

The Little Child Spirit

by John Hames

The sermon emphasizes the importance of embodying a childlike spirit characterized by humility, trust, and openness in our relationship with God and others.

Scripture: Exodus 34:29, Proverbs 16:18, Matthew 5:7, Matthew 18:3, Philippians 2:3

Topics: "Childlike Faith", "Humility"

Description

John Hames preaches on the importance of having a childlike spirit in order to enter the kingdom of heaven, emphasizing characteristics such as honesty, teachability, charity, tenderness, trust, humility, and receptiveness to reproof. He urges believers to emulate the qualities of a little child, free from guile, suspicion, worry, self-conceit, and back-talk, and to fully trust in God's Word without doubt. Hames warns against pride and self-importance, encouraging humility and a gentle, merciful demeanor in all interactions.

Transcript

"And He said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3).

In this chapter it shall not be our aim to speak of power, faith and great external gifts, but the little child spirit. We confess, however, that it is a scarce article among religious people today. There are so few who will take the low place and do the little things.

Now since the Savior has used a little child for our example, it would be well for us to closely examine the characteristics of a child and bring our lives in harmony with them. You will notice the Savior did not say, large children, but little children.

For our special edification let us briefly paraphrase some of the most prominent characteristics of a little child.

1. A little child is open, honest and free from guile. It does not hide or cover up things. It does not know how to play the hypocrite, but states facts just as they are. Oh, it means so much for people to have all of the dodge, guile and two-facedness taken out of them! We are glad to say, however, that salvation takes it all out. Praise the Lord!

2. A little child is teachable and easily led. This is the same spirit that should possess all of God's children. They should be easily entreated and free from every vestige of stubbornness, self-will and hard-headedness. No one can retain the grace of God and at the same time be stubborn and mulish. The two do not go together.

3. A little child is also free from uncharitable suspicion and surmising. It believes good of every one until otherwise convinced. It is not hasty to misjudge people. Reader, have you any of this material in stock? There is a class of people who on first sight censure and misjudge others. All such conduct is wrong. We are to believe good of every one until we are sufficiently convinced to the contrary.

4. Little children are of a tender spirit, and easily moved to sympathy and tears. It is absolutely impossible for them to hold a grudge, or manifest a hard, merciless spirit. Tears and entreaties will melt them up and make them willing to be friendly with their greatest enemy. This is the way Christians should be. Not hard, merciless and stiff, but pliable, sympathetic and merciful. Jesus said, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt. 5:7).

5. Little children entertain no worry or uneasiness, but believe and depend upon their parents fully. This is the way God wants His children to do. He does not want them filled with anxious care, but with implicit trust. Just as the little child fully believes everything that its parents tell it, just so does God want us to fully believe all that He has said in His Word without the least shadow of doubt.

6. A little child is also lowly and free from self-conceit and egotism. It is simple, humble and lowly in manner and deportment. Reader, beware of an egotistic, self-conceited, important spirit, for it paves the way to a fall. The wise man of old left the following statement on record: "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Better is it to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the great" (Prov. 16:18, 19).

7. A little child takes all kinds of reproof, both at home and abroad without dictation or back-talk. It is true, a large child may sometimes talk back, but the smaller ones receive all reproof and criticism without a word of back talk. Reader have you reached this place?

Jonathan Edwards describes a Christian as being like "such a little flower as we see in the spring of the year, low and humble on the ground; offering its bosom to receive the pleasant beams of the sun's glory; rejoicing, as it were, in a calm rapture; diffusing around a sweet fragrance; standing peacefully and lowly in the midst of other flowers." Reader, I charge you, be clothed with humility, or you will yet be a wandering star, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. Let Christ increase, let man decrease. Remember, 'Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone.' Looking at our own shining face is the bane of spiritual life, and of the ministry. Oh, for closest communion with God, till soul and body, head and spirit shine with divine brilliancy! But, oh, for a holy ignorance of their shining!"

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