

Becoming Childlike *Susan Dean Landry, LPC*

The prophet Isaiah foretells Jesus' coming by saying, "and a little child will lead them." (Isaiah 11:6b)

It seems we've been in the middle of "the Christmas season" since Halloween, doesn't it? Alongside aisles of candy and costumes are stockings and pre-lit reindeer for sale. And every year, it feels as though the adage "Christmas is for the kids" is so true. We see the hope and joy of the season through the eyes of children, excitedly anticipating what awaits them under the tree. But, the child who came over two thousand years ago brings *all* of us the possibility of hope and joy. Adults tend to lose the enthusiasm associated with the holidays, because, well, adulthood can be downright difficult. This is especially true for those who are alone at Christmas because of divorce, widowhood, an empty nest. The loss of joy and hope in situations such as these brings many people through the doors of the counseling office.

Yet, Hope came down in the form of a little child. Joy came to this world in the form of a little child. Our Savior came as a little child and would later tell His disciples, "Let the little children come unto Me." He also said that "unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom" and "whoever humbles himself like this child is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19:14; 18:2-4)

Many of my clients think that in order to "get right" with God, or to come into His presence, they need to clean up their act, improve themselves, achieve something, and then God will accept them. They have it backwards. Why did God tell us we must become as little children? Did he mean that children are innocent, and therefore we have to make ourselves innocent before he will care about us? If you've ever spent much time around small children, I bet you hardly see their behavior as blameless. No, Jesus knows we have to recognize our helplessness before we can see Him as our only hope. There is not a more helpless creature on earth than a newborn human! We come into this world utterly dependent on our caretakers.

How do you need to become like a little child? Do you need to humble yourself and receive Christ, who came to earth as a baby, lived a perfect, sinless life and died in your place? Or maybe you have done that, but you need to humble yourself and seek wise counsel as you struggle with your personal difficulties. We weren't meant to live in isolation; God uses His children to bring about healing and restoration amongst His children. You and I are His instruments, here to help each other along the way.

Like a little child, we can be excited and exhilarated about Christmas. When we humble ourselves, we receive salvation. We receive help. When we humble ourselves and become like little children, we experience joy, hope, and a place in a new family—the family of God. "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure" (Matthew 11:25-26).