

Resting in God  
"A childlike trust that He is a loving Father"

Study 6

*Matthew 18:3-4 (New International Version)*

3) *And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.*

4) *Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*

An infant never questions whether they are going to be taken care of. They have no ability to do so. If they are hungry, they express their need. In most cases, when it is possible to do so, the need is taken care of. The child learns that, when it expresses need, the need is met. Having no ability to meet the need themselves, they must wait until they are provided for. If they are not provided for, they die.

In God's kind of family, children look to their loving father and mother for provision, leadership, belonging, warmth and guidance. An honorable mom and dad serve and invest in each one of their children. The father as the protective covering over the household, shows them Who Father God is by his examples and heart positions toward them and toward others.

Children, in return are to respect their parents, come to them in their fear and need, and attempted to follow their ways through the loving guidance provided them. They should be able to trust parents to teach them properly and provide for them. In most cases, parents prove themselves trustworthy, in the ideal scenario, caring about the health and safety of their children above their own.

Jesus used a trusting child and the way that they approached life as an example of how we are to rest in our Father's love in the Kingdom of God while on this earth. Knowing that after His resurrection, we would gain access to Father God only by our complete and total submission to His Lordship and His completed work, he pointed to children. As humble little children allowed their lives to be enhanced by their parents, we are to look to God. Our child-like humility allows God's Christ-like life to be lived through us. In our submission, we have the privilege of understanding God and His desires for us. We are formed to see and understand Who He is, how capable He is to take care of us, and how much He desires to do so.

*Matthew 11:12 (New International Version) From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it.*

All of us want to be big, wise and powerful. Everything in us, everything the world has taught us, demands that we become the best we can be in our own strength, using our own resources and talents to do so. Our lives are spent gaining the knowledge and ability to succeed in life. That is, however, until the Lord, in His mercy, devises some way for us to understand how limited our resources are without Him. In our brokenness, we surrender to Him to help us.

Not fully understanding that our need was simply used to break our will, and bring us to Jesus, gets us into trouble once we begin to feel better because of His love and mercy. We have a tendency to take on the challenges in Christ in the same way that we functioned before we came to Him, in our own strength. We see who we are to become, and how we are supposed to act and begin to do so as best as we can. In reality, we are playing right into the hands of the enemies of God.

Fighting our own fights keep us in an unwinnable war. Beat up and scarred, we turn back to God only for the strength to fight another losing battle, another day.

Jesus won the right to be given the power to defeat our old lives. We were never called to complete in our own strength what He began spiritually. Our battles are not battles of the flesh, battles we can win with our carnal abilities. They are spiritual battles that can only be won by Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Advancing God's Kingdom is accomplished by allowing ourselves to be changed by Christ living through us. It is advanced by who we become, not by what we do. When we are changed, when we become more Christ-like through His power, we are winning a violent war in the kingdom of darkness and advancing the kingdom of God.

*Hebrews 4:9-10 (New International Version) There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; 10) for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his.*

Just as children grow into maturity, God's perfect life is developed in us in stages. When you observe the life of a child there are many seasons. Sometimes there is great growth. Sometimes it seems that they will remain children forever. Sometimes they astound us with the maturity they exhibit, defying their chronological age.

It is the same with our walk towards God's perfect life of learning to rest in Him. Sometimes it seems as if His work in us will never be completed. Sometimes we are astounded as He reveals all that He has done in us. Other times, the days are endless waiting for Him to move as He forms patience in us.

The final outcome of all of the growth challenges we face is a holy rest. There are certainly rest stops along the way, but when we finally, fully rest in the fact that He chooses to be responsible for our growth, and we submit to the fact that He loves to work in us, we get to that holy place of continual, perfect rest.

Begin today to cultivate the art of trusting God. Determine in your heart to wait on Him for everything. Rest in His love. Ask Him to teach you how to do it. As He teaches you to cease from striving, you will become more and more acquainted with the welcome rest He provides between growth spurts. Embrace them! They are wonderful!

For thought or discussion:

What is the difference between your child-like submission, and your spiritual immaturity

Why is the idea of approaching God as a child foreign to you