



Like a Little Child

David C. McCasland



*Unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. **Matthew 18:3***

Read: **Matthew 18:1–5; 19:13–14**

Bible in a Year: **Exodus 21–22; Matthew 19**

One evening many years ago, after saying a goodnight prayer with our two-year-old daughter, my wife was surprised by a question. “Mommy, where is Jesus?”

Luann replied, “Jesus is in heaven and He’s everywhere, right here with us. And He can be in your heart if you ask Him to come in.”

“I want Jesus to be in my heart.”

“One of these days you can ask Him.”

“I want to ask Him to be in my heart *now*.”

So our little girl said, “Jesus, please come into my heart and be with me.” And that started her faith journey with Him.

When Jesus’s disciples asked Him who was the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, He called a little child to come and join them (Matthew 18:1–2). “Unless you change and become like little children,” Jesus said, “you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. . . . And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me” (vv. 3–5).

Through the eyes of Jesus we can see a trusting child as our example of faith. And we are told to welcome all who open their hearts to Him. “Let the little children come to me,” Jesus said, “and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (19:14).

Lord Jesus, thank You for calling us to follow You with the confident faith of a child.

Help the children in your life come to know Jesus. Introduce them to Our Daily Bread for Kids at ourdailybreadforkids.org.

Our faith in Jesus is to be like that of a trusting child.

Able and Available



Xochitl Dixon

*God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. **Psalm 46:1***

Read: **Psalm 46**

Bible in a Year: **Exodus 23–24; Matthew 20:1–16**

My husband was at work when I received news about my mom's cancer diagnosis. I left him a message and reached out to friends and family. None were available. Covering my face with trembling hands, I sobbed. "Help me, Lord." A resulting assurance that God was with me comforted me through those moments when I felt utterly alone.

I thanked the Lord when my husband came home and support from friends and family trickled in. Still, the calming awareness of God's presence I sensed in those first few hours of lonely grieving affirmed that God is readily and faithfully available wherever and whenever I need help.

In Psalm 46, the psalmist proclaims God is our sanctuary, strength, and steadfast supporter (v. 1). When it feels as if we're surrounded by chaos or everything we thought was stable crashes down around us, we don't have to fear (vv. 2–3). God doesn't falter (vv. 4–7). His power is evident and effective (vv. 8–9). Our eternal Sustainer gives us confidence in His unchanging character (v. 10). The Lord, our secure stronghold, remains with us forever (v. 11).

God created His followers to prayerfully support and encourage one another. But He also affirms He is always able and available. When we call on God, we can trust Him to keep His promises to provide for us. He will comfort us through His people as well as through His personal presence.

Lord, thank You for assuring us You're always accessible because You're always with us.

God is always able and available to help us.

White as Snow



Keila Ochoa

Though yours sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. [Isaiah 1:18](#)

Read: [Isaiah 1:16–20](#)

Bible in a Year: [Exodus 25–26](#); [Matthew 20:17–34](#)

Last December, my family and I went to the mountains. We had lived in a tropical climate all our lives, so it was the first time we could see snow in all its magnificence. As we contemplated the white mantle covering the fields, my husband quoted Isaiah, “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow” (Isaiah 1:18).

After asking about the meaning of scarlet, our three-year-old daughter asked, “Is the color red bad?” She knows sins are things God dislikes, but this verse is not talking about colors. The prophet was describing the bright red dye obtained from the eggs of a small insect. Clothes would be double-dyed in this bright red so the color became fixed. Neither rain nor washing would remove it. Sin is like that. No human effort can take it away. It’s rooted in the heart.

Only God can cleanse a heart from sin. And as we looked at the mountains, we admired the pure whiteness that scrubbing and bleaching a piece of cloth dyed in scarlet red can’t achieve. When we follow Peter’s teaching, “Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out” (Acts 3:19), God forgives us and gives us a new life. Only through Jesus’s sacrifice can we receive what no one else can give—a pure heart. What a wonderful gift!

Father, thank You for forgiving our sins and wiping them clean.

When God forgives, He purifies us too.

National Treasure



Mart DeHaan

Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!

Matthew 21:9

Read: Matthew 21:12–16

Bible in a Year: Exodus 27–28; Matthew 21:1–22

When an advertiser altered a photo of Michelangelo's famous marble sculpture of the biblical hero David, Italy's government and gallery officials objected. Picturing David with a military rifle slung over his shoulder (instead of his slingshot) would be a violation—"like taking a hammer to it or worse," a cultural official said.

In first-century Jerusalem, David was remembered as the shepherd-songwriter and soldier-king of Israel's fondest memories and greatest hopes. Prophets foretold that David's descendant would finally defeat the enemies of Israel. So, centuries later, when crowds welcomed Jesus as *the Son of David* (Matthew 21:6–9), they were expecting Him to lead the revolt that would overthrow their Roman occupiers. Instead Jesus knocked over the tables of temple money-changers to restore His Father's house as a house of prayer for all nations. Israel's leaders were furious. This wasn't the kind of Messiah and *Son of David* they were looking for. So without realizing what they were doing, they called for Roman executioners to take a hammer to the hands and feet of the true glory of Israel.

Instead of stopping them, Jesus let Himself be lifted up on a cross of shame—defaced and disgraced. Only by resurrection would it be known that the true Son of David had defeated His enemies with love and enlisted the children of all nations to spread the word.

Father in heaven, it's hard to admit. But it's true. We get so confused. We try to protect the images we love more than the love You consider priceless.

Jesus shows that God is always better than our expectations.

Stepping Into Opportunity

Adam Holz



*Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. **Colossians 4:5***

Read: **Colossians 4:2–6**

Bible in a Year: **Exodus 29–30; Matthew 21:23–46**

Like lots of people, I struggle to get enough exercise. So I recently got something to motivate myself to move: a pedometer that counts steps. It's a simple thing. But it's amazing how much difference this gadget makes in my motivation. Instead of grumbling when I have to get off the couch, I see it as an opportunity to get a few more steps. Mundane tasks, like getting one of my kids a cup of water, become opportunities that help me work toward a larger goal. In that sense, my pedometer has changed my perspective *and* my motivation. Now I look to get extra steps in whenever possible.

I wonder if our Christian life isn't a bit like that. There are opportunities to love and serve and interact with people every day, as Paul exhorts in Colossians 4:5. But am I always aware of those moments? Am I paying attention to opportunities to be an encourager in seemingly mundane interactions? God is at work in the lives of every person I relate to, from my family and coworkers to a clerk at the grocery store. Each interaction offers a chance for me to pay attention to what God might be doing—even if it's something as seemingly “small” as kindly asking a server at a restaurant how she's doing.

Who knows how God might work in those moments when we're alert to the opportunities He sends our way.

Lord, there are so many opportunities to love, listen, and serve those around us each day. Please help us to become people who notice the needs of others.

Take every opportunity to serve someone.
