

Little Children

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I have a short title today, it's:

Little Children

Little children had a very special place in Christ's heart. Christ had such tremendous love and compassion. The disciples tried to chase the children away and Christ said,

"Let the little children come to me and forbid them not because of such is the Kingdom of heaven".

As you might imagine, sometimes when I have a message to give, I spend a little time at night lying awake and going over some of the scriptures and last night I was thinking of this particular scripture—Matthew 19:14—"Let the little children come to me and forbid them not for such is ["is", is in the present tense] the kingdom of heaven." It indicates here that those who inhabit the Kingdom of heaven have the characteristics of lovable, unassuming little children, loving and compassionate. I was thinking that Jesus Christ came out of the heavenly environment and came down here to our society, which was much different. I think we don't really comprehend what Christ gave up and what He went through—His sacrifice for us. There are so many things. The analogy came to my mind of Christ leaving heaven and coming down here—would that be like me moving to Haiti or some terrible place like Afghanistan?

Talking about analogies, there are some amazing analogies in the Bible—types and anti-types. God uses these as a teaching tool and a very effective one it is. There are many in the Bible. There's the analogy of Abraham sacrificing his only son Isaac. That pictures God the Father sacrificing His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. I remember early in the church, I heard about this in a sermon and there were a lot more details in the analogy, like the three-day journey. I thought, that's really amazing; here's this analogy that God uses for teaching.

Then there's the analogy of God choosing Israel and bringing Israel out of Egypt and taking them to the Promised Land. This is an analogy of the people that God has pulled out of this world now and is heading us toward the Promised Land—the millennium—as we heard here in the sermon at the Feast, like the first Exodus and the second Exodus.

Jesus Christ used a lot of analogies comparing things with the Kingdom of God which is to come. I think one of the most profound analogies is the one that compares human birth with a spiritual birth into God's Kingdom. For my first scripture today, we will go to John 3, starting in verse 1.

John 3:1 *There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.*

2) *This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."*

3) *Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*

4) *Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"*

5) *Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."*

6) *That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

7) *Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'*

8) *The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."*

9) *Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?"*

10) *Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?"*

11) *Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness.*

12) *If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? (NKJV)*

So, Jesus Christ told Nicodemus that unless we are born again, there is no way we can enter the Kingdom of heaven. Being born again is a foreign concept to us as it was to Nicodemus. He didn't understand the analogy between physical birth and a spiritual birth. That is growing up being born physically and growing up and being born as a spirit being. Notice Job 32:8.

Job 32:8 *But there is a spirit in man, And the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding. (NKJV)*

He's saying there is a spirit in man—a spirit that has been given to man. I remember a long time ago in Worldwide, there was a lot of discussion, as it was a big topic about this spirit of man—what it is and when is it given? It's been argued over whether God gives us this spirit when we're born, perhaps before we're born, after we're born, but the bottom line is there is a spirit in man. I think we can read a little more in 1 Corinthians 2:11.

1 Corinthians 2:11 *For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. (NKJV)*

So, our human spirit enables us to understand, as it says here, the things of man. We understand physical things but not really spiritual things. The Holy Spirit is given at

baptism and then we begin a new kind of learning—we learn about spiritual things. You might say it's like a period of gestation. We become born physically and then we have to grow up over a period of time and eventually be born as spirit beings.

We can go a little further in 1 Corinthians 11:12.

1 Corinthians 11:12 *For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman; but all things are from God. (NKJV)*

So, once He gives us the Holy Spirit God gives us things that we just didn't understand before. We're all looking forward to being born of the spirit and becoming spirit beings and we have all pondered a great deal about what that would be like. I've heard many times that when we are resurrected, we become spirit beings and then all of a sudden, we have power and understanding and knowledge that we didn't have before. Then we can go right out and start attacking the world and solving all the problems. What if there was more to all of this analogy between physical birth and spiritual birth? With our physical birth as babies, we are completely helpless and depend on our parents for everything. We need total care; we learn to crawl, then walk and as we mature, we learn to do many, many things and finally come to have a lot of abilities. Could becoming a spirit being be something like that?

