

Weakness – The Power of Sonship

By James Jordan | January 4, 2018

Since I was a young Christian I have been told that I have to mature and grow up. In our Christianity, we are trying to become strong, educated, competent, and confident—whereas the Lord is trying to bring us down to childlikeness. In the world, you need to become educated to survive and be successful but in the realm of God's rule, we need to become as little children. For years, I was trying to do all this hard work until I discovered what it was really about.

When I first became a Christian, the predominant message that I was taught went something like this, "Now that you have become a Christian, you must grow up in the Lord. Now you have to be mature. You've got to get the victory, brother! Whatever it is that comes up, you have to make the breakthrough. You have to seek God and find Him in the midst of the situation and become an overcomer!" etc. etc.

There was a saying, "When you become a Christian, you really have to get your act together!" I realize now that even if you actually do get your act together, it's still just an act! A lot of our positive talk is just bravado rather than faith; a kind of "fake it until you make it!"

If we can be honest about where we are at instead of denying the realities we can gain a lot of ground spiritually. Many things we were taught to do were a kind of denial and denial is not victory.

Childlikeness

I have discovered a particular characteristic of godly people. The most wonderful and Christlike people are also the most childlike.

We have been told so much that we need to grow up. We have been told that we need to become competent and mature, full of faith and power. We have been told that we need to learn all the lessons and accumulate knowledge so that we can always give answers to people's questions. Preachers would often say to me, "If the church was really doing its job, we would be

doing this and that because it is our responsibility to fix this world.” Do you know where He found us? He found us in drains, under hedges and down alleyways – some literally. We had broken and messed up lives. We are not the noble of this world. We are not the ones who have it all together. We are the ones without hope, who couldn’t do anything right. He found me under a tree in the wilderness somewhere. I don’t know why He chose me. I’m the dregs of society. Why did He come and find me?

The whole purpose of man is to worship God and enjoy Him forever, says the Westminster Confession. That is enough. We don’t need anything more. This applies to ministry as well as our personal lives. Christianity is not a path to competency but a path to childlikeness. The more childlike we become, the closer we are to Him. And the closer we are, the more childlike we become. Do you think Jesus said to us, “Unless you become as a little child you cannot enter the Kingdom of God,” but there was a different way for Him?

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Children know how to enjoy life. Who has the most joy? A lawyer or a child? Who is the best at laughing from their belly? An architect, a policeman or a little girl? It is always a child. Why? Because they aren’t caught up with all the competency issues of life. They will laugh and laugh at something that we don’t even smile at. They have an incredible capacity to simply enjoy the present moment. In many cases Christianity as we know it has added to the seriousness of our lives. We can walk a tightrope of the fear of not doing things correctly and not living right. No wonder the non-Christian person looks at us and thinks, “I do not want to be like that!”

Jesus is childlike

Jesus Himself was extremely childlike. Matthew 11:25 says, “At that time, Jesus answered and said, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth that You have hidden these things from the wise and the prudent and have revealed them to babes.”

It took me many years to realize that Jesus is actually talking about Himself here. What are “these things” that He is talking about here? He is talking about the things that He has been teaching in the preceding few chapters. If they were not revealed to the wise and prudent who were they revealed to? They were revealed to Jesus! He was the one who was teaching them. The Father taught Him these things because He had the heart of a little child. He also said “My doctrine is not My own.” (John 14:10) In other words, “I haven’t got this theologically figured out. I don’t have opinions on all of the doctrinal issues.”

He also said, “The Son can do nothing of Himself.” (John 5:19) He didn’t say, “The Son will do nothing by Himself,” which is how many of us read that scripture. He said: “The Son can do nothing OF himself.” In other words, “There is nothing in Me that can do these things that I am doing or teach these things that I am teaching. The miracles that I do are happening through Me, not of Me. The words that I speak are not My words. It is the Father living in Me who is doing it all.”

