
WORSHIP

Suggested worship songs: Today, House of the Lord, Run to the Father, Good, Good Father, Holy Forever

WELCOME

What are some privileges that children have that adults no longer have?

WORD

Matthew 18:1-6

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" ² And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, ³ and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. ⁵ And whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me; ⁶ but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea."

Luke 18:15-17

¹⁵ And they were bringing even their babies to Him so that He would touch them, but when the disciples saw it, they *began* rebuking them. ¹⁶ But Jesus called for them, saying, "Permit the children to come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. ¹⁷ Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it *at all*."

Many of us want to be the "GOAT" --- Greatest of All Time --- in something, to have prominence, honor, and great status in everyone's eyes. But God wants something else for His children, to be the "greatest for all time" (**Matthew 18:1-3**). It's taking the humble road and being like children all over again.

WHAT IS A CHILD

Unlike adults, children do not seek greatness. To be great, people are preoccupied with the *doing*, but in God's kingdom, it's all about the *being*. "Unless we do a U-turn towards God, we won't become like children that please Him. Our Enemy gives us excuses for not growing towards Christ: why we can't attend church, read our Bibles, join Dgroup meetings, etc. We need to change because adults need:

- Child-like CURIOSITY
- Child-like INNOCENCE
- Child-like DEPENDENCE
- Child-like HUMILITY

Jesus said in the beatitudes that "Humble men are very fortunate!" he told them, "for the Kingdom of Heaven is given to them" (**Matthew 5:3**). As Charles Spurgeon said, *"There is no faith so genuine, so simple, and so powerful as the faith of a child who takes God at His word."* According to Jesus, the greatest for all time are those who humbles himself like a child (**Matthew 18:4**). Church leaders especially need to learn this (**Mark 9:35-37**). It's not about how great you are, but about the great work that God wants to do in and through you. John Piper said that *"Every good thing in the Christian life grows in the soil of humility. Without humility, every virtue and every grace withers. That's why Calvin said humility is first, second and third in the Christian faith"*.

Jesus considers acts of care towards His children (those who believe in Him) as acts towards Him (**Matthew 18:5-6**). The Lord also warns all of us against harming a child (physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually). A child is one who enjoys his father's company and yearns for his presence. Just like when we desire to be with God and know our Heavenly Father through His word.

WHY BE A CHILD

As children of God, we are given the privilege to rest on His shoulders that we may be able to see the world and gain wisdom, to see things from God's perspective. God's child enjoys:

- Provision and security
- Love and acceptance
- Authority and ability (**Jeremiah 1:7-8**)

Young people can trust God to do mighty things through them! Unfortunately, adults can often believe the dumbest things such as, "I am the master of my fate; I am the captain of my soul..." (Invictus). Thus, we live a life of self-reliance and defiance. But the Bible tells us that there is a way that seems right to a man, but its end leads to death and though man

plans his ways, the Lord directs his paths. Many also believe that the "greatest love of all" is self-love. However, the Bible tells us that God's love is the greatest love of all, as evidenced by how He showed it through Jesus' laying down His life for us (**John 3:16, John 15:13**). Instead of focusing on ourselves, God wants us to focus on others.

While the disciples of Jesus argued about who was the greatest among them, the Lord used the example of a child to instruct them on humility as the way to greatness in God's eyes (**Luke 9:46-48**). The disciples didn't have the spiritual perspective to understand God's agenda that Jesus just revealed to them, and so they focused on themselves (**Luke 9:44-45**). We may achieve the pinnacle of success and have our hierarchy of needs and aspirations met, but these are all so small in light of what God has planned for us (**1 Corinthians 2:9**). C.S. Lewis was right when he said that we are so easily pleased! As the Bible reminds us, "what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world, but loses his soul?"

A child is a recipient of all the Father's promises, enjoys everything that He owns, and becomes part of His will.

HOW TO BE A CHILD

God's kingdom belongs to those with child-like faith in Jesus (**Luke 18:15-17**). Adults want to enter the Kingdom of God, but they want to do so in their own terms (**Luke 18:9, 14**). They say, "I will earn it...", and become self-righteous in their own spirituality that they look down on everyone else. In another parable, Jesus explained that new teachings (new wine) will not do well with old teachings (old wineskins). You want to know the truth, but you don't want to change!

Adults ask the wrong question – "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" (**Matthew 18:1**). The right question should have been: "How does one become great in the kingdom of heaven?"

To be a child, we need to realize that we don't have everything. We need to make a U-turn towards heaven. There ought to be a transformation from the "negatives" into the "positives". God wants us to be transformed and be set apart (holy) for God (sanctification). A child of God aims to bring delight, to bring the Heavenly Father pleasure. It takes a conscious decision to accept Jesus in your life as Savior and Lord for you to become God's child (**John 1:12**). Belief in God must be accompanied by your decision to accept Jesus into your life as your Savior and Lord, for forgiveness and salvation. God is simply waiting for us to stretch our hands towards Him --- He has his hands already fully extended to accept us into His family.

WILL YOU BE MY CHILD?

The Almighty God is waiting for you to become His child. Respond in alignment with His agenda --- whether you are already His child, or if you are just making that decision to return to God and be His child by accepting Jesus as Savior and Lord. Let this day be the day that you become God's child!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. Have you experienced a season when spending time with God felt difficult or distant? What might God be inviting you to do today to draw closer to Him again?
2. Is there an area in your life right now where God is asking you to fully trust Him and hold on to His promises?
3. Are there moments when you struggle to believe that you are truly God's child? What thoughts, experiences, or barriers might be holding you back from embracing a deeper, loving relationship with your Heavenly Father?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for the adults in your life to learn what it means to be a child that pleases God. Be an example of what it means to be converted and become like children --- fully trusting and obeying our Father in Heaven. Share the gospel to adults and young people alike, let them know that all those who believe in Jesus become God's children!

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives.

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of public servants; repentance and salvation for government leaders and citizens for a Christ-centered Philippines.
- For legislators to promote and support bills and laws aligned with God's Word.
- PRAY for the protection, safety and release of kidnapped American Christian missionary, Kevin, serving in Niger (West Africa). For God to turn the hearts of the kidnappers to repentance and salvation. Peace and comfort for Kevin's family.
- Pray for persecuted Christians in Sudan and Nigeria) --- many have been beheaded and murdered; earnestly seek God's intervention to stop the bloodshed. Pray for freedom from oppression, that God's word and His people bring them comfort and hope.
- PRAISE God that the rest of the living Israeli hostages have been restored to their families safely! Continue to pray that even all the dead hostages will be returned to their families for burial.
- For Israel's war with terrorists to end according to God's purpose and for His glory. For Jewish people worldwide who are experiencing a surge of antisemitism; may this lead them to the Messiah, Jesus as they turn

to God for help and comfort.

- For protection of Iranian, Syrian and Lebanese Christians and other minorities, and freedom from oppression. Pray for the gospel to spread rapidly throughout their region.
- War in Ukraine to end, loss of lives prevented.
- Earthquake victims in northern Cebu, Davao Oriental Seek God's mercy upon our land. May many more Filipinos turn to Jesus!

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God, and make disciples
- For elders, pastors, deacons, and families to become holy, humble, harmonious, happy, and heart-working)
- For ministries and church expansions worldwide.

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain (MMRC)

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper and intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living.
- Salvation of family and friends

MEMORY VERSE

Matthew 18:3

"Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven."

