

# Our Church & Children

## Eyes on the Road or the Radio

- easy to loose sight of critical issues over time
- radio station over route and destination

## The Why is as Important as the What

- music – excellent technical, performance – without heart is noise to God
- preaching – good information, good delivery – without prayer, practical steps is not life changing
- children's ministries – volunteers rounded up, materials gathered – without God's heart for kids - busy

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## Children In Our World:

- 14 million born that die before age 5
- 10 million of those from 5 conditions
- 90 countries in our world with 40% under 15
- Several countries with 50% under 15

## Children in Our Culture

- over half have experienced family break down
- less than 6% of homes attending a church
- greater instances of abuse and neglect than ever before

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## God's Word To Us About Children

*“They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, ‘what were you arguing about on the road?’ But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest. Sitting down, Jesus called the twelve and said, ‘If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and servant of all.’ He took a child and had him stand among them. Taking him in his arms, he said to them, ‘Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.’” Mark 9:33-37*

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## 1. You Must Serve Them

- notice the context – pursuit of greatness
- notice the concern – longing corrupted by sin
- notice the correction – greatest measured by servant hood

### \*Object Lesson\*

- Child – symbol of unimportance, only a child
  - no political payback to serving kids
  - take for granted you will care for them – serve them
  - don't make a big deal that you sacrifice for them

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true greatness is:

- serving the defenseless, downtrodden – weak
- God's heart for the weak, defenseless etc

Note Jesus Actions and Words

- takes the child in his arms – visible and real
- when you welcome them, you welcome me!
- when you serve these – you reflect the father

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## 2. Serve Them In My Name

- reasons why and heart always matter
- many reasons to do something:
  - have to, get something back, someone checking on me, duty, expectations etc
- 'welcomes in my name' – speaks of action & heart
- in Jesus name – reflecting what is important to Him
  - reflecting the heart of the Father
- motivation becomes a love issue – more of Jesus

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Kids Know What You Really Think:

- if you value their words and opinions
- if you care about their hurts and victories
- drawn to those who care – safe place

God Loves Them and Wants You to Represent Him

- serving them and hearing them
- caring for and providing in their lives
- putting their safety and needs before your own

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## 3. Remove All Hindrances

*“People were also bringing babies to Jesus to have him touch them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. But Jesus called the children to him and said, ‘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.’” Luke 18:15-17*

- Disciples of Jesus should remove all hindrances that keep children from encountering Jesus!



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## Things That Hinder:

### a) Selfishness

- my time is too valuable, I deserve a break
- my preferences matter more than others
- serve those who can respond in kind

### b) Theological Error

- unclear about what you believe – cannot pass on
- not growing in your walk – pass on poor theology
- belief that its about here and now, your comfort

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## c) Resources

- spend money on space, materials, tools for ...
- have our people employ gifts with peers, not kids
- building space that works to reach kids

## d) Lack of Intention

- not seeing the possibility
- not planning to reach children in Jesus Name
- Not being involved - apathy

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## So What

This is a Heart Issue – Children Matter to God – Must Matter to Me

1. I am Commanded to Serve Them

- greatness is defined by service - others first

2. I Serve in Jesus Name

- I represent Jesus and heart matters

3. Remove All Hindrances

- disciples of Christ are not to hinder Christ & Kids