

WEEK of July 7:

Childlike Faith

Matthew 18:1-5 (NIV)

Did you ever go to family gatherings as a kid and when the meal was ready you had to sit at the kids table with your little cousins while your aunts, uncles and older, cooler cousins got to sit at the adult table?

I can remember being in this scenario as a child and thinking to myself, *"I want to sit with the older people. I mean after all I'm way more mature than my younger cousins."*

This is kind of what the disciples thought as well.

In a way they sort of ask Jesus, *how they can sit at the adult table in heaven?*

*At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked,
"Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"*

Matthew 18:1 (NIV)

Jesus answers by calling over a small child and giving a powerful teaching. Telling the disciples in verse 2-3,

*He called a little child to him,
and placed the child among them. And he said:*

***"Truly I tell you, unless you change
and become like little children,
you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."***

This would have stung me if I was a disciple talking to Jesus in that moment.

(Can you feel that sting? Can you put yourself in the disciples' shoes?)

Jesus just told me if I don't change, I will never get into heaven.

(Is there anything that comes to mind you know you need to course correction?

Take a moment to talk with the Lord, confess if necessary)

I would be thinking, *"but I have listened to and obeyed Jesus' teachings. I have given up my life to follow him. You're telling me I have to change more?"*

(Can you relate?)

You can't blame the disciples too much for thinking this way. We do it too.

It's natural for us to want to rank ourselves as greater or lesser than our peers. The disciples wanted the younger generation to try and be more like them, but Jesus explains we need to look to be like little children (verse 4).

*Therefore,
whoever takes the lowly position of this child
is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*

So, ultimately, what does it mean to have a childlike faith?

To be honest it can mean a lot of things.

To me it means we need to have a humble faith.

Thinking of yourself as better than your little cousin won't get you a seat at the adult table, and thinking like you are somehow better than a fellow believer because you do more good deeds is like being on the right road but headed in the totally wrong direction!

And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.

Matthew 18:5 (NIV)

The other meaning I can think of is to trust like a child. A child trusts their parents to care for them and meet their needs.

We need to trust God will do the same for us now.

We will get lost if we try to live in this world relying on our own understanding. Kind of like how a child on his bike thinks he knows all the trails around the campground and gets himself so lost his mom has to call the park rangers to find him.

*At about the same time, the disciples came to Jesus asking,
“Who gets the highest rank in God’s kingdom?”*

*For an answer Jesus called over a child,
whom he stood in the middle of the room,*

*And said, “I’m telling you,
once and for all,*

*that unless you return to square one and start over like children,
you’re not even going to get a look at the kingdom,
let alone get in.*

*Whoever becomes simple and elemental again,
like this child,
will rank High in God's kingdom.
What's more, when you receive the childlike on my account,
it's the same as receiving me."*
Matthew 18:1-5 (MSG)

The point is, there are so many things we can learn from children that we can apply to our faith in Christ.

I encourage you to reflect on what it means to you to have childlike faith, and ask a fellow believer what childlike faith means to them.

You might think of your faith in a whole new way.

REFLECTION:

So, ultimately, what does it mean to have a childlike faith?

~kids don't care what they look like when they do something they love.

~kids are often loud, spontaneous, delighting in their surroundings.

~kids often throw their whole bodies into an event...like running through a field with their arms windmilling, they walk funny to some unheard internal drum!

~kids ask questions

~kids are eager

~they don't question their feelings....they feel them...act them out...

~trust ~obedience ~eager pursuit/practice

CHALLENGE:

Make your own list, and try to apply a few of them to your relationship/pursuit/love for the Lord this week.

Try a new thing each day this week!