victorious. They trust their parents to keep them safe from all harm. Ps. 72:12; 22:4-5; 34:6; 107:6; Ex. 14:13-14; Rom. 12;19; Ps. 60:12; Dt. 20:1-4, Ex. 15: 1-3; Deut. 33:27; Ps. 27:1-3; 46:1-3; Ps. 91:2-10; Ps. 9:9-10

16. **Restfulness:** A little child will rest in his mother's arms when he is tired. Likewise we must learn to rest in the loving arms of the Father when we are weary. Matt. 11:28; Isa. 32:18; Ps. 131:2

### *Digging Deeper in the Word*

All of the characteristics of a child's relationship with their parent is summed up in "faith." A Child believes their parents can do anything and that there is nothing that is too hard for them. We must believe that all things are possible to our Father in heaven and nothing can thwart His blessed will. Matt. 17:19-20; Rom. 4:20-21; Mark 9:23; Mark 9:28-19

Review the verses included in this lesson. Ask the LORD to show you how to become more childlike in your relationship with Him. Use a journal or notebook to record your insights and prayers.

*What God is speaking to my heart?*

*My Response to God*