



The Country Preacher's Newsletter

"...speaking the truth in love" Ephesians 4:15

Suffer The Little Children

By Randall F. Matheny

Children are endearing to all but the hardest of heart. They are "...an heritage of the Lord" (Psm. 127:3) and grandchildren "...are the crown of old men" (Prov. 17:6). Children are precious to the Lord Jesus too, and His love for them sets the standard for all of His disciples to measure up to. "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mk. 10: 14b).

Children are naturally attracted to the Good Shepherd, Jesus. No one who has ever taught little ones about Jesus will deny that. Their tender little hearts are blank slates for the Lord of Glory to write upon. Adults, including parents, must take great care not to deny any child the opportunity to learn of Jesus. Nothing we do by way of word or example should hinder them in their natural attraction to Him. We must never "forbid them" by leaving Jesus out of our own lives, or by depriving them of Bible study at home and in our assemblies, or of regular contact with other faithful Christians.

We can only "suffer the little children" to come to Him if we

bring them to Him, for they do not have the means to come to Him on their own. When little children are led to Jesus they become the teachers of those who are grown, "...for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a



millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Mat. 18:6).

The price that the church and the world at large must pay when children are deprived of the influence of Christ beginning at an early age can be clearly seen in the rebellion and violence that has grieved so many homes even in our generation. Parents, grand parents and guardians neglect their own souls and the souls of their youthful charges until some tragedy occurs and then, seeing that all else has failed, try to point the erring ones to "church."

Although this sometimes works, even after morals have been corrupted and minds have been warped after the futile foibles of this life, tragedies cannot be reversed, lives

lost cannot be restored, and damage done to minds and bodies due to drug and alcohol abuse, and other sins, often cannot be undone. What is the solution? There are no absolutely foolproof guarantees, because when the human factor is introduced so is the probability of error. However, all of us who love our children can dramatically increase the odds in their favor by applying God's word to our lives first, and then imparting it to our children by instruction and reinforcing it by example (Prov. 22:6; Eph.

Will you suffer your little children to come to Jesus? Are you willing to pay the price if you do not?

little child, he shall not enter therein" (Mk. 10:14b-15). In children can be seen the humility, the eagerness to learn and to please, the desire to grow, and the quickness to forgive that must come to characterize every disciple. Depriving children of the opportunity to be blessed by the Lord Jesus deprives present and future generations of families and churches of a vitally important lesson on spirituality. "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a

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6:4; Col. 3:21). Start developing your spiritual life before you have children. If you already have children, then start now, because you do not have a minute to lose! Learn what the New Testament of Jesus Christ teaches about becoming a Christian and then do it (Heb. 5:8-9; Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:28). If you have difficulty understanding what is required of you, seek out godly counsel (Acts 8:30-31). You should find a listing in your Yellow Pages under "Churches of Christ." If you cannot find a local congregation, write to The Book, PO Box 911, Warren, PA 16365, or send an e-mail message to thebook@countrypreacher.com for a free, self paced, no obligation, non denomination Bible correspondence course.

If you are already a member of the church of Christ, but have not been doing your duty to the Lord, yourself, or your loved ones, then get started. If you have an infant, do not be deluded by thinking that you have plenty of time to get started. You do not. If your congregation has a cradle roll class, take your child to it while you study in an adult class. Whatever your child's age, get started now. Reinforce what is learned in Bible class with family devotionals at home, and find ways to apply the Bible lessons to your life and your child's right away, so that message will not be lost through neglect (Deut. 6:6-7; Acts 2:39). Will you suffer your little children to come to Jesus? Are you willing to pay the price if you do not?

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Tempted And Tried

By Randall F. Matheny

"Tempted and tried, we're oft made to wonder why it should be thus all the day long..." So goes the verse from "Farther Along." No one has ever lived a life free from challenges and difficulties, not even Jesus. Especially Jesus. He "...was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15b). If anyone ever had the right to be depressed, despondent and discouraged, it was Jesus. Yet, the scriptures teach that His outlook was predominantly positive, He was always in control, and He was always aggressive in confronting challenges. Paul mirrored this

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"take control" attitude toward the challenges of life (1 Cor. 9:24-27) and urged all Christians to follow the same example (1 Cor. 11:1). He also wrote, "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13).

We live in an escape oriented society. The past four decades have seen a major swing from a noble ethic of "take control" to an ignoble one of "take a powder" (or, a pill). Mood altering drugs are among the most prescribed. Drug and alcohol abuse as forms

of escape from responsibility continue to devastate individuals, families and society. Mental institutions are jammed with people who have allowed the pressures of life to accumulate to the point of collapse. But, we must remember that in all of this no one has ever been overtaken with any temptation except such as is common to man, and there is always a way of escape.

The only difference between "win" or "lose" is in how the temptation is dealt with. **Take responsibility.** Every choice between right or wrong, good or evil, positive or negative, boils down to a "yes" or a "no." Accept responsibility. We cannot shift the blame for bad decisions (Mat. 21:28-31). **Take counsel.** Seek out the best advice available; the "wisdom that is from above" (Jas. 3:13-18). The wisdom that does not descend from

above (v. 15) will make problems worsen. Secular society has no cure for troubled souls. **Take courage.** There is nothing beyond our ability to cope with if we have teamed up with Christ (Mat. 11:28-30; Phil. 4:13). "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (Jas. 4:7). **Take charge.** Do not wait for someone else to make the first move. Do not couple your action to the actions or inactions of others. Do not rely on others to do for you what you should, and must, do for yourself (2 Cor. 5:10). **Take action.** Procrastination hurts (Mat. 8:21-22; Lk. 9:23). Whether we succeed or fail depends to a large degree upon what we do today. "Behold, now

is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:1-2).

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**“As a man thinketh
in his heart”
(Proverbs 23:7)**

By Don Lemley
Elder, St. Albans, WV

This single verse in Proverbs provides us with a precious tool to help us to understand just who we are. With the exception of God, only we within ourselves can realize the thoughts that make us what we are. We often allow our minds to be filled with unrighteous judgments and unclean thoughts. We criticize others without first examining ourselves as taught in Matthew 7:2-5. If we do not first examine ourselves, repent and place our lives in harmony with God’s will it is SIN and we will give an account before God who does know the thoughts and intents of our hearts. The scriptures promise us that for every temptation that we encounter God will provide a way of escape (I Corinthians 10:13) and this is no exception. Once we have repented, prayed and been forgiven of our sinful thoughts in Philippians 4:8 we have very specific instructions for keeping our minds pure. “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and

if there be any praise, think on these things.” As always God has kept His promise if we will only follow His instruction we can have pure thoughts and happy lives which will prepare us to serve others as Christ taught us by His example.

Once we have prepared ourselves we must then remember our mission as a servant of Christ as found in James 1:23-25. “For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face is a

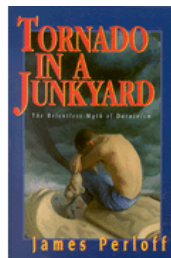
In Philippians 4:8 we have very specific instructions for keeping our minds pure.

glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work: this man shall be blessed in his deeds.” Let us all work to receive the blessings found in Christ.

Via the “Belvedere Beacon”

(Editor’s note: I had the privilege of serving under brother Lemley, as well as the other elders, at the Washington Street congregation for nearly ten years.)

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Suggested Reading:
Tornado in a Junkyard, The Relentless Myth of Darwinism, by James Perloff. Perloff debunks popular myths of Darwinism, such as proof of evolution from the fossil record, mutations as mechanisms for evolution, chance as the mechanism for creating the building blocks of life, and radiometric dating techniques. Perloff has compiled a rich resource from the creationist view point. His views on salvation and conversion, found at the end of the book, are unscriptural.

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