

From the Preacher's Desk
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Recently my youngest son, Donovan, lost his first baby tooth. As it is for virtually all young children, this was a momentous occasion for him, a milestone marker in his young life, and a time of great joy. Other rites of passage of the young are running through sprinklers on a hot afternoon, catching fireflies during the twilight time of dusk, and playing games with friends under a starry summer evening.

Recently my wife, my younger sister and I have all enjoyed watching our own kids playing No Ghost, Crack the Whip and other games we enjoyed ourselves as children. It makes one feel good as a parent to watch one's children engage in wholesome entertainment, and I, for one, am always reminded of what Jesus said in Matthew 19:14 when I watch the young at play, *"Let the children come to Me. Do not hinder them. The kingdom of God belongs to such as these."*

When Jesus looked out at the throng of people who were following after Him and He saw the little children among them, **He** thought of His Father and His Father's kingdom. So why shouldn't we? For as He said, ". . . *the kingdom of God belongs . . .*" to those who are like children.

It is important to remember, though, that being **childlike** is not the same thing as being **childish**. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 13:11, *"When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things."* We are expected to grow and mature as one of His disciples. So how are these passages harmonized?

To be childlike is to be humble and lowly in spirit: *"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven."* (Matthew 18:4) When we as disciples of Jesus imitate Him by living a life of service and humility, the Lord will exalt us (James 4:10). It is not a little child who is full of self-pride. They are innocent of this. It is the individual who wants everything his way who is being **childish**.

What it boils down to is this: To be like little children means that we will trust in the Lord in every aspect of our lives just as little children are trusting and dependent on their earthly parents in every aspect of their lives. To live as one of God's children in His kingdom is to depend upon Him for everything, for without Him we can do nothing of ourselves. As Jesus said in John 15:5, *"I am the vine, you are the branches: He that abides in Me, and I in him, the same bears much fruit: for apart from Me you can do nothing."*

May the Lord bless you!