

Thy Kingdom Come: Children and the Kingdom

Reflect

1. What images or people come to mind when you think of the words humility – dependent – unassuming?
2. What images or people come to mind when you think of the words: greatest – clever – accomplished?
3. When you think of the kingdom of God, what comes to mind?

Read Your Bible

1. Proverbs 3:5-6
2. Matthew 18:1-5

Apply God's Word To Your Life

1. What does it mean to trust someone? What does it look like?
2. Read Proverbs 3:5-6. The psalmist associates trusting the Lord to not leaning on your own understanding. Why do you think that is?
3. The proverb writer says when you submit to the Lord He will make your paths straight. Even with the promise of paths being made straight, submission to the will of God is not easy. Where in your life do you find it hard to submit to the will of God?
4. Read Matthew 18:1-5. Jesus tells us that unless we change/turn and become "like children" we will not enter the kingdom of heaven. When we think of children, we often think about innocence and vulnerability. What positive attributes do little children have, especially in relationship with those older and wiser than them?
5. What about children could be considered "lowly" by human standards, but valued by God?
6. What are the stumbling blocks to being "like children" in your relationship with God?

Conclusion

Jesus constantly talked about the kingdom of God and in His teachings the power and value structure of God's kingdom is so often described as opposite of our human structures. Children, some of the most vulnerable and powerless among us, are lifted as kingdom inheritors and the example for how we are to change in our relationship with God. Why? What power and value do they hold in this world? Children have an incredible ability to enter situations and relationships in unassuming ways, to build relationships and bridges that many adults would

otherwise consider difficult and unimaginable. Children have the ability to trust in God and be molded by Jesus' teachings in ways that adults find so hard after years of conforming to the patterns of this world. Children are incredibly open to the possibilities that are in God and to be awe inspired by God's love and work in this world. The sin of the world slowly erodes these amazing gifts that we are born with and our hearts become hardened to the realities of our broken lives and world. Jesus calls us to change – to turn – from our hardened ways and become like children in our relationship with Him and with others. When we do this, the kingdom of God is close at hand!

Pray

Father, thank You for Your Son, Jesus, who reminds us through the example of children that there is incredible power and blessing in vulnerability. It takes courage when we trust and submit to Your loving will and way for us. By Your Spirit, help us to turn to You, to not lean on our own understanding, but submit to You with our whole life and be changed so that we can join with You in Your kingdom work of sacrificial love in this world until the day when we see You face to face and Your kingdom has no end. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.