

Luke 18:15-17

¹⁵Now people were even bringing their babies to Jesus for Him to place His hands on them. And when the disciples saw this, they rebuked those who brought them.

¹⁶But Jesus called the children to Him and said, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them! For the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

¹⁷Truly I tell you, anyone who does not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”

Berean Study Bible

1

Kissing babies. Luke 18:15-17

The spiritual life of children is confused. 18:15

Sometimes children might be in the way. 15 “the disciples rebuked”

Sometimes children are the way. 17 “like a little child”

The spiritual life of children is confirmed. 18:16

The Kingdom welcomes children. 16 “do not hinder them”

The Kingdom belongs to children. 16 “belongs to such”

The spiritual life of children is commended. 18:17

Everyone needs to receive the Kingdom. 17a “receive the kingdom”

Everyone needs to receive like a child. 17b “like a little child”

2

Power of parenting. Luke 18:15-17

The power of authenticity. 18:15

Authentic presence. 15 “to Jesus”

Authentic power. 15 “place His hands on them”

The power of proximity. 18:16

Come close. Come to your Person. 16a “come to Me”

Come close. Come to your possession. 16b “belongs to such as these”

The power of simplicity. 18:17

Receive the Kingdom with the simplicity of a child. 17 “receive the Kingdom”

Enter the Kingdom with the simplicity of a child. 17 “enter it”

What makes me acceptable? Luke 18:15-17

God accepts me, independent of human opinion. 18:15

Some people are for me. 15a “bringing their babies to Jesus”

Some people are against me. 15b “rebuked those who brought them”

God accepts me, based on Divine declaration. 18:16

God’s heart is for me to come. 16a “Let the little children come to Me”

God helps me to come. 16b “do not hinder them”

God has the best for me when I come. 16c “the kingdom of God belongs to such”

God accepts me, based on Kingdom principles. 18:17

God’s Kingdom is open. 17a “anyone who does not receive”

God’s Kingdom is to be entered. 17b “will never enter”

I am being made stronger. Luke 18:15-17

I am made stronger by physical touch. 18:15

My touch must be spiritual. 15 “to Jesus for Him”

My touch must be appropriate. 15 “place His hands on them”

I am made stronger by personal presence. 18:16

I am a contributor. 16 “called the children to Him... come to Me”

I am not a controller. 16 “and do not hinder them”

I am made stronger by practical steps. 18:17

I know my blessings. 17 “receive the kingdom”

I use my blessings. 17 “enter it”

Children of the Kingdom. Luke 18:15-17

Children are special. 18:15

We have a ministry to children. 15 “bringing their babies to Jesus”

Jesus has a blessing for children. 15 “to place His hands on them”

Children are significant. 18:16

Be a helper. 16 "Jesus called the children to Him"

Not a hindrance. 16 "do not hinder them"

These are heirs. 16 "belongs to such as these"

Children are a symbol. 18:17

Look, and see God's relationship with people. 17 "receive the kingdom of God"

Live, and be in God's relationship with me. 17 "enter it"

6

Values-driven living. Luke 18:15-17

Clash of values. 18:15

Some people believe this about God. 15 "bringing their babies to Jesus"

Some people believe that about God. 15 "rebuked those who brought them"

Clarification of values. 18:16

God's values and taught by Jesus. 16 "Let the little children come to Me"

God's values need to be received. 16 "the kingdom of God belongs to such"

Commitment to values. 18:17

Accept God's values. 17 "receive the Kingdom"

Practice Godly values. 17 "enter it"

7

Luke 18:15-17

Perceptions. 18:15

Perspective. 18:16

Priority. 18:17

8

Come and get it. Luke 18:15-17

Come and receive God's blessing. 18:15 "place His hands on them"

Blessing is something I can receive.

Blessing is something I can pass on.

Come and receive God's belonging. 18:16 "God belongs to such as these"

I belong by being human.
I un-belong by choosing sin.
I belong again by being born again.

Come and receive God's Kingdom. 18:17

Receive the Kingdom like a child. 17 "receive the Kingdom"

Enter the Kingdom like royalty. 17 "enter it"

Other possible titles

If a child dies, does she/he go to Heaven?
Are infants automatically saved?
When does 'original sin' kick in?
Do children of unsaved parents go to Heaven?
Is my unborn child with Jesus?
Where is my baby?
Those who are pushed aside.
When are children old enough to decide for themselves?
Let the children come.
Release your inner child.
You can come into the Kingdom.
Children are people, too.
Kids hold the keys to God's Kingdom.
God the Father is a parent, too.
Remember when you were a child.
Why children can't come to Jesus.
The future is them, not us.
The good, the bad, and the snuggly (thanks to Jonathan Meyer)

Quotes and illustrations

Dr. Jim Slack, head of demographics for the Southern Baptist Foreign Missionary Society, shared the results of a Gallup Survey: nineteen out of twenty people who became Christians did so before the age of twenty-five. At age twenty-five, one in 10,000 will become believers; at thirty-five, one in 50,000; at forty-five, one in 200,000; at fifty-five, one in 300,000; at seventy-five, one in 700,000.

