

AND THEY BROUGHT YOUNG CHILDREN TO HIM, that He should touch them: and His disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, He was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them. —Mark 10:13-16

What were the disciples thinking when they rebuked the parents? Having been with Jesus so long, how had they misread His feelings toward children? Rather than bringing everyone to Jesus, they were hindering some from coming. How could they be so out of step? Did they know Him at all?

How would you feel if you'd been one of those parents? Ashamed? Humiliated? Angry? Would you have concluded that Jesus and His message of salvation was only for adults?

Practically speaking, children could not take up crosses to follow Jesus. They brought nothing to Him, unlike the Rich Young Ruler who would arrive soon after. How much could they learn or understand? Could they express faith in Jesus or do any sort of service for Him? What is the appropriate age for discipleship?

Spiritually speaking, the disciples made a huge blunder by allowing parents and children to think God didn't care for them, had no time for them, or that they were a bother. What a terrible impression to create in troubled minds!

Jesus' disciples had not been representing Him well and so He drew a sharp distinction between Himself and them. He went out of His way to welcome the children. He scooped them into His arms and "suffered" their shrieks and cries, their dirty hands and runny noses. He looked closely at

their faces and smiled at them. He let them know He was pleased with them. He blessed them. What mom or dad wouldn't want to hear "of such is the kingdom of God" about their child?

Some parents suffer greatly from not knowing that Jesus loves their children, especially parents who are considering abortion. They absorb the world's attitudes: *There are too many children. They get in the way. They take up too much time and money. We should remove them while we can ... before they're born!*

Parents need to know how much Jesus cares for them and that they can bring their children—born and unborn—to Him. They can ask Him for wisdom and "daily bread" before and after birth. They can seek His help to avoid abortion.

One way He helps is through His people. Jesus' disciples today adopt His attitude of love for all children. Even though our world treats children as commodities with little value, Christians sacrificially welcome all parents and children to the Master.

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