Become As Little Children (Part 1)

In Matthew 18:1-4, we learn some wonderful truths from Jesus about children. “At the time the disciples came to Jesus saying, ‘Who then is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?’ Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, 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.’”

In this passage, Jesus plainly stated that unless a person is converted and becomes as a little child, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 18:3). If a person fails to be converted to Christ and does not become like a little child, then, in the ultimate sense, he will never find eternal life!

But, what exactly does Jesus mean by stating that we must “become as little children”? Let’s pick it apart one word at a time. We all know what children are (i.e., human offspring of their parents). The word little describes the age of the children under consideration. Jesus wasn’t talking about teenagers or even those on the verge of adolescence. Young people at this stage of life are already very much like adults. Jesus was referring to young children (e.g., toddlers or preschoolers). The word become means to develop or change into.

So, does Jesus want us to be little children? No, He does not desire that. He does expect us, however, to become as little children! In other words, Jesus is not telling us to be little children but to be like them. He wants us to have the positive attributes of a small child. We need to develop the personality attributes (or spiritual qualities) of little children in order to please God and go to heaven one day!

Well, what are these qualities and where are they listed in the Scriptures? In truth, there is no specific passage that details the characteristics of children that we must acquire. Thus, we are left to our skills of observation to a certain degree. Jesus Himself manifested that specific quality. Jesus was like a child, and He expects us to be like one too! Our goal is to first understand what it means to be like little children, and then it is up to us to work diligently to become like them.

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