

LET THE LITTLE CHILDREN COME TO ME

by Belinda Watson

In the spring of 1998, Crystal, a 47-year-old Native American, lay in a hospital bed on the Ute Indian Reservation, having resigned herself to losing her leg the next day. Gangrene was in her leg due to complications from diabetes, and all hope for keeping her leg was gone.

That afternoon, a mission team of children from Tasch Ministries International (TMI) was scheduled to come in and pray for her. Crystal had considered canceling their visit, but something stopped her. The small group of children from the mission team arrived at the designated time, and they were certainly ready to pray! A nine-year-old girl named Faith led the prayer. She laid her small hand on Crystal's leg, and, in a sweet voice, said a simple prayer, "Dear Jesus, please heal her leg." That was all. No long, superspiritual prayer. The prayer and expectancy in the children's eyes and voices touched Crystal's heart as they said good-bye that afternoon.

One year later, my husband, Michael, and I took another team back to the same reservation. We saw Crystal cheerfully cooking and socializing in the kitchen. She ran to us and asked, "Where's Faith, where's Faith? She prayed for me last year when I was in the hospital about to lose my leg, and God healed me!" Wow, God used a 9-year-old girl to heal Crystal's leg!

God is using the children! Isaiah 8:18 says our children are for signs and wonders. No longer are our children satisfied with having their church time filled with games, coloring, and cute songs. They desire to see the signs and wonders of God and to be used by Him. They don't want to just sing songs about Him; they want to sing songs to Him and be in His presence.

Later that same year, another team consisting of children, with an average age of 11, went to Puerto Rico on a mission trip. We were having a children's crusade in a building that was 30 x 50 ft.—about the size of a typical classroom here in the United States. The children were packed in so tightly they were sitting two children per chair. The teenagers stood in the back of the room, pressed against the wall. As we were worshipping, the power of God came down so strong that the teenagers began sliding down the walls under the power of God. Children fell over onto each other, and the adults who couldn't get into the building were slain in the Spirit in the parking lot outside. This is yet another example of how God wants to touch the children!

The children doing most of the ministry on a TMI mission trip are under age 12. They teach, preach, share testimonies, lay hands on the sick, and minister in drama and song. Many opportunities for ministry open up because community leaders are intrigued and impressed that children, rather than adults, minister and perform in the services.

Just as a child led Samson to his greatest victory before the end of Samson's life, it will be the children leading the body of Christ to our greatest victory, our greatest hour, before Jesus returns.

Children have always played an important role in the plan of God. God has used children in many instances. In I Samuel 3, He used Samuel to give messages to Israel. In another passage in I Samuel 16, a teenager, by the name of David, was used to defeat Goliath. In Genesis 37, Joseph was a young man to whom God gave dreams, and in 2 Kings 5, God used a faithful servant girl.

A child's faith is 'so be it.' The Bible speaks of four types of ground: stony, thorny, wayside, and the good ground. Children are the good ground, the fresh, fertile ground. Children don't have all of the hang-ups and the spiritual scars that a lot of adults have. We had a children's crusade at a tent in downtown Cleveland over the summer. There were about 80 - 100 children each night; some had never set foot inside a church their entire lives. On the first night of the crusade, 31 children asked Jesus to be their Lord! The next night, we taught on the power of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. Michael said, "If you want to receive your special prayer language, come down here now." The front area of the tent was quickly packed with children. Approximately 95% of them received their new prayer language, speaking in tongues. Many of the adults from the church that was sponsoring the crusade, were surprised to see how many of the children received so easily. This outcome is typical of children. Show them what the Bible says, and they believe it and do it. A child's faith is 'so be it.'

No longer can we look at children's services as babysitting. God is entrusting us with the spiritual nurturing of the children. What a great challenge and blessing it is to mentor children, to see them discover their own spiritual giftings and grow in the Lord. The Bible says in Matthew 10:42, that, "Whosoever shall give a cup of cold water to a little one will surely receive a reward."

