

CHILDREN ARE WET CEMENT



Children Are Wet Cement is a book written by Anne Ortlund (1981). I have never read this book but when I heard its title many years ago it captivated my thinking. Just recently I read for the first time a brief description of its contents. Ortlund takes readers through each age of childhood and offers specific instructions about practicing verbal affirmations to children so that they grow up to be secure and loving adults. (sounds like a good read)

I have pondered that title many times and thought how Jesus did not choose followers from the religious elite in Jerusalem to lead his movement for they were already hardened in their beliefs and traditions (Matthew 15:6, Mark 2:5). Instead, Jesus chose young men who were open to new ideas. They were impressionable, like wet cement, and were willing to quickly leave everything to follow Him.

My greatest joy in ministry is not just to lead someone to Christ but to pour the truths of the kingdom of God into new believers. They are excited and have a great appetite to learn about God and His Word. Group discipleship is very effective, but I especially enjoy one to one ministry as it is more personal and facilitates greater honesty, accountability and friendship.

It is often a greater challenge to teach those who have been in the faith a longer time. If their beliefs are all scripturally sound no problem. However, if they are misguided in some of their ideas or ways, it is much like having to jackhammer hardened cement, which is time consuming and often quite jarring!

Jesus had a little over three years to train disciples before he left, so he spent most of his time with those who were soft-hearted and open minded. Jesus is still calling people today to be his disciples, but they must become like little children.

At that time the disciples came to Jesus saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and **become as little children**, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, **whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven**. Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives me. Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a **millstone (3000 lb.)** were hung around his neck and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. - Matthew 18:1-6 NKJV

We should note that there is a difference between being 'childish' and childlike. Although both have qualities related to being a child such as immaturity, the term childish has more unpleasant qualities such as fretful impatience and undeveloped taste and mentality which are appropriate to children but not to adults. However, being childlike suggests more attractive and admirable qualities of childhood such as innocence, straightforwardness and trust.

- Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary 1973

CHILDREN:

- * **Trusting**.....with simple faith in parents for provision, protection and guidance unlike adults, who tend to be more skeptical and unbelieving.
- * **Teachable**.....as they ask lots of questions and eager to learn, explore and have a sense of wonder about many things. A child from the age of 4 to 5 learns more than a college student does during 4 years.
- * **Transparent**.....wears no masks, is innocent and genuine.
- * **Humble**.....loves people as people and is not prejudiced. Is carefree and quick to forgive. Enjoys each new day and loves life.

Children are like wet cement. Whatever falls on them makes an impression. - Dr. Haim Ginott

Although God desires his followers to grow up into mature sons and daughters, he never wants us to lose those wonderful childlike qualities. He also wants us to treat all children with special loving care, just as Jesus did. (Note how his disciples acted more childish than childlike)

People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, 'Let the **little children** come to me, and do not hinder them, for **the kingdom of God belongs to such as these**. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it. **And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.** - Mark 10:13-16

Two of my favorite Christian songs relate to being a child of God. Good time to listen to them on You Tube:

- * **Who You Say I Am** - Hillsong Worship
- * **No Longer a Slave to Sin** - Bethel Music

I am a child of God!

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