We have a very good friend of mine who I worked with for many years, he was our age and is retired. He came to spend a good part of the summer with us two years ago. He had a large fifth wheel trailer and he would travel around in that. He came and parked in our yard and spent time with us and roamed around the city and met old friends. He had bad legs—like most of us are coming to have at our age—and saw an ad for a Zinger. I don't know if you've heard of that—the ads are in some of the magazines. A Zinger is a cute little compact collapsible, motorized wheelchair. You can fold it up and put it in the trunk of your car. UPS brought it and left it on our porch. So we unpacked it and set it up on our sidewalk. Our sidewalk goes most the way across the front of our house. He was really anxious to get it going, so he sat in it, took off, zooming down the sidewalk and crashed into our rain barrel. I think the lesson there is that it takes time to learn how to operate in any new environment. Is it like that when we enter the Kingdom of God? Is this life like a kindergarten? We're learning some very basic lessons, learning good versus evil, partaking of the tree of Good and Evil in this life, hopefully learning to be the little children that God wants us to be. Developing that character so that when we become spirit beings, we're at that point where we can blend in with the spirit beings that are there in God's Kingdom already and who have those characteristics.

God says we really have no idea what it's going to be like. We really can't conjure up in our minds what God has in store for us. It's really wonderful beyond our dreams. We are here at the Feast to try and picture that time—picture the millennium. The Bible has many passages about what is coming. I think it's going to be fitting right now to look at a few, as a bit of an aside. 1 Corinthians 15:49.

1 Corinthians 15:49 *And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.*

50) *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.*

51) *Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—*

52) *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

53) *For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

54) *So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."*

55) *"O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" (NKJV)*

Revelation 21:1 *Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.*

2) *Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

3) *And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.*

4) *And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."*

5) *Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."*

6) *And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.*

7) *He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. (NKJV)*

1 John 3:1 *Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.*

2) *Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. (NKJV)*

One last one in John 14:1.

John 14:1 *"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.*

2) *In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*

- 3) *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.*
- 4) *And where I go you know, and the way you know.” (NKJV)*

So God offers a resurrection to eternal life, He offers us a wonderful, wonderful world to come and He says He has reserved a place for us. So we need to have faith in that—that’s what we know so far. God has promised and we know God does not lie; He holds that out and we need to be satisfied with that for now, even though we can’t truly envision what the millennium is going to be like.

Right now, our whole life must really be involved in preparing for that time. Turn to Matthew 18:1.

Matthew 18:1 *At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”*

- 2) *Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them,*
- 3) *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.*
- 4) *Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. (NKJV)*

I think that is quite profound. Can we really wrap our minds around that? That this is an absolute that Christ gives, that we have to become like little children. So what do we do with that? We read it, but how can we make it register in our minds? There is something else that needs to register in our minds in Matthew 24:3.

Matthew 24:3 *Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”*

- 4) *And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you.*
- 5) *For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ, and will deceive many.*
- 6) *And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.*
- 7) *For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. [Seems like we are seeing more of that now.]*
- 8) *All these are the beginning of sorrows.*
- 9) *Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake.*
- 10) *And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. (NKJV)*

I’m going to continue in verse 15.

15) Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand),

- 16) *“then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.*
- 17) *Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house.*
- 18) *And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.*
- 19) *But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!*
- 20) *And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.*
- 21) *For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.*
- 22) *And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened. (NKJV)*

From what Christ foretold and from what we read in Revelation this earth is going to be a ruinous heap. We’ve heard that in some of the messages so far at the Feast. Romans 14:11, one short scripture which is actually quoting Isaiah 45:23.

Romans 14:11 For it is written: “As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God.” (NKJV)

There’s more about that in Isaiah; I’d like to turn to Isaiah 2:10.