The book of Proverbs is a great guide for training children. The word "proverb" means a rule or a standard, something that is stable. Throughout the book of Proverbs you will hear and read the words "knowledge," "understanding" and "wisdom." The word "knowledge" means the ability to get the facts. "Understanding" is the ability to arrange the facts. "Wisdom" is the ability to use the facts. You are not just a hearer of the Word, which is knowledge, but you are a doer, which is wisdom. If I were to plant a tree in my yard, I would dig a hole, put the tree in it, and fill it back up with good soil. Then, I would put a stake or a pole (or standard) next to that young tree to stabilize it so that it would grow tall and strong. The young tree also would need the stake for stability during storms so that it would not be uprooted and tossed to and fro. You see, the proverb or the standard is something that is stable. Likewise, we as parents are standards. We are the stakes that go into the ground and do not move. The tree represents your children; if that young tree was not connected to you, it might grow crooked. But, that isn't going to happen because it is connected to you. There comes a time when that young tree is no longer little; it has become mature, and the stake is no longer needed. The child's roots have gone down deep into the good, fertile soil. That tree is now a tall, mature tree. Every day that our children are in our care, we are shaping them

into strong, vibrant children of God. We must reach the children and prepare them for the work of the ministry while they are still good ground. John Tasch, the President of TMI says, “It is better to prepare a child’s life than to repair an adult’s.”

The church or home group setting is supplemental to what is taught at home. Children’s ministers might only have access to a child for a few hours each week, and if that is the extent of their spiritual food, it will be very hard for them to grow in the things of the Lord. Teaching must be done in the home. Too many parents look at child-raising as an experiment. It’s similar to when you bake a cake—you put all of the ingredients in and mix it up, put the cake in the oven and walk away thinking, “Oh, I hope it turns out .” Every five minutes you check on it. Forty-five minutes later when you take it out it is just fine—why is that? You have put all of the ingredients in it and followed the cooking directions.

Well, parents think of child raising the same way— hoping they turn out all right. If you put all of the ingredients into your children and follow the directions, don’t worry. They will be all right because Proverbs 22:6 says, “Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart I know some parents think that during the teenage years their children will draw away from the Lord and do spiritually harmful things, but this doesn’t have to happen. The Bible says, train up your children, and when they are old they will not depart.

The word “train” means to mold, to form, to shape, to drill or to make prepared for a test of skill. There are four basic training steps

that we use to teach the children. I do and you watch, I do and you help, you do and I help, and, finally, you do and I watch. All of the steps are necessary; you must fulfill each of the steps or you and the child will become frustrated.

I have met many parents who have missed their children growing up. I have never heard one of them say, "I wish I would have spent more time in the office". Instead, they say, "I wish I would have spent more time with my children as they were growing up." Remember this: the only earthly possession that you can take with you to heaven is your children. You have to put everything into your children before you untie them from that stake. I would rather go fishing with my son today than go fishing for him tomorrow.

Abraham was chosen as a covenant partner because God knew that Abraham would train his children well (see Gen. 18:19). Jesus was never too busy to minister to the children. In Matthew 19:13-15 Jesus said, "Let the little children come unto me..." The disciples tried to get the parents to stop bothering their master with the children, but Jesus told them not to hold them back because the kingdom of heaven is filled with such as these. Jesus knew the importance of reaching out to the children. Do you? Where can you best invest your life over the next 20 years to have the greatest eternal benefit for the kingdom of God? In the children!

God is pouring out His Spirit in such awesome ways upon our sons and daughters in these last days. Yes, our children are going far beyond us in the things of the Spirit. What we need to do as parents and adults is to aim them in the right direction so they will

not miss the target that God has marked for them. In Psalm 127:4 we read, “As arrows in the hand of a mighty man; so are children...” This verse is telling us that our children are like arrows. Note how an arrow always goes beyond you.

Speaking God’s word and praying over your children are keys to assuring that they will hit the target. We need to see them the way God sees them: born again, Spirit-filled, on fire, and serving Him with all their heart, mind and strength.

The Watsons travel and minister full-time with Tasch Ministries International, holding Family Revival Services, Family Camps, Leadership Training and Family Missions Trips.

They believe it is better to prepare a child than repair an adult. The children in their services are challenged to go deeper with God in practical and powerful ways, using high-energy, action packed ideas that will keep them on the edge of their seats. For more information or to contact them: Tasch Ministries International Address: P O Box 1705, Clemmons, NC 27012 Ph (336) 778-9200 Fax (336) 778-8686 Toll Free 1-888-887-2076 Watsonmb@aol.com
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