

LESSON 8
April 19, 2026

**Unit II: Fulfilling Our Obligations to Family
and Community**
The Beauty of Dependence

DEVOTIONAL READING: Psalm 8

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES: Matthew 18:1-6; Mark 9:36-37, 42; 10:13-16;
Luke 2:1-20

PRINT PASSAGES: Mark 9:36-37, 42; 10:13-16

KEY VERSE

Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. (Mark 10:15, KJV)

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“Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” (Mark 10:15, NIV)

Lesson Aims

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

- Assess your life goals considering Jesus’ invitation to become “like children.”
- Approach God with childlike faith.
- Review and, if necessary, revise the church’s mission statement to better protect and serve the community.

***Key Terms**

Believe (Mark 9:42)—Greek: *pisteuó* (pist-yoo’-o): to trust, to have faith in.

Child (Mark 9:36)—Greek: *paidion* (pahee-dee’-on): a kid or youth, a little one.

Enter (Mark 10:15)—Greek: *eiserchomai* (ice-er’-khom-ahee): to go into, to come in.

Hinder (Mark 10:14)—Greek: *kóluó* (ko-loo’-o): to prevent, restrain; “forbid” (KJV).

Rebuked (Mark 10:13)—Greek: *epitimaó* (ep-ee-tee-mah’-o): to reprimand, admonish, or censure.

Receive (Mark 9:37)—Greek: *dechomai* (dekh’-om-ahee): to welcome, accept; “welcome” (NIV).

*(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 2)



The Biblical Context

Mark 9 and 10 move quickly through several key events: the Transfiguration, the healing of a boy with an unclean spirit, Jesus' teachings about His death and resurrection, and His lessons on discipleship. One of His most striking demonstrations came when the disciples argued about greatness in the kingdom. To answer, Jesus called the children to come to Him. In the first century, children had little status or security. Infant mortality was high, and many who survived still did not reach adulthood. Society was heavily male-dominated, and children had few rights, yet they were expected to contribute to family life. For Jesus to embrace children was remarkable. It redefined how God views heaven and humanity.

Introduction

A church with a thriving children's ministry once faced an unusual Sunday. Technical and plumbing issues forced adults and children to worship together. Some parents objected, saying they counted on children's church to give them a quiet hour to focus on worship. Seniors worried the service would become too noisy or that Communion would lose its reverence with children present.

The senior minister quickly adapted. The youth pastor gave a children's message, the choir added a youth song, and the sermon centered on "Suffer the Little Children." That day, twenty-five people, including fifteen children, came forward for salvation. What began as a disruption became a blessing for the entire congregation.

ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT

The Welcoming of God (Mark 9:36-37)

KJV

36 And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them,

37 Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

NIV

36 He took a little child whom he placed among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them,

37 "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."

Jesus' act of presenting a child shocked His disciples. They were discussing matters of status in the kingdom, yet Jesus chose a child as His example. In a society where children were often overlooked, this was radical.

Notice that Jesus did not say simply, "welcome a child." That alone could be misunderstood. Instead, He said, "*Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me.*"

The emphasis was on His name—the name above all others, the name that brought/brings miracles, the name that revealed God’s authority. To welcome a child in His name was to welcome the Savior Himself.

🔍 WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Since all humans are made in God’s image, does God have qualities we think of as childlike—such as joy, laughter, or trust?

The Danger of Hurting Children (*Mark 9:42*)

KJV

42 And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

NIV

42 “If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them if a large millstone were hung around their neck and they were thrown into the sea.”

Jesus made it clear that children mattered deeply to Him, even when society did not value them. He warned against leading children astray. Temptation does not always begin with the one who sins; sometimes it is caused by others. Thus, Jesus gave a severe warning: anyone who causes a child believer to stumble faces serious consequences. A millstone was used to grind grain. Smaller ones could be turned by hand, but larger ones, weighing thousands of pounds, were pulled by animals. To imagine such a stone tied around someone’s neck and thrown into the sea is to understand how serious Jesus was about protecting children. Leading any child into sin is dangerous, but leading a believing child astray carries eternal weight.

🔍 WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Many churches require workers to be screened before working with children. Why is this important for both ministry and safety?

Bring Them to Be Blessed (*Mark 10:13-16*)

KJV

13 And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them.

14 But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

15 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

16 And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

NIV

13 People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them.

14 When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

15 “Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”

16 And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

Parents brought children to Jesus, but the disciples turned them away, assuming He had more important matters to handle. They forgot that He had already healed Jairus' daughter and the nobleman's son. But Jesus rebuked His disciples and welcomed the children Himself.

Imagine being told that your child was not important enough for Jesus! Instead, He declared, “Let the little children come to me . . . for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these” (verse 14, NIV). He insisted that all who enter God's kingdom must do so with childlike faith and trust. Then He took the children in His arms and blessed them—children with little status, some dirty or restless, yet deeply loved.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Are there any circumstances where a child should be kept from uniting with the church? What if one or both parents object?

A Closing Thought

Looking into the face of a child is like looking into the face of God. God is not only the Ancient of Days but also fresh as a new blessing. Welcoming children in His name opens the kingdom to all and shows that children must be cherished, blessed, and protected. To neglect children risks eternal consequences.

Your Life

How do you encourage the children in your life to follow Christ? Do you read with them, pray with them, take them to church, or model faith before them?

Your World!

How do you help children live out their faith in today's world? Do you teach them to share Jesus kindly in a diverse culture? Do you invite children of other faiths or no faith to experience church?

Closing Prayer

O Lord, thank You for giving us a faith simple enough for children to believe and strong enough for them to be embraced by You. In the precious name of Jesus, Lover of all—including children—we pray. Amen.

