

I. Read Luke 18:15-17

- A. In verse 15, we read that people were bringing their babies to Jesus. Describe an analogous situation in our day within the church.

The NAS and NKJV translation use the terms “babies” and “infants” respectively. These were babies that had not reached the *age of discretion* (the point at which a child can fully understand the gospel personally). Hence, the situation is analogous to Covenant/Infant *baptism*, or, at the very least, what Baptist churches call *baby dedication*.

What is the scriptural argument for baptizing infants in a Christian family?

Genesis 17:9-11

Abraham is commanded to administer the sign and seal of the covenant to his children — as well as to his descendant’s children.

Galatians 3:6-7

Christians are the true descendants of Abraham.

Colossians 2:11-12

Baptism is the new sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace, taking the place of circumcision.

Galatians 3:15-17

Neither the Covenant nor its sign and seal have been abrogated.

Galatians 3:26-29

Both men and women are *sons of God*, meaning that both males and females are the same in so far as their position before God. This is the case under the Covenant of Grace fulfilled. Hence, baptism, taking the place of circumcision, should be administered to both male and female.

Read the following and explain how parents might apply the principle which Hannah demonstrated:

1 Samuel 1:27-28

Hannah dedicated Samuel to the Lord, demonstrating in an obvious way that her son belonged to God and that his life would be fulfilled in serving God alone. It is a reflection of the stewardship of our children.

- B. In verse 15, we may glean another important lesson for the church in our day. It concerns our ministry to children. What is it?

We must do all that we can to facilitate children coming to know and love Christ, and so a significant part of our resources should be geared to children’s ministry. This means having an adequate facility (nursery), good teachers and nursery workers, a safe and comfortable environment, good curriculum, and efficient administration.

The majority of Christians have trusted Christ by what age?

It has been estimated by church growth experts that 80% or more of Christians trusted Christ before their 18th birthday.

What are the implications of this?

We must not neglect the ministry and teaching of our children and youth. We should pursue children aggressively in our evangelism and ministry, for, *humanly speaking*, once

they are grown, they may have missed the best opportunity they have to believe the gospel of Christ. Our children and youth are very important!

- C. In verse 15, we read that the disciples began “rebuking” those who were bringing the babies to Jesus. How do churches and Christians sometime inadvertently reflect the same attitude?
- 1. By seeing children and babies as a problem to deal with rather than as an opportunity.**
 - 2. By adopting the world’s attitude toward children rather than that of Jesus — that is, since they don’t write checks and are often unappreciative of *our* abilities, we focus on adults to the exclusion of children. (In other words, children are often incapable of responding *in kind* to our efforts.)**
 - 3. By avoiding or ignoring children in the church.**
 - 4. Finally, by simply not knowing the children of the church. Some questions we should ask ourselves: Do I make an effort to learn the children’s names? Have I developed a relationship with the children to an extent that I would be comfortable correcting them for misbehavior? Have I ever offered to take a child other than my own on an outing in order to get to know him or her better (or just called or wrote them)? Do I know where the children in the church go to school, what sports they play, what they are good at, or where they are spiritually?**
- D. What did Jesus mean in saying “the kingdom of God belongs to such as these”?
He was pointing to the children’s characteristics which should be reflected by mature believers.
- 1. Children are excited about seeing Jesus!**
 - 2. Children are open to what He says. They have not yet *made up their minds* to the extent that they think they know it all.**
 - 3. Children have no difficulty trusting or depending upon Jesus rather than themselves. They are conspicuously dependent.**
 - 4. Children enjoy the small things in life. They have not yet become jaded with the simple pleasures of life.**
- E. In verse 17, Jesus makes a strong statement regarding who may or may not enter the Kingdom of God. What does it mean to “receive” it “like a child”?
This is a reference to their capacity to *believe and trust*. It is only adults who have such difficulty believing and trusting Jesus. Children almost always have a natural affinity for Jesus.