

Prayer, Praise, Testimony, and The Lord's Supper

Scripture:

Mark 10:13-15

Motivation (Why You Need This):

I have two kids, who are now adults.

I was not always an excellent parent, but I was a decent observer of them.

There were a couple things about their kid-like days that are common to most kids...

- They're **honest** (they say what they mean)
- They're **messy** (what you see is what you get)
- They're **persistent** (they ask until you give in)
- They're **dependent** (they need others)

Childlikeness, at some point, turns to adulating.

Honesty, messiness, persistence, and dependence is abandoned for what we've mistakenly labeled **maturity**.

Maturity is the ability to stand on my own two feet.

The problem with our modern view of maturity is this...

Grown-ups outgrow God.

We've substituted honesty for a more "spiritual" way of praying.

We'd rather cover our mess than come clean with Him in prayer.

We want to prove to God that we are all grown up now and only need Him on occasion.

Maybe you don't see a problem with this, but there's a problem with that logic...

We should never outgrow childlike faith and dependence on God.

Information (What You Need to Know):

Let's look together in Mark 10.

Mark 10:13 (NLT) One day some parents brought their children to Jesus so he could touch and bless them. But the disciples scolded the parents for bothering him. **14** When Jesus saw what was happening, he was angry with his disciples. He said to them, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. **15** I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it."

The disciples (probably heavily influenced by a first century view of children) saw children as a bother.

Jesus scolded the disciples and taught them the following lesson –

An individual must approach God through humility, dependence, and without merit.

It's not your maturity, supposed spirituality, or good works that get God's attention.

"The only way to come to God is by taking off any spiritual mask. The real you has to meet the real God. The very things we try to get rid of — our weariness, our distractedness, our messiness — are what get us in the front door! That's how the gospel works. That's how prayer works." – Paul Miller

I'm not sure where the crossover happens (probably gradually), but there is point when we cross from *dependent* to *independent*.

We move from *child-like dependence* to *adult dependence*.

- If I need more money, I get a second job
- If I need a spouse, I put myself in places where I might find one
- If my grades or performance are suffering, I throw myself into my work
- If I'm struggling in my marriage, I read a book or try to change my spouse
- If I'm in a place of transition, I kick it into overdrive.

Is there anything wrong with a second job, working harder, or getting advice?

Absolutely not.

However, is it right that our first reaction is independence (*what do I need to do*) rather than dependence (*what can God do*)?

We enter God's kingdom as children, and we **must remain** as dependent children.

We don't outgrow dependence.

"The difficulty of coming just as we are is that we are messy. And prayer makes it worse. When we slow down to pray, we are immediately confronted with how unspiritual we are, with how difficult it is to concentrate on God. We don't know how bad we are until we try to be good. Nothing exposes our selfishness and spiritual powerlessness like prayer." – Paul Miller

Application (What You Need to Do):

Let's apply this teaching on praying like a child by reading a prayer of David -

Psalm 86:1 (NKJV) Bow down Your ear, O Lord, hear me; For I *am* poor and needy.

Psalm 86:1 (ESV) Incline your ear, O Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and needy.

Psalm 86:1 (NLT) Bend down, O Lord, and hear my prayer; answer me, for I need your help.

I need you to see what David was asking for here...

He was poor and needy, but asked God to bend down to his level – as a father would do to listen to his child.

Don't we believe that when we speak to our Heavenly Father, He will willingly and lovingly stoop down to hear us?

We should never outgrow this.