Isaiah 2:10 *Enter into the rock, and hide in the dust, From the terror of the LORD And the glory of His majesty.*

- 11) *The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, The haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, And the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.*
- 12) *For the day of the LORD of hosts Shall come upon everything proud and lofty, Upon everything lifted up— And it shall be brought low—*
- 13) *Upon all the cedars of Lebanon that are high and lifted up, And upon all the oaks of Bashan;*
- 14) *Upon all the high mountains, And upon all the hills that are lifted up;*
- 15) *Upon every high tower, And upon every fortified wall;*
- 16) *Upon all the ships of Tarshish, And upon all the beautiful sloops.*
- 17) *The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, And the haughtiness of men shall be brought low; The LORD alone will be exalted in that day,*
- 18) *But the idols He shall utterly abolish.*
- 19) *They shall go into the holes of the rocks, And into the caves of the earth, From the terror of the LORD And the glory of His majesty, When He arises to shake the earth mightily.*
- 20) *In that day a man will cast away his idols of silver And his idols of gold, Which they made, each for himself to worship, To the moles and bats,*
- 21) *To go into the clefts of the rocks, And into the crags of the rugged rocks, From the terror of the LORD And the glory of His majesty, When He arises to shake the earth mightily. (NKJV)*

God says after this, after everyone has been totally humbled, a people will come whose egos and vanities have been totally crushed. A people starved for love, for goodness

and really finally brought to the point of being like little babies with whom Christ can work. We call ourselves the Firstfruits, which means we are going to have to accomplish that transition right now in this age. The analogy between physical birth and spiritual birth is really profound. We start life as physical beings, as a little child and are required by God to enter His Kingdom with those characteristics. When we think about becoming like little children it's really a foreign concept to us and has been during our lives. Perhaps you can call it the cycle of life—become as a little child. I'm going to have to come back to that.

The innocence of childhood tends to fade as we grow up and see all the corruption and politics and things going on in this world. The hypocrisy and these things get set in our minds and our ways and we become hardened. It's extremely hard to change. For most of us—for all of us—coming into God's church required change; we had to change many physical things.

In my life, for example, I started learning about the various laws of God—clean and unclean foods was not a big thing for me, it wasn't really a problem. The Sabbath, my family heard about some of the Adventists and Sabbath keepers and we thought they were a strange lot but didn't pay much attention. When I was little, I always thought Sunday was the last day of the week because it was the end of the weekend. I mentioned that to my mother one time and she set me straight, she told me to look at the calendar, the Sabbath is the seventh day. Much later as I began Bible study and started being brought into the church, I read about the Sabbath and realized the Sabbath is God's Holy Day and the day to keep. I understood that and accepted that. Easter was not a big thing in our family. My mother colored eggs and had Easter egg hunts but I knew they didn't come from bunnies. Christmas on the other hand was something else. It was the favorite and happiest time in our lives, in our family, in our extended family. My mother died in the fall of the time that I came to learn about the truth about Christmas. I was an only child and my dad died about ten years later. That was probably one of the saddest times in my life. My mother had died of cancer and before she died, I had dropped out of college and taken a job because of her condition and one thing that helped was the job I had was one that required someone to be on duty every day of the year. So, I volunteered to work on Christmas which made everybody else happy and gave me something to do and took my mind off it.

I'll never forget the time I had to tell someone I was very close to that I was not going to keep Christmas and she said, "You're no longer a Christian?" That cut also. These things faded away—these physical things. Right now, I don't give Christmas a second thought; another day of the week, another day of the year. It's not that hard to change physical things but when it comes to spiritual things, that's the problem. Changing the very nature of what we are requires God's help. I'd like to look at John 14:23.

John 14:23 *Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.*

24) *He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.*

25) *These things I have spoken to you while being present with you.*

26) *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. (NKJV)*

This is our 'out', this is what we have to have; we need to have God's Spirit working in us and that's the one and really the only way we can change who we are inside. Christ said we had to become like little children. He's offered us help through the Holy Spirit to do that. What are some of the characteristics that we have to change? I was looking in Halley's handbook and he mentions four characteristics. I think it would be good to look at those.

1. A child is humble and free of pride.

You can tell a child that he is doing something wrong and he doesn't automatically come up with an excuse. Later in life our egos take over and we want to be right. That's part of becoming an adult in this society.

2. A child is teachable.

A child tends to absorb everything it sees its parents do. It likes to copy what it sees. It looks to his parents as examples and that is so important that we watch what we let our children see and what we let them see us do. A little child is like a clean slate and picks up everything it sees. It's very important to realize to be careful what it does see. A child can learn many wrong things and they do. I usually have a song in my sermonettes. I heard one from South Pacific, "You've Got to be Carefully Taught".

