



# LOVE THE LITTLE CHILDREN

MATTHEW 19:13-15

## Matthew 19:13-15 says:

*<sup>13</sup> Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. <sup>14</sup> But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. <sup>15</sup> And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.*

The overall point: **recognize the importance of children to the Lord (Matthew 19:13-15)**. God seems to have a soft spot for children. Perhaps it is because they are defenseless, or because we can learn so much from them. It could even be because they are the future. Therefore, we must be careful to place importance on children as the Lord does. So, are children valued in our society? In some ways they are, but when you think about abortion and the care—or lack of care—for children with special needs, I'm not sure the Lord is pleased. As believers, let us value children.

As the church, let us **take time to minister to children in need and look for ways to minister to their families (Matthew 18:4; Mark 9:14-29)**. Many children have special needs. Think about the number of children with developmental disabilities, struggle with autism, or have a specific learning disability or another challenge. We must minister well to them. In Mark 9:24-29, a father brought his son to the disciples. In exasperation, he asked Jesus if there was anything He could do for him. Jesus helped the child. We, too, want to help all children but *especially* those with special needs and their parents. How can we do this?

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We must **understand that children (or older people for that matter) with special needs do not respond well to a one-size-fits-all approach.** We must observe the child and design an approach that works for them. For example, some children with special needs need a smaller environment. Others benefit from a buddy, perhaps an older, more mature youth or adult who attends a service or activity with them. Some will need a different environment because of the way they are impacted by stimuli. In these situations, often a smaller environment is better, and a volunteer who is simply caring and willing to help can provide an enormous amount of support.

We, too, must focus on parents who often experience greater stress as they care for a child with special needs. Some struggle with guilt, stigmas, or the difficulty of interacting with others who do not understand the needs of their child. I encourage you to watch or listen to the Better Together Podcast with Amos Dillard as he describes how his church has ministered to children with special needs and their parents.

**Take time to teach and disciple children and ponder what you can learn from them (Matthew 18:1-5).** May we never forget that Jesus showed His disciples a child and told them to be like that child. What did the Lord want them to learn from the child? Whenever we work with children, we learn from them and are blessed by them. Yes, it can be taxing and difficult, but all of that pales in comparison to the reward and joy of being with children, especially those with special needs.

**May we love and value children as Jesus does and be blessed by them, too.**

JEREMIAH **29**  
INITIATIVE

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