

## Young Children Serving God

Joe Slater

Who shouted praise to Jesus in the temple? Not only grownup disciples, but little children! (Matthew 21:15-16). This should have surprised no one, for David foretold it in the eighth psalm, quoted by Jesus.

The Old Testament contains numerous examples of young children rendering meaningful service to God. Miriam watched over her infant brother, Moses, until Pharaoh's daughter retrieved him from the Nile; then she shrewdly suggested that their mother be his nurse. Thus Moses benefitted from his family's influence during his earliest years.

An unnamed Israelite girl pointed Naaman the leper toward healing by Elisha the prophet (2 Kings 5). In spite of growing up in the idolatrous Northern Kingdom (Israel) and being taken captive by the enemy Syrians, this child kept faith in the true God and His faithful prophet.

Joash and Josiah were two of the best kings ever to reign over the Southern Kingdom (Judah). Joash became king at age seven, and Josiah at age eight! Joash came from an awful family background (an idolatrous father and murderous grandmother); but his uncle, Jehoiada the priest, led him to be a true man of God (2 Kings 11). Josiah also had an idolatrous father, but may well have been influenced by a godly mother, Jedidah (2 Kings 22:1)

Never underestimate what young children can do for the Lord, both here-and-now and later in their lives! Much will depend on the training they receive. Parents bear enormous responsibility, as do religious leaders.

How are you preparing your children and grandchildren to be men and women of God?

## *The Things Which Make For Peace*

Years ago, during a Thanksgiving visit to my parents, my mother gave us a couple of owls (not the real things, but plaster owls – the kind you hang on walls). I don't have any affinity toward owls, but these once belonged to my grandmother and, for that reason, were very special.

After leaving them for a week in a paper sack on the kitchen counter, we decided to let the owls out and see if we could find them a place to land on our walls. Colleen suggested a place beneath some cabinets above the kitchen counter. She held them up in just such a way as to hide some holes left behind by an old paper towel dispenser which had long-since given up the ghost. Holding them carefully in place, she asked me how they looked. As the holes were never in my field of vision, I stooped to look and, as I did so, one of the owls slipped from Colleen's hand and fell to the floor.

Colleen felt badly about the accident and even tried to repair the fallen owl. Later, I came across some Super Glue and gave it a try myself, succeeding only in attaching my thumb to my index finger. With the help of nail polish remover, I was able to give it another try. Persistence paid off, and the owl faithfully performed its duty, and also served as a reminder of a valuable lesson.

It's always easier to tear things apart than it is to put things together. This is true in all earthly relationships – in marriage – in the family – and even in the church. Criticism has its place, but anyone can be a critic. It takes someone special to be a builder and a peacemaker. Seeing what is good in others and building on it takes time and energy, but it is a much better plan than trying to put pieces back together once they have fallen apart. Paul rightly exhorts us, saying, *“let us pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another”* (Romans 14:19).

--Glen Elliot (Greenbriar, AR)

## Change And Contentment

A king reigned over a very rich nation. One day he set out to see all the land over which he ruled. After his journey, his feet hurt from the rocky roads on which he had walked. Determined to do something about it, he ordered that all roads in his kingdom be covered with leather. This would cost a fortune and, because so many cattle would be butchered for the leather, the people of his kingdom would probably starve. Nevertheless, the king was determined to do something about his hurting feet.

One of his servants overcame his fear of upsetting the king and offered this suggestion: “Instead of covering every road in the country with leather, why don't you just strap a small amount of leather to your feet?” The king was surprised at his servant's boldness but decided to fashion some “shoes” for himself.

The deeper moral of this story is: In order to make this world a happier, better place to live, change yourself – your heart and understanding – not the world.

In Philippians 4:12-13 we read that Paul learned to be content in any situation in which he found himself. *“I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty., I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all things through Him who gives me strength.”*

As Christians we should learn not to become upset and down about circumstances life throws our way. Instead, we should learn about the strength, understanding, and peace we are offered in Christ Jesus.

You can't always change the things that happen to you, but you can change what you do with those things.

--Luke Bower (via Old Paths)