



# The Good News

August 13th, 2017

Volume 17, Issue 33

## Are you a “little child”...?

By Michael McCleary

Depending on how this question is asked or meant, it may come across as offensive to some. The natural response may be “No, I’m an adult!” However, the quotations around “little child” should give it away as being a trick question. In the Bible, numerous references are made to children, particularly as John writes his epistles and refers to the Christians as “little children”. However, Jesus also uses this concept when discussing the character of those who hope to enter into the kingdom of God. In **Matt. 19:13-14**, we find that the people had brought little children to Jesus that He might bless them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked those who brought the children, but Jesus said, *“Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”* In today’s article, let’s look closer at what it means to be a “little child”.

**Character of submission, readiness** – In **Mark 10:14-15** (and again in **Luke 18:16-17**) we read about little children being brought to Jesus. After the disciples rebuked those who brought the children, Jesus says *“Assuredly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.”* The term “receive” means “accept”. This involves a willingness and readiness of mind to accept God’s word, and the willingness to submit to it.

**Character of humility** – In **Matt. 18:1-4** a question was brought to Jesus by His disciples regarding who was the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus replied by saying *“Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever*

*humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”* This can be read as a criticism from Jesus to His disciples, as He corrects their incorrect view of the kingdom; the kingdom does not view greatness in the same way that man does. He specifically tells His disciples that they must be “converted” which means to “turn around” or “change”, and if they did not change they would “by no means enter the kingdom of heaven”. We find, then, that our attitude regarding humility can keep us out of the kingdom.

**What does this mean?** These passages and points can be applied to two categories: Christians and non-Christians. As a non-Christian, unless I embrace a submissive and ready mind, there is no way that I will be able to enter the rule of God that culminates in the church. It requires me to change my life and develop a Christ-like character, and without the proper mindset, this will be impossible. It also means that I must embrace God’s view of greatness; it is not those that are strongest or wealthiest, but rather those who humble themselves as servants of God and servants of others that God views as “greatest”. As a Christian, I must realize that if I want to continue in the kingdom of heaven, and one day be counted with the kingdom in heaven, I must continue to keep a submissive and ready mind as well as a humble attitude. Jesus makes it quite plain that without these characteristics we cannot hope to enter the kingdom of heaven, now or later.