

Do your, and CCF's priorities, reflect His toward children?

Do we treat like proverbial “step kids”? Step over, on, away from, to do “important things” (James 2:1-9)

Or, do we stoop down to love, serve, honor, protect? (John 1:1-14)

How can we apply Hebrews 10:24, 25 to the children in our lives?

“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” (ESV)

What can you add to these ways to bless “Such as these”?

Teach, Nursery, MOPS, Youth Group, VBS, Camp in VA

Random gifts, cards, kindnesses

Treat them like Jesus would, like they are Jesus (Mathew 25:40)

“Inasmuch as” with the “such as”: “And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” (Matthew 25:40—KJV)

Jesus, get Your hands on our children.

Bless these—Your—little ones

Help us to be Your hands in serving them

Show us any and every way we hinder them

We want to partner with You in ministry to such as these. Amen.

A Discipleship Tool of Christ Community

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JESUS LOVES “SUCH AS THESE.” DO WE?

Receiving, Respecting, not Rejecting “Nobodies”

“for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

—from Matthew 19:13-15

If you were lumped into a pile of “such as these,” how would that hit you? It may depend on who was creating the categories and who else was in the subgroup. The “such as these” Jesus refers to in Matthew 19:14 were children; social nobodies, who were heavenly-honored, yet earthly zeroes.

Children—aka “such as these”—represent those low on, or not even on, the social ladder. They are last in the pecking order, stepped over and sometimes on. Quite a crowd to be called to proudly/humbly honor and associate with!

“Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people, but Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.” And he laid his hands on them and went away.”

(Matthew 19:13-15—ESV)

In this part of Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus is continuing with His theme of God-honoring, Kingdom relationships. This is holy, hard work: being humble, hungry for holiness, pursuing reconciliation and accountability, forgiving, and building marital oneness, following our Creator’s perfect plan (Matthew 18:1-19:12). He again turns to our attitudes towards children.

Not only should we have the same lowly attitude of these “least ones” (cf. Matthew 18:1-14), we should treat “such as these” with great honor. Far from barring them access to the King, we should seek it for them, removing every hindrance that keep them from His blessing. How we treat those who have nothing to offer us says more about us than “them.”

Hearing the Text Two More times:

Jesus is heading to Jerusalem, the Cross. “When Jesus had finished saying these things, he departed from Galilee and went to the region of Judea across the Jordan. Large crowds followed him, and he healed them there . . . Then children were brought to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them. Jesus said, “Leave the children alone, and don’t try to keep them from coming to me, because the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” After placing his hands on them, he went on from there.” **(Matthew 19:1, 2, 13-15—CSB)**

“One day children were brought to Jesus in the hope that he would lay hands on them and pray over them. The disciples shooed them off. But Jesus intervened: “Let the children alone, don’t prevent them from coming to me. God’s kingdom is made up of people like these.” After laying hands on them, he left.” **(19:13-15—The Message)**

Esteeming “Such as These”

“Scientific evidence shows that love, attention, and affection in the first years of life have a direct and measurable impact on a child’s physical, mental, and emotional growth” (BabyCenter.com). Winston Churchill said: "There is no finer investment for any community than putting milk into babies." If this is true in the physical realm, how much more in Kingdom, spiritual matters!

BRING YOUR CHILDREN TO JESUS!

Pursue Kingdom Priorities (Matthew 6:33)

At home, in the car, as faithful parts of Church (Hebrews 10:23-25)

Seek His Blessing, Favor, Intercession above All:

And, as His body, we are to do our Part to **B.L.E.S.S.:**

Beseech God’s blessing on them. Pray for, protect

Lead them well: Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Proverbs 1-8; 2 Timothy 2:24-26

Express God’s and your love for them (John 3:16)

Speak truth to: Luke 2:52; Ephesians 4:12-16; 6:1-4

Shepherd, Shield, Stand up for: fully pro-life Psalm 23

Let them come! Do not H.I.N.D.E.R.:

Hurt physically, spiritually, emotionally (Matthew 18:1-14)

Ignore: the painful Unkindness of Indifference

Not Prioritize and thus Disrespect (1 Timothy 4:12)

Expect too little, or too much (Ephesians 6:1-4)

Reject, Rail at, Belittle (Colossians 3:21; Ephesians 4:29-5:2)

Be like such kingdom heirs! (cf. Matthew 18:1-14; 19:16-30)

The least deserve the most from us (James 2:1-9)

Learn from the Little, Lowly Ones—Kingdom examples

For Further Growth, Group Study

Note Timothy’s Spiritual Heritage and Responsibilities:

Paul writing to “Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. . . I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. . . You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.” **(2 Timothy 1:2, 5; 2:1, 2—ESV; 2:24-26)**

How can we apply Moses’ command to parents entering The Land?

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” **(Deuteronomy 6:4-9—ESV)**