

JESUS: THE SERVANT AT WORK

VOLUME TWO

STUDY NINETEEN

Bring On the Children!

Mark 10:13–16

How do you treat those who can do nothing for you in return? It is one of the marks of greatness.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

JOHNN WOODEN, the legendary college basketball coach of the UCLA Bruins, made a lasting impact on everyone around him. In the 1960s and 1970s, his team won ten national championships in twelve years—a winning streak that’s never been equaled. Other coaches have aspired to be like him, but he never wanted to be thought of as a celebrity, and he never demanded special treatment. Before practices, he often swept the floor of the gymnasium with his players, modeling the importance of teamwork and service.

Coach Wooden didn’t simply teach basketball; *he taught life*. He once wrote, “You cannot have a perfect day without helping others with no thought of getting something in return.”¹ Helping the helpless doesn’t sound like a formula for success, but it’s a key characteristic of those who follow Jesus, the ultimate Servant.

Through our study of the gospel of Mark, we’ve walked alongside Jesus as He served those who couldn’t give anything to Him in return. He showed kindness to outcasts whom society shunned, to the powerless who lived on society’s fringes, and to the afflicted who suffered without hope. Jesus served them when no one else would.

In the passage for this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, Jesus welcomes children and blesses them as an expression of the Father’s tender care for the weak and vulnerable. Let’s watch and admire Jesus as He pauses His busy day, puts His agenda on hold, and takes time to show kindness to the little ones.



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SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES
BIBLE STUDIES

Bring On the Children!

Mark 10:13–16



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Humility is the posture of the prayerful heart.

*The LORD is good and does what is right;
he shows the proper path to those who go astray.
He leads the humble in doing right,
teaching them his way. (Psalm 25:8–9)*

Reflect on the words of the psalmist. Recognize your own frailty and limitations. Ask God to lead you in doing what is right, to teach you His way, and to show you the proper path.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Our view of children has changed significantly since the first century AD. In most homes today, family life revolves around children's needs and activities. "Children are a gift from the LORD" (Psalm 127:3), and they should be treasured as God's special blessing. In pagan Greek and Roman culture, however, children were often neglected and abused. Parents would abandon their unwanted babies and leave them to die. Thankfully, infanticide was outlawed in Roman law during the fourth century.

We can trace the shift in society's attitude toward children to Jesus. While He was going to Jerusalem, focused on redeeming the world and absorbed in thoughts about the suffering He would endure, He paused His journey to bless children. In this passage in Mark, we see Jesus with His arms open, welcoming little ones as precious gifts from God. It's a tender moment in which we admire the Master as He displays the marks of true greatness.



Observation: Jesus Blesses the Little Children

Take the first step of the *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, observation.² Read [Mark 10:13–16](#) and imagine the broad smile on Jesus' face. Hear His laughter as the toddlers giggle and raise their arms to Him. Listen to the warmth in His expression as He blesses the children and returns them to their mothers, whose faces beam with delight.

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A Significant Scene and the Attitude of Jesus' Disciples—Mark 10:13

How did Mark describe the scene in Mark 10:13? Why did they bring the children to Jesus? How did His disciples respond? Why do you think they interfered?

Jesus is in a house with His disciples. No doubt word has traveled that this itinerant preacher, this miracle-working man has come to this area. The mothers come out of their little homes, and they arrive with their babies in arms or children in tow. What do they want? They want Him to touch them.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

The Reaction of Jesus—Mark 10:14–16

What was Jesus' response to His disciples in Mark 10:14–15? What two commands did He give them and why?

He's angry at these disciples and He gives them two commands. One is positive; the other is negative. He says, "Let them come. Don't stop that." But what makes this significant is the "for" that follows. This is called an "explanatory particle." It explains why He commands. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

According to 10:16, what did Jesus do with the children?

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Interpretation: Jesus Showed Kindness to the “Insignificant” Ones

Take the second step of the *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, interpretation. Explore terms and background information that can shed light on the meaning of [Mark 10:13–16](#).

