

Matthew 18:24 (Walt Porter) 168328

The Christian Shepherd: 1999, Dependence and Independence (18:24)

“And Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 18:24).

I have thought a little differently about these verses since the Lord sent us another child. I had always pictured the child mentioned in Matthew 18 as being of grade school age. But I now feel that the little one could easily have been younger.

When our little girl came along, it was a delight to see her so dependent and responsive! She would contentedly lie where I placed her. She was happy when her diapers were changed or a bottle was given to her. She went without question wherever she was carried. She happily explored anything placed within her reach and, when tired, laid her head trustingly on my shoulder. What a happy and sweet relationship I enjoyed with her!

As an infant, her actions were best characterized by the happy word “dependence.” But as she has gotten older, I am increasingly aware that something is happening. Two letters “I” and “N” are creeping in front of that lovely word “dependence.” It is striking to see how soon the marks of IN-dependence in thought and action begin to mar the morally beautiful spirit of dependence!

There will surely need to be much patient discipline and unceasing labor devoted to our daughter, so that this sweet condition of dependence may mark her actions and the dreaded independence be checked.

Yet must we not all admit to that tendency of independence rather than resting in sweet, full dependence upon our God? It has been said that man gained independence at the fall and that God has been working ever since to take it out of him!

How wonderful to have our Father’s help in this matter and to know our blessed God as the “God of all comfort” (2 Cor. 1:3) and the “God of all grace” (1 Peter 5:10).

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