



# Sermon Notes

**Topic:** Becoming Like Children

**Preacher:** Ps Sam Toms

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 18:1–5

**Date:** Sunday 12th October 2025

## Study Guide Overview

**Main Theme:** *Jesus redefines greatness through the posture of childlike faith—simple, dependent, and humble—and calls us to value children not as future believers, but as vital ministers in His kingdom today.*

### 1. Childlike Faith, Not Childish Faith

When Jesus called a child into the center of the crowd and said, “*Unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven*” (Matt 18:3), He wasn’t calling us to be immature—but to rediscover *simplicity, trust, and awe*.

Childlike faith is **uncomplicated**. It takes God at His Word even when not everything is understood.

“God created. We are broken. Jesus saves.”

It is a faith that says, “*I don’t understand it all—but I trust the One who does.*”

By contrast, **childish faith** is complicated and self-centered.

Childishness clings to ego, demands control, and doubts God when life doesn’t make sense. It tries to *explain away* the miraculous and *rationalize* mystery.

To be childish is to stop learning; to be childlike is to keep *wondering*.

### 2. Growing Into Dependence Is Spiritual Maturity

“Faith doesn’t grow out of dependence; it grows into it.”

In life, we mature *out of* dependence—but in faith, we mature *into* it.

The mark of spiritual growth is not greater independence from God but deeper reliance upon Him.

Children instinctively know their need. The only way to receive God is to **recognize our need for Him**.

The gospel is offensive because it exposes our true condition—we cannot save ourselves.

“Good people don’t go to heaven; forgiven people do.”

Christian maturity is not self-sufficiency—it’s self-surrender.

It’s living daily from a place of *trust, humility, and awe*—not cynicism or control.



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### 3. Valuing Children and Empowering Their Ministry

Jesus didn't only call adults to be childlike; He **redefined the value of children** themselves.

In the ancient world, children had no status or legal protection. But Jesus publicly honoured them, placing a child at the center and declaring, "*Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.*"

It was a revolutionary statement—one that reshaped human ethics.

At VPBC, we reflect this same truth: **children are not the church of tomorrow—they are ministers of today.**

Their prayers matter. Their voices carry heaven's power.

We don't just *teach* them; we *learn from* them.

We don't just *pray* for them; we *pray with* them—and invite them to pray for us.

Our calling is to **help children discover their spiritual gifts**, nurture their faith, and empower their purpose in the body of Christ.

## Small Group Questions/Discussions

### Theme: Childlike, Not Childish – Becoming Dependent on God Again

#### Icebreaker

- Share a funny "childlike moment" in your own life—maybe when your kids (or you!) said something surprisingly simple yet profound about faith.
- What's one thing about being a kid you wish you could get back?

#### Scripture

Read **Matthew 18:1–6** together.

Optional: Also read **Mark 10:13–16** and **1 Corinthians 1:18**.

#### Discussion Questions

##### 1. Childlike vs. Childish Faith

- How would you describe the difference between *childlike* and *childish* faith in your own words?
- Why do you think Jesus made "becoming like a child" a condition for entering His Kingdom?
- In what ways can our sophistication or cynicism actually distance us from God?

**Reflect:** Where have you overcomplicated your faith? What would it look like to simplify it again?

##### 2. Growing into Dependence

- "Faith doesn't grow out of dependence; it grows into it." What does that mean to you personally?
- When was a time you felt totally dependent on God—and how did that deepen your faith?
- How can we model *dependence on Christ* to those around us without it appearing like weakness?

**Challenge:** Ask God to show you one area of your life where you're trying to be self-sufficient—and surrender it to Him this week.



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## Small Group Questions/Discussions

### 3. Valuing and Empowering Children

- What does it mean to “*welcome a child in Jesus’ name*” in our church context today?
- Why do you think Jesus was so passionate about protecting and affirming children?
- What could it look like for us, as adults, to help kids in our church discover their **spiritual gifts** and use them?

**Practical Idea:** This week, intentionally pray with a child—or ask one to pray for you. You might be surprised what God says through them.

### Reflection & Prayer

Close by reading **Mark 10:16** together:

“And taking them in His arms, He blessed them.”

Pray that:

- We would have *uncomplicated, childlike trust* in God.
- We would grow in *dependence* rather than self-reliance.
- We would *value, equip, and learn from* the children God has placed among us.

Encourage your group to bless a child this week—with words, prayer, or time.