The Greek tense of “brought” in 10:13 implies that the parents kept on “bringing” children to Jesus, but the disciples *rebuked* them. The Greek verb *epitimao*, translated “rebuked,” expresses strong disapproval. The disciples overstepped their authority by deciding who was and who wasn’t worthy of Jesus’ attention. What’s so significant about Jesus welcoming children? What point was He making?

First-century people would have found this act shocking. That’s why we read that the disciples rebuked them. You might think they are just mean-spirited bodyguards. That’s not true. “Do you realize how busy He is?” The word means “disapproval, censure, reproof, rebuke.” “Get those kids out of here.”
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Jesus “was angry with his disciples” (Mark 10:14). Look up [10:14–15](#) in the MSG and J. B. Phillips translations and see how these versions describe Jesus’ anger. Jesus wanted His disciples to learn a priceless lesson about faith from children. How would you explain Jesus’ statement that we must “receive the Kingdom of God like a child” to enter it (10:15)?

Little children have absolutely nothing to bring. So whatever a child receives, the child receives by divine grace on the basis of sheer neediness rather than any merit that might be inherent within the little boy or girl. The point of what He says is exactly what we read in that old hymn, “Rock of Ages.” “Nothing in my hand I bring; simply to the cross I cling.” Listen to this next line. “Naked, come to thee for dress; helpless, look to thee for grace.” I have nothing! That’s what it takes to join the kingdom band. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Mark noted that Jesus took the children in His arms, placed His hands on them, and “blessed them” (Mark 10:16). The Greek word for “blessed” is *kateulogeo*, from the verb that means “to speak well of someone.” The prefix intensifies the action—He blessed them fervently. How would you translate this verse using your own words? What message does this passage communicate to us?

Jesus holds these little children, and He whispers those wonderful words that only Jesus and child shared. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: Greatness in God’s Kingdom

True greatness in God’s kingdom involves blessing others—particularly those who can do nothing in return. As you compare our passage with *Matthew 18:1–5*, why is there greatness in humbling ourselves like children?

How does Jesus’ statement, “Allow the children to come to Me” (Mark 10:14 NASB), inspire your attitude toward children? What message based on *John 3:16* and *1 John 4:9–10* can you share with them?

*If there was ever a verse of Scripture promoting child evangelism, there’s the verse. The reason is when children are small, “beginning to take on life,” I often call it, they are forming opinions about many things that are significant.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll*

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What message do we find in [Luke 6:31–35](#); [Galatians 6:9–10](#); and [Philippians 4:5](#)? How should believers treat those who can do nothing for them in return?



Application: Showing Christlike Kindness

Pastor Chuck offers some questions to help you put this passage into practice in your own circles of relationships. First, *do you value, listen to, and take time for those in your immediate family?* How can you demonstrate kindness toward them?

Do you take time for your sons, your daughters? It takes time. It takes attention. Bend down. Sit on the floor. Get at their level. If they're little, hold them. When's the last time you could honestly say, I connected deeply with a child of mine or a grandchild. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Second, *do you look at, encourage, and take time for the disabled, the autistic child, the one with the congenital illness, or the adult in a wheelchair?* What is the Holy Spirit prompting you to pray and do in response to His truths?

Third, *how about caring for our aging parents or making room for those who serve you like those in uniform, the nurses, and the trash collectors?* Which group or specific person has the Lord brought to your mind so that you can show him or her kindness?

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Adults teach children how to tie their shoes, put away their toys, and get along with others. But have you thought about what children teach you?

From children we learn how to love God as they do, with open arms and an open heart. We learn to pray honestly and simply. To trust God without hesitation. To delight in Jesus and enjoy His smile. To receive His blessing and share it with others. To feel Jesus' acceptance as He wraps us in His arms. And to respond to His love by loving Him from the depths of our soul. Oh, to have the heart of a child in our walk with Jesus!



A FINAL PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for these simple yet profound truths. Help me to trust in You with childlike faith and to make my day a masterpiece as I show kindness to others who need Your touch. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

ENDNOTES

1. Pat Williams with James Denney, *Coach Wooden: The 7 Principles That Shaped His Life and Will Change Yours* (Grand Rapids: Revell, 2011), 65.
2. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page "*How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?*" at insight.org.

For the 2026–2027 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Mirlenda Noëlliste in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 2011, 2026 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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