He didn’t say, “The Son doesn’t want to do anything of Himself.” Nor did He say, “The Son has chosen not to do anything of Himself.” He said, “The Son can do nothing of Himself.” What an incredible statement! I say this with reverence, but Jesus was incredibly incompetent. He wasn’t grown-up and mature! He was childlike. So often in the church today we aspire to what is wise and prudent. Jack Winter used to remark that this revelation is often difficult for pastors and leaders to receive. Having been a pastor myself I can well understand the pressures that pastors and leaders are under. Pastors often receive this message as good for the congregation but not applicable to the leadership. Church leaders also need to open their hearts as a little child to receive what God has for them.

Wisdom is acting correctly in a given situation while prudence is making correct choices for our future good. Often pastors can be focused on trying to do things the right way – “What is the right thing to say, the right way to approach this situation? What is the right way to do this? What do we do in the leaders’ meeting? How do we prepare for the next five years?” Slowly it becomes more and more about how to live your life right and how to do “the right thing.” Jack believed that the pastors had often become the “wise and prudent” and had closed off the childlike heart.

I am not saying that we shouldn’t do these things, but don’t assume that it amounts to maturity. When we start to think along the lines of, “This is what maturity is, now I’m a mature Christian because I do all these things,” what happens is that having wisdom and prudence becomes our life pathway, which actually acts as a hindrance to receiving revelation. Revelation is given to a childlike heart. I believe that this is one of the reasons why the Body of Christ in the last century has made such little inroads into real revelation and intimacy with God. We have been focusing on becoming wise and prudent when the Lord is actually leading us on the path to become a little child.

Your weakness is your strength

Paul the apostle knew what it was to live in the paradox of weakness. He talks about it in his second letter to the church at Corinth. We don’t exactly know what the thorn in his flesh was,

but what we know for sure is that Paul had a problem. It was not a simple problem either. Whatever this was, it caused him to really plead with God three times, to take it away. This was obviously a very difficult thing to live with. When he asked the Lord to take it away, his request was denied. However, God was saying to him, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

My strength is made perfect in weakness. The truth is, if you want to have the power of God resting upon you but you are strong in yourself, you actually disqualify yourself from having the power of God on you. The power of God comes upon people who are weak. Paul's strength was not that he had become strong, competent and had all the answers. On the contrary, the grace of God came on him because of his weakness. The Lord said, "My grace is sufficient for you for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

Do you know what the key to this revelation of the Father's love is? Just become a little child. A little child.

What I have discovered is this, if you think that God uses you because you pray a lot, or that He uses you because you have done this or that, then your heart will take the glory to itself. You can even say, "I give all the glory to the Lord," but it is not your speech that the Lord takes account of. He looks at your heart. When your heart takes the glory, God will cut off the power. He will not share His glory with anybody. It takes faith to know that there is nothing in us that qualifies us for God to use us. It takes more faith to step out and trust God to use you. It takes much more faith to step out in God when you have an overwhelming sense that there is absolutely nothing in you that qualifies you before God.

The Secret of Sonship

Paul was very aware of his condition and he didn't hide it from the Corinthian church. "I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling." (1 Cor 2:3) He didn't know what to do. Paul had learned the same secret that Jesus knew. Be a little child. When we think we know how to do it all, we are disqualified. God comes to us in our weaknesses. You don't need to have it all together to be God's son or daughter.

Do you know what the key to this revelation of the Father's love is? Just become a little child. A little child. The more that you try to be sophisticated and know it all, read all the Scriptures, listen to the sermons and read all the books; the more you want to be the big, strong, grownup man or woman of God and have a reputation, the less capacity you have to know the Father as a loving Father to you.

The weaker you are, the more He can use you. The greatest handicap is our own strength, our own competency, our accreditation and accomplishment. Being “full of faith and power” and “having it all together” is our greatest hindrance. If you use your strength, He will let you have the product of your strength. However, if you can be weak you will get the product of His strength and that is infinitely better.