

9 children

Look at how many times Jesus equates children with the Kingdom of God. **Childlike segues into Kingdom living.** We're not talking about childish. Childish is about immaturity. Childlike means having the innocence, trust, and candor of a child. Childlike reflects the heart of God. God's nature is innocent, trusting and forthright. God is honest and straightforward in His attitude and His words. Childish means being marked by a lack of maturity. God is never childish, yet He is patient with childish behavior and attitudes even with adults. We all have different areas in our lives where we seem to have more maturity than in others. As adults, childish often manifests in unconscious motives and behaviors rooted in unresolved childhood issues. This results in a lack of maturity in adulthood. Until we resolve these childhood issues, childish blocks Kingdom living.

I think of all the times in my life where childhood issues have blocked my Kingdom living, of living out the Kingdom of God in my heart. The year I felt God calling me to start JJBS I got stuck in despair. I was feeling really inadequate to do the study. I am not a good example. Look at all my mistakes! I was stuck in the despair of my own inadequacy. This emotional trap prevented me from moving forward. Finally, I started pressing into the despair and discerning why I was in this stuck place. I reached out and got help. Have you ever been emotionally trapped like this? Keep pressing through. The sun still shines behind the clouds. Get help! Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to give you wisdom on the direction you need to take. Don't stay stuck! With the help of a counselor, the Holy Spirit led me back to my childhood where as a 6-year-old child I was curled up on the ground in fetal position wracked with the pain of colitis. God showed me how I 'stomached' my stress beginning in childhood. Pain is the doorway to healing. This emotional pain from my childhood was manifesting as an adult. My own childish attitude was blocking my Kingdom living. As I let go, let Jesus heal me, freedom came. What are the issues in your life where you get stuck? Jesus wants you healed and set free. He doesn't want your childish attitude to keep you stuck. He wants you to have a childlike faith and reach out so that you can live in freedom and kingdom living. The heart of Jesus is the heart of a child. Childlike segues into Kingdom living.

We as children take on the sins of our parents and don't even realize what we're doing. When the devil's accusations settle in the soul of a child, childlike wonder is lost. Jesus came to restore childlike wonder and faith. Turn with me to Isaiah

54:17 NASB: **"No weapon that is formed against you will prosper; And every tongue that accuses you in judgment you will condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, And their vindication is from Me," declares the LORD.**" Jesus set you free from all condemnation. You just need to walk it out. So often we only needed to hear as children, "It wasn't your fault." There were times I used anger and guilt to control my children. Folly may be bound in the heart of a child, but loving guidance not guilt brings freedom from folly and maturing. In Proverbs 22:15 the kind of correcting or discipline that drives folly from a child is the Hebrew term: Musar, a correction that results in education. Often it is oral and not corporate discipline. When I am patient with myself, I am patient with others. I had to realize my anger and impatience towards my children and others was only a reflection of anger and impatience within myself rooted in fear. I was usually afraid that the worst was going to happen, whatever the 'worst' is. As I was set free from control, fear and guilt so were my children. Whatever freedom and healing I received I passed on to them. The greatest gift you can give your children is what you do with yourself – your own repentance. What motivates us unconsciously is much more powerful than when we are aware. Once we are conscious, it starts to lose its power.

We need to be kind and patient with ourselves first. I am telling you right now, when you were little and violated or abused, it wasn't your fault. Let Jesus heal you so you can see your child with the heart of Jesus. I used to be so hard on myself. I used to be so hard on my children. As I healed, so did my children. Let's look at Luke 18:16-17 in your Bible or Just Jesus on page 236. Jesus loves the little children! He said, **"Allow the little children to come to me, and don't hinder them, for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Most certainly, I tell you, whoever doesn't receive the Kingdom of God like a little child, he will in no way enter into it."** I had to let God heal me and replace my childish immaturity with childlike joy and wonder. This is why understanding a child's nature is so important. It is vital to living the Kingdom of God. Childlike segues into Kingdom living. This is how I learned to raise my children with God's love. Today they are beautiful, unique, phenomenal adults. We don't always agree, but understand. There's a loving respecting relationship with each one of them in different ways. Where do you need healing so you can mature? So you can connect with yourself and others?

Let's look at Matt 18:3-6 NLT: **Then he said, "I tell you the truth, unless you turn from your sins and become like little children, you will**

never get into the Kingdom of Heaven. So anyone who becomes as humble as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. "And anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf is welcoming me. But if you cause one of these little ones who trusts in me to fall into sin, it would be better for you to have a large millstone tied around your neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea." Children represent vulnerability and innocence the world regards as weak. The world respects strong and invincible, not defenseless or weakness. Yet God calls us to love and respect the most vulnerable. Children are needy! He calls us to love and give to those who can't give back. This is His heart. Childlike segues into Kingdom living. Kingdom living is living out the Kingdom of heaven that is within you. It is living out God's nature within you. This happens when you are born again. You're taking on the nature of Jesus.

Turn to John 3:3-8 NLT: *Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God." "What do you mean?" exclaimed Nicodemus. "How can an old man go back into his mother's womb and be born again?" Jesus replied, "I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. So don't be surprised when I say, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can't tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can't explain how people are born of the Spirit."* This is what happened last time at healing chapter. Some of you asked Jesus into your heart. You were born again. The wind of Holy Spirit was blowing through us. We never know where or when He's coming. The kingdom of God embraces all created intelligence, both in heaven and earth that willingly submit to the Lord and are in fellowship with Him. When you are born again you are submitting to the Lordship and nature of Jesus. You are taking on the nature of God. This is Kingdom of God living. This is what Jesus is talking about, **your childlike nature reproduces the Kingdom of God within you. Like begets like.** Apples produce apples, spirit produces spirit, not a list of do's and don'ts. When you have the nature of God within you, these virtues are going to flow right out of you. All you need to do is abide in the nature of God!

Turn to 1 Cor 1:11 NIV: **"Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ."** This is what we're doing. We're born again. We are following the

example of Jesus. Follow Jesus' example. He kept boundaries of love and respect. Love and respect starts at the top, parents! When we live our lives with love and respect our children will do likewise. We need to listen to their thoughts and actions so we can guide them according to their gifts. Are you listening with your heart? Your children are watching. Good habits are better caught than taught. We need to encourage our children when we feel like it and when we don't. **Sometimes the most inconvenient times are the most anointed ones.** I can't tell you how many times I've dropped everything to meet one of my children or stayed up until 2 or 3 in the morning to listen to their issues and needs. An ounce of example is worth a pound of advice. Let me tell you, their favorite learning moments have been the stories that I've shared about my life. They loved hearing about how I got into trouble and how I got out of it. How many of you like when I share about my troubles? ☺ We're all likin' it! Because it's really not the trouble that counts but the truth that sets me free from my trouble that counts. This is what we really love. "If she can do it, so can I."

Turn to Mark 9:37: *"Whoever receives one such little child in my name, receives me, and whoever receives me, doesn't receive me, but him who sent me."* There is a little bit of Jesus in each one of us. We need to see Jesus in our children, in ourselves, in each other. Don't let the devil rob you of childlike wonder. Being childlike keeps the wonder of life alive in your spirit. **Life's disappointments do not change God's nature.** Let His nature, let Kingdom living bring you into healing and freedom. **Childlike segues into Kingdom living.** Live out God's nature in your heart! Let's pray.

"Lord Jesus, let my sisters see that being vulnerable as a child is brave and courageous. It is heart connection that brings us close to each other. Connect my sisters' hearts to You, to themselves, their children and loved ones. Bless each one of my sisters with childlike wonder. Thank You for freedom! In Your holy and wonderful name, Amen."