

## CHILDLIKE “these little ones who believe”

<i>Negative example</i>	<i>Positive example</i>
Immaturity	Lack of status
Selfishness	Follower
Simple appetite	Teachable
Naive	Vulnerable

## Why are we to be “childlike”?

### Greatness

is marked by humility.

### Discipleship

is marked by following, and teachability.

### Saltiness

is marked by the treatment of the vulnerable.

### Mark 9

<sup>38</sup> John said to Him, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we tried to hinder him because he was not following us.” <sup>39</sup> But Jesus said, “**Do not hinder** him, for there is no one who shall perform a miracle in My name, and be able soon afterward to speak evil of Me. <sup>40</sup> For he who is not against us is for us. <sup>41</sup> For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because of your name as followers of Christ, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward. <sup>42</sup> And whoever **causes one of these little ones who believe to stumble**, it would be better for him if, with a heavy millstone hung around his neck, he had been cast into the sea.”

<sup>43</sup> And if your hand **causes you to stumble**, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than having your two hands, to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire, <sup>44</sup> where *their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched*. <sup>45</sup> And if your foot **causes you to stumble**, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame, than having your two feet, to be cast into hell, <sup>46</sup> where *their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched*. <sup>47</sup> And if your eye **causes you to stumble**, cast it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into hell, <sup>48</sup> where *their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched*. <sup>49</sup> For everyone will be salted with fire. <sup>50</sup> Salt is good; but if the salt becomes unsalty, with what will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and **be at peace with one another.**”

### The common theme

“We tried to **hinder** him”

“Do not **hinder** him”

“**causes** one of these little ones who believe **to stumble**”

“**causes** you **to stumble**”

### The exhortation

“Have **salt** in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.”

### Mark 9

“<sup>38</sup> John said to Him, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we tried to hinder him because **he was not following us.**”

### The disciple’s question

- ✓ There are people who are ministering outside our group -

Their ministry is in Jesus’ name and they are effective.

They don’t have it all together.

Our impulse is to shut their operation down.

**Examples:** Sectarian competition today

**Question:** Can God actually use anyone who is not “following US?”

### Mark 9

“<sup>39</sup> But Jesus said, “**Do not hinder** him, for there is no one who shall perform a miracle in My name, and be able soon afterward to speak evil of Me. <sup>40</sup> For he who is not against us is for us.”

### Jesus’ response

- ✓ Don’t hinder those who may not yet have it all together but give them a break.

**Examples:** John Mark, Peter,

**Question:** Do we shoot our wounded or too quickly discard those who disappoint us?

*Mark 9*

“41 For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because of your name as followers of Christ, truly I say to you, **he shall not lose his reward.**”

*Jesus’ response*

✓ **At the final judgment there will be some who will be unexpectedly rewarded.**  
Matt.25:34-40

**Question:** Have we disqualified ourselves and others long before God has?

*Mark 9*

“42 And whoever **causes one of these little ones who believe to stumble**, it would be better for him if, with a heavy millstone hung around his neck, he had been cast into the sea.”

*Jesus’ response*

✓ **We are better off dead if we hinder the weak and immature among us.**

**Question:** Has our lack of graciousness hindered the spiritual life of some one around us?

**To “stumble” is translated “fall away” in Mark 4:17**

“they have no firm root in themselves, but are only temporary; then, when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they **fall away.**”

**Note the Apostles’ sensitivity.**

*Galatians 4:19*

“**My children**, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you”

*1 John 2:1*

“**My children**, I am writing these things to you so that you do not sin.”

**Who are the spiritually vulnerable**

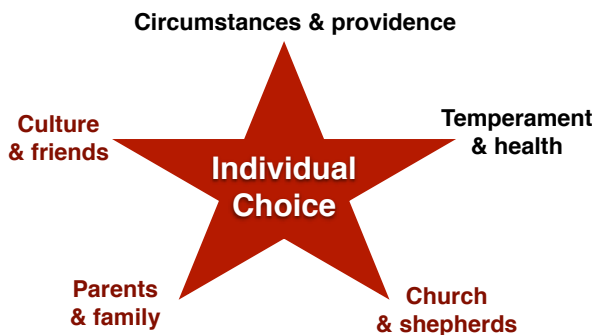
**Example #1**  
**vs.38-41**

**The immature who minister in Jesus’ name**

**Example #2**  
**vs.42**

**The weaker brother who can easily stumble**

**Temporal Responsibility for Faith**



*Romans 15*

“1 Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves.  
2 Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to his edification.”

✓ **The strong take on the needs of the weak - One gives up his freedom in order to be salt - protecting and preserving the other.**

**Question:** Do we judge others in terms of our own strengths and preferences?

*1 Corinthians 12:21*

“And the eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you;” or again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.”

- ✓ **The analyst vs. the activist** - The “eye” is better at analysis, while the “feet” are better at action. But all are needed to work together.

**Question:** Do we judge others in terms of our own strengths and preferences?

“43 . . . 47 And if your eye causes you to stumble, cast it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into hell, 48 where *their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.*

*Jesus’ response*

- ✓ **Sacrifice what you must in this life to keep the faith.**

**Question:** Do we see our faithfulness as an investment in the lives of others?

“49 For everyone will be salted with fire. 50 Salt is good; but if the salt becomes unsalty, with what will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.”

*Jesus’ response*

- ✓ **Everyone will face trials of fire in this life that should strengthen your faith.**

**Question:** Do we let your trials turn us into the salt that preserves unity - makes peace?

*Summary*

Last week vs.33-37      This week vs.38-50

What does it mean to be “great?”

What does it mean to be “salt?”

**Promote**  
*those who are lowly.*

**Preserve**  
*those who are vulnerable.*

**Example of Jesus being IN but not OF the world.**

**Disciples see the “extra grace required” believers to be an opportunity not a hindrance to the ministry.**

**Practical challenges for the evangelical Christian.**

- 1. We need one another more than we sometimes realize.***
- 2. Caring demands sacrifice.***
- 3. We may give up on ourselves & others long before God does.***
- 4. The “extra grace required” folks are an opportunity not an obstacle.***