So why is it so difficult to bring people over 25 to faith? It is not because they are smarter; it is because they have built up a greater resistance. By that stage in life, we have invested so much in our sinful justifications for our lifestyles that we cannot bear to admit that we have been wrong for all these years. The older we get, the harder it is to change direction!

Make me, O Lord, a child again,
So tender, frail, and small,
In self possessing nothing, and
In Thee possessing all.

O Saviour, make me small once more,
That downward I may grow,
And in this heart of mine restore
The faith of long ago.

With Thee may I be crucified—
No longer I that lives—
O Saviour, crush my sinful pride
By grace which pardon gives.

Make me, O Lord, a child again,
Obedient to Thy call,
In self possessing nothing, and
In Thee possessing all.

(With thanks to Bruce Goettsche)

Commentary

The babies in verse 15 is βρέφος [Strong's 1025] meaning 'baby, infant, new-born, babe'.

The little children in verse 17 is παιδίον [Strong's 3813] meaning 'little child, young child, a child in training', perhaps a toddler up to early school age. This is a diminutive form of παῖς meaning 'child, boy, girl, youth'.

Children can be 'naughty', but are they 'sinful'?

Yes, children are sinful, because everyone is sinful.

"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)

When did children's sinful state begin?

"Surely I was sinful at birth; sinful from the time my mother conceived me" (Psalm 51:5).

"Even from birth the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward, spreading lies" (Psalm 58:3).

Therefore, I was a sinner when I was born. I was a sinner before I was born.

How did children's sinful state begin?

"Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned" (Romans 5:12).

All those who were born sinners, must be born again, to be born saints.

“Jesus replied, “Truly, truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.” (John 3:3)

“Do not be amazed that I said, ‘You must be born again.’” (John 3:7)

“To all who did receive Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God; children born not of natural descent... but born of God” (John 1:12–13).

David and Bathsheba’s child

The child born of adultery and murder. “Now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me.” 2 Samuel 12:23.

The baby, and David had a shared destiny. David is among the ‘heroes of Faith’ (Hebrews 11) whose home is in Heaven. Jesus said, “Today you will be with Me...” (Lk.23:43). To be absent from the body is to be at home with the Lord (2 Cor.5:8).

Parallel passages

Matthew 19:13-15	Mark 10:13-16	Luke 18:15-17
¹³Then the little children were brought to Jesus for Him to place His hands on them and pray for them. And the disciples rebuked those who brought them. ¹⁴But Jesus said, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them! For the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these.” ¹⁵And after He had placed His hands on them, He went on from there.	¹³Now people were bringing the little children to Jesus for Him to place His hands on them, and the disciples rebuked those who brought them. ¹⁴But when Jesus saw this, He was indignant and told them, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these. ¹⁵Truly I tell you, anyone who does not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” ¹⁶And He took the children in His arms, placed His hands on them, and blessed them.	¹⁵Now people were even bringing their babies to Jesus for Him to place His hands on them. And when the disciples saw this, they rebuked those who brought them. ¹⁶But Jesus called the children to Him and said, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these. ¹⁷Truly I tell you, anyone who does not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”

Music and songs

Songs about God as a parent

Abba Father, (Michael Card)
Abba Father, SiS 305
Father, Father of all things, SiS 275
Father God I wonder... I will sing Your praises, Ot 13

Songs about church as a family

Family of God (Bill Gaither)
Friends, all in the family of God (Petra)
We are the Lord's own family

Songs about parents / children

Children are a treasure from the Lord
Just like a child, FE 107
The warrior is a child (Twila Paris)
When mothers of 'salem, H

Songs about the Kingdom

Hear the call of the Kingdom, (Getty)
Let Your Kingdom come, Ot 12
Live for the Kingdom, Ot 15
This Kingdom, Ot 47

Songs about the King

All hail King Jesus, 237 / SiS 219
I'm forgiven... Amazing love... You are my King, Ot 8
King of Kings and Lord of Lords, SiS 409
Servant King, 674
Shepherd King, 726
The King is coming, Ot 40
The King of Love my Shepherd is, 86
The splendour of the King, How great is our God, 1020

Thought starters for personal reflection or group discussion

1. What is your earliest childhood memory, and how old were you at that time?
2. Young children are invited into the Kingdom of God. How can they enter the Kingdom without understanding theological concepts?

3. Why would the disciples not want children near Jesus? Suggest some way in which believers today keep people away from Jesus? What is the solution?
 4. Look at v17. List the ways in which a small child receives the Kingdom of God. Are there any differences between how an adult, and how a child receives the Kingdom?
 5. What descriptions are given to believers in John 13:33-34, and 1 John 4:4? What similarities do you find between the 'little children' in these verses, and the children in Luke 18:16-17?
 6. What is the bad news in v17? Explain what is meant by "receive" and "enter".
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