*You've got to be taught to hate and fear.
You've got to be taught from year to year.
It's got to be drummed in your dear little ear.
You've got to be taught to be afraid,
of people whose eyes are oddly made.
People's whose skin are a different shade.
You've got to be taught before it's too late.
Before you are six or seven or eight.
To hate all people your relatives, hate.
You've got to be carefully taught.*

I think it's an absolute crime what children, especially as they are growing up, are taught in this society. Even as they start into school, in a lot of places in our society, there is the 1619 Project with the corrupted history, there is critical race theory that has been pushed, not only race pushed on us again as children and as adults. A child is trusting so a child looks to his parents for everything and trusts his parents to supply all his needs, to take care of it, protect it. If you tell all little children to jump and I'll catch you,

the child will jump—until the first time you miss. But it's completely trusting. A child doesn't have an ego that it knows better than the parents. That often comes in the teen years. But parents think that their child really knows everything.

As a child, I absolutely believed there was a Santa Clause because that's what my parents taught me. I didn't think much about the physical things, about a sleigh flying through the air, being pulled by reindeer—that didn't seem to bother me for some reason. I trusted back then and then finally learned that physical parents are sometimes fallible. Before a child is loving—love is one thing that a child readily absorbs from parents. If it doesn't see that, it doesn't absorb it. That's something that parents really need to show their children and it will become very part of their nature and character.

Christ said unless we become like little children and take on these characteristics, we will by no means enter the Kingdom of heaven. With this in mind, I think it's good to really look at some of these in more detail. These really need to become prime directives in our lives. How about humility? Let's look at 1 Peter 5:5.

1 Peter 5:5 *Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."*

6) Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time ... (NKJV)

As we learn humility, He will help us to increase in that. I think, to me, that maybe the number one problem in human nature is lack of humility. If people had humility, there would be no more wars, no more political in-fighting, there would be happy families, there would be no more splits in churches. Look at Isaiah 57:15.

Isaiah 57:15 *For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, With him who has a contrite and humble spirit, To revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones. (NKJV)*

God can help us learn humility. How we get there is the problem and it requires much of God's help. James 4:10.

James 4:10 *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.*

The key there I think is learning what we are with respect to God. How do we relate to God? A good study of that is in Job because he had to learn that. Job 42:1.

Job 42:1 *Then Job answered the LORD and said:*

2) "I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You.

3) *You asked, Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge? Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.*

4) *Listen, please, and let me speak; You said, I will question you, and you shall answer Me.'*

5) *I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You.*

6) *Therefore I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes."*

Now in verse 12.

12) Now the LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of oxen, and one thousand female donkeys.

Job had to learn his place with respect to God and be humbled in the sight of God and God let him learn that. It was a very difficult lesson as I think it would be for anyone. You might say God popped Job's bubble of spiritual vanity. Humility is taught by God as we let His Spirit guide us and work in our minds.

How about being teachable? In our case, we need to absorb the characteristics of our heavenly Father because He is perfect in all of His ways. Jesus Christ said,

"If you've seen Me, you've seen the Father".

Jesus Christ is our perfect example. It's no accident that the four gospels—the four chapters of the Bible—are all related to Jesus Christ's life so we can study the life of Jesus Christ; what He said, what He taught, how He lived. I think that's a key really to learning it. We need to do that and be teachable before God.

The third trait:

2. A child is trusting.

Our heavenly Father does know everything, He is perfect in knowledge and we need to trust him thoroughly. God is a perfect teacher. I believe that, as He is perfect in everything else. He's perfect in what He has surrounded us with, this environment, our physical body. He is perfect and He knows what each and every one of us needs as far as lessons. Sometimes we need some tough love. There are always times in the lives of each and every one of us that we need some tough love. The sermonette I gave, I mentioned Randy Pausch, he played football and one of the players came to him and said,

"The coach has been really hard on you. If the coach hadn't been hard on you, he would have left you alone. He was hard on you because he saw some character there that you could make it."

