

Psalm 127:1-5

Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the LORD guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain.

It is vain for you to rise up early, To sit up late, To eat the bread of sorrows; For so He gives His beloved sleep. Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, The fruit of the womb is a reward.

Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one's youth.

Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them; They shall not be ashamed, But shall speak with their enemies in the gate.

The Gift of Children

Years ago, before inflation and taxes took all the fun out of the malt shop, a little girl sat at the counter and inquired about the cost of a sundae. When she was told "fifty cents", she opened up her fist and studied the coins in her hand. Then she asked how much a plain dish of ice cream would cost. "Thirty-five cents" snapped the busy waitress. Finally the little girl ordered the plain ice cream and gave the waitress thirty-five cents.

Later as the waitress was cleaning the counter, she noticed that the little girl had left a tip in her empty dish, two nickels and five pennies. That waitress has kept those seven coins as a gentle reminder that little people are just as important as big people, especially to themselves. The dignity of humanity reaches across all cultures, all races, all social structures and touches little girls at malt shops as well.

A single child, just like an adult, is special in God's eyes! Jesus brought this reminder to his disciples. They had mistakenly sought to prevent children from approaching him. His response to their actions was pointed and unique: "Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." (Matthew 19:14 NIV). The greatest gift and most valuable inheritance that a adult can leave a child is influence that points them to Christ.

Jesus also gave warning to those who would lead children astray: "But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea." (Matthew 18:6 NIV). God will hold every parent, every teacher, every adult, accountable for the direction that they lead children in.

One hundred years ago, Pastor D.L. Moody challenged the citizens of Chicago with this very thought: "What would have been Noah's feelings if, when God called him into the ark, his children would not have gone with him? If he had lived such a false life that his children had no faith in his word. He would have said: "There is my poor boy on the mountain. Would to God I had died in his place!" Noah loved his children and they had confidence in him, and found safety. Are your children safe in the ark?" (Are they safe through faith in Christ). God has not changed, nor have children's needs!

A trip to Sick Kids Hospital in Toronto brought to my mind the sober reality the suffering of children. I was grateful for a facility committed to their care, provided through the sacrificial contributions of concerned people. As adults, we must see the whole person and extend that same concern to the spirit and soul as well. In what direction does your sphere of influence point children?

Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,

Look upon a little child,

Pity my simplicity,

Suffer me to come to thee.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

What is my response:
