



Berean Christian Fellowship

DEVOTIONAL 157.0

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Acting Like Illegitimate Children—P2

“You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

The reality of life is that men are but *“children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes”* (Eph. 4:14). Man is a child *“in slavery under the elemental spiritual forces of the world”* (Gal. 4:3b), *“by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind”* (Eph. 2:3b). Yet, man puts so much effort into denying he is a slave—even more that he is a child. Why? Because slaves serve others at the expense of themselves and children are dependent, ignorant, and helpless. So just like children, man “make believes” he’s bigger, more knowledgeable, and more important