Likewise, we all need tough love from God and we have to come to expect it sometimes and realize there is a purpose in that. We can see something in Hebrews 12:2.

Hebrews 12:2 *looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

3) *For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.*

4) *You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.*

5) *And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;*

6) *For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives."*

7) *If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?*

8) *But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.*

9) *Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?*

10) *For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.*

11) *Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. (NKJV)*

Some of God's training is letting us have trials and coming out the best for them. Let's look at 1 Corinthians 10:13.

1 Corinthians 10:13 *No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. (NKJV)*

God will let us go through trials but as I mentioned, Randy Prausch was talking about brick walls; that a brick wall is not there to kick you out, it's to help you see how badly you want something. We're going to have our brick walls but God always provides an opening.

3. A child is Loving.

God is love, He created the feeling of love, He lets us have those feelings in our emotions. I think the one we really need to develop is love.

We all know John 3:16.

John 3:16 *God so loved this world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (NKJV)*

It is one of the most famous scriptures in the Bible. Let's look at 1 John 4—John wrote a lot about love.

1 John 4:7 *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.*

8) He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

9) In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.

10) In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (NKJV)

It says if we don't love, we don't know God because God is love. 1 Corinthians 13, we call the love chapter, Let's take a look at that, verses 1 through 8.

1 Corinthians 13:1 *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.*

2) And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

3) And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

4) Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up;

5) does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil;

6) does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;

7) bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8) Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.

(NKJV)

All these things really are things that come and go, but love is the one thing that endures. This is a chapter that we need to read very often. Each of these traits is a good Bible study on its own. I encourage you to really look at these four and maybe come up with some other traits, but these are four that were enumerated. I encourage Bible study in these things. The problems of this world won't exist in God's Kingdom because God isn't going to allow anyone in His Kingdom who doesn't come to have the characteristics of a little child.

I asked myself—this is a major transition in our lives—what would it be like? The idea came to mind that this transition would really be like coming out of withdrawals from some addictive habit. We've been addicted to the ways that we have grown up with. We become addicted to our egos, to the ways of the world around us, things that we normally do. So, is becoming like a little child really like escaping the addictions of life

that we have been taught; the way we've grown up? I'm somewhat acquainted with addiction. Not terrible, terrible addiction like some have been involved in, but my father had an alcohol problem and that caused a lot of grief in the family. No matter how he tried, the promises he gave, he couldn't come out of it. My parents both smoked and they couldn't stop. We didn't have a lot of money and they had to spend some money on cigarettes all the time. They weren't as expensive then as they are now but it was still part of the budget. So as a teenager, I swore off tobacco and alcohol and it wasn't until I came into the church—which is strange—that I ever took a drink. That was after I had learned that alcohol is not a sin; that a glass of wine with a nice meal really can be good. You learn a lot of things at church and change things that we held in our minds that bothered us. Withdrawal from the way we had been, to becoming like these little children that God wants us to be really requires an intervention by God. It's good to review a couple more scriptures—two more. Isaiah 25:6.

Isaiah 25:6 *And in this mountain The LORD of hosts will make for all people A feast of choice pieces, A feast of wines on the lees, Of fat things full of marrow, Of well-refined wines on the lees.*

7) *And He will destroy on this mountain The surface of the covering cast over all people, And the veil that is spread over all nations.* [There is such blindness today.]

8) *He will swallow up death forever, And the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces; The rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken.* (NKJV)

A picture again of what's there for us. A scripture that we all know, Romans 8:28, I think this has been used already but it's very important.

Romans 8:28 *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.* (NKJV)

God holds out to us this picture that we are looking at in the Feast of Tabernacles. He promises His Spirit to help us become what we need to be, to be a part of that Kingdom. When I retired, which has been a long time—fifteen years ago now—people ask what it's like being retired. I said,

“It actually feels good. I can make my own schedule, I can work in the garden, I can take a nap in the afternoon—that's what retired folks do.”

It actually did feel good. What will it feel like if we really conquer our own selves and become like these little children that God wants us to be? I think being good can actually feel good. Growing up to be like little children sounds very strange, as it would have sounded strange to Nicodemus, but it's what God says we have to do.