



## The Other Six | Cherish the Children: Being Present with our Kids | Week 3 | September 23, 2018

**Matthew 18:1-5; Mark 10:13-16; Prov. 22:6**

**Opening:** Children are a blessing. They are also an ever-present challenge to our wisdom, our patience and our endurance. Think back to your childhood and recount a story where you felt cherished. How has that impacted you, formed you, today?

**Discussion:** Pastor Pete Stearns preached the third message of this series. Quotes are from Pete unless otherwise noted.

**Context:** There is no other place in our “field” (week 1) that we feel more responsible, more involved or more challenged than with our children. Like other areas of the “field” we will bring our individual gifts and talents (week 2) in specific ways while Cherishing our children and that practice gives us a chance to express the Father’s love like nothing else.

### **Cherish the Children—Drawn into Jesus Presence**

Pete calls this an “essential spiritual practice”. How is parenting (or being parented) like a spiritual practice? Think of a time when you could identify a spiritual parenting experience—what was going on? Was it a good thing (praise and thanksgiving to God) or a bad thing (discipline and anger, at wits end—“God help us!”)? How was dependence on God spoken? Does a practice come to mind that you could begin with your kids? (e.g. bedtime prayers, Bible stories, pray before a tough exam...Share your experience with the group)

### **Cherish the Children—Recognize our Place Within Christ’s Kingdom (Matt. 18: 1-5)**

Read Matthew 18:1-5. Look back at Matthew 17. “At that time” the disciples asked a very ego driven question. In the context of transfiguration and miracles Jesus answers their question about greatness in the Kingdom in a surprising way. What makes greatness in the kingdom? Why does Jesus use a child rather than the character qualities, or behavior or skills and capability? What does vs.5 add to your attitude about Cherishing Children?

### **Cherish the Children—Our Hearts Become More in Tune with the Purposes of God**

“We live in a culture that teaches children to be adults. Jesus envisions a kingdom that teaches adults to be children.” What is your take on this quote? Where would you draw support from scripture in agreement or disagreement? Does our parenting style attempt to change the things Pete talked about: humility, dependence, trust, forgiveness, optimism, love, joy, awe, wonder, creativity? How do you compare the character our culture values and rewards with this list of qualities? As a parent, what is your goal for your child?



Pete's story and the picture of Shepherd was iconic. Where were you in that picture? Dad was relieving stress and enjoying his son. Shepherd was "free of fear and anxiety and looking only for his parents' love"; he was simply BEING in the presence of Father. Perhaps this is the reason being childlike is "greatness" in the Kingdom; we are able to BE in the presence of Father.

Read Mark 10:13-16. How does this child image inform our life in the kingdom?

### **Cherish the Children—We Invite them into the Family**

Prov. 22:6. What is your reading of this verse? How does it affect your parenting goals? Take a minute to consider and discuss each phrase: "raise up a child", we've been calling that cherishing, "in the way he should go", how many ways are there?

This is followed by the promise: "and when he is old he will not depart from it".

Talk about how you personalize "the way HE should go". Your sons and daughters are all different, is there a different invitation for each one? What are the differences?

### **Practice of the Week: Reflection on Scripture**

Take Prov. 22:6 with you this week. For each child (or grandchild) or if neither apply for yourself, and consider "his way". Attributes of his way may be nature, music, art, interaction, sports, projects.....there are many "ways" in life. Which attribute is most important to the person you are considering? How can you bring THE WAY into that attribute of his way. Then consider the gifts and talents of that same person. How should "he" be honing and applying his gifts for his way in the world. As Pete says "we invite them into the Family"—the Family of God. Work on your invitations, personalize them for each child, hone them to intentional encouragement and pray for God's help.

### **Family Formation: Report Out**

Ask each child at dinner to report something they really like about being your kid. Then do the same thing for something they wished was different. **Hear them** and then talk about why you do things in terms they will understand.

### **Additional Resources**

For further discussion and resources:

<https://christianmomthoughts.com/5-things-christian-parents-must-do-to-raise-godly-children-in-a-secular-world/>

We'd love to hear from you!

If you have thoughts questions, comments, ideas on how to make these study guides more meaningful for you and your group, please let us know.

We also enjoy hearing how God is using these scriptures and study guides in your lives.

Roger Peer: [roger.peer@comcast.net](mailto:roger.peer@comcast.net) \* Eric Haskins: [ehaskins@christchurch.us](mailto:ehaskins@christchurch.us)