

ARM Prison Outreach International

"Ministers' Minute"

Volume III Number 5

Editor's Note: This "MM" is the 29th email sermon in a series we are sending as an encouragement to preachers and Christian workers around the world. This message develops the idea that children are a precious stewardship. This message was recently shared by Gary Kins, a friend and veteran proclaimer of the Word. (Thanks, Gary!) I'm sending this message out a little early due to my traveling schedule and the fact this message would serve well as a Mother's Day message. It is my prayer that this message will encourage you and those you teach. Use it as a devotional, edit it, share it, use it or components of it! May God bless your labors! -- Rod Farthing, Development Director

The Value of Children - Matthew 18:1-10

Jesus used a child to teach us several valuable lessons. NASB Matthew 18:1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" 2 And He called a child to Himself and set him before them,

Innocent children are already in the Kingdom of God. NASB 18:3 and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Childlike humility is a source of greatness. NASB 18:4 "Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven

Children have a special place in God's heart. NASB 18:5 "And whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me; 6 but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

Adults are expected to be responsible examples for children. NASB 18: 6 but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea. 7 "Woe to the world because of *its* stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; but woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes!...

Adults need to examine their lifestyle. NASB 18:8 "If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or lame, than to have two hands or two feet and be cast into the eternal fire. 9 "If your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than to have two eyes and be cast into the fiery hell. 10 "See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven continually see the face of My Father who is in heaven.

There are several reasons that we need to set the proper example to children.

I. God Considers Children Very Valuable Matthew 18:10 "See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven continually see the face of My Father who is in heaven.

II. God Gives Us The Gift of Children NASB Psalm 127:3 Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, The fruit of the womb is a reward. 4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the

children of one's youth. 5 How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them; They will not be ashamed When they speak with their enemies in the gate.

III. God Made Us With A Special Love For Children KJV 2 Timothy 3:1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 Without **natural affection**, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

KJV Romans 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without **natural affection**, implacable, unmerciful: 32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

IV. Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, Taught and Lived the Importance of Being a Godly Model for Children NASB Matthew 19:13 Then *some* children were brought to Him so that He might lay His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. 14 But Jesus said, "Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." 15 After laying His hands on them, He departed from there.

Mark 10:13 And they were bringing children to Him so that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked them. 14 But when Jesus saw this, He was indignant and said to them, "Permit the children to come to Me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 15 "Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it *at all*." 16 And He took them in His arms and *began* blessing them, laying His hands on them.

V. God Commanded His People to Teach Children His Ways NASB Deuteronomy 6:1 "Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the LORD your God has commanded *me* to teach you, that you might do *them* in the land where you are going over to possess it, 2 so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. 3 "O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do *it*, that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, *in* a land flowing with milk and honey. 4 "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! 5 "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. 8 "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. 9 "You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

VI. God Recorded Examples of Godly People to Emulate in Regard to Being Responsible to Children.

Hagar - Genesis 21:14-21

Amram & Jochabed - Exodus 2:1-10; Exodus 26:59

Hannah & Elkanah - 1 Samuel 1:15-28

Zibeah of Beersheba - 2 Kings 12:1,2

Jehodan - 2 Chronicles 24:1,2

Mary & Joseph - Matthew 1, 2; Luke 2

Eunice and Lois - 2 Timothy 1:5

Saul (Paul) of Tarsus - Titus 1:4

Conclusion:

1. History makes us debtors to children.
2. Children are miniature reproductions of adults.
3. God gives His people a special responsibility to children.

This Mother's Day I want individuals in this congregation assembled today to make a commitment to all the children that are within our sphere of influence.

Our desire should be to dedicate ourselves to the Lord and to the Lord's service in this matter of being Christian examples to all people and especially children.

Listen as I read and give a hearty Amen if you agree:

1. I believe that Jesus is the Saviour of the world and the Son of the Living God. and your personal Savior?
2. I commit myself to living in such a way that no one can use my life as an excuse not to be a Christian.
3. I promise to work hard at truly loving my spouse and others around me so children will grow up seeing how Christian people should treat each other.
4. I purpose in my heart to the best of my ability to raise my children, help nurture my grandchildren ... influence and charge all children with the knowledge and the admonition of the Lord.
5. I pledge to live my life in such a way that children will see the teachings of the Lord in practice.
6. I promise to dedicate myself to being a help to every parent as they teach and model Jesus Christ to their children by setting a Christ-like example before them in all that I do.

You have vowed before the Lord and His people that you will dedicate yourselves to the high and holy task of raising the children in your charge and as much as in you is to influence all children everywhere to know the love and teachings of Jesus Christ.

May the Lord Jesus Christ richly bless you and give you His strength as you dedicate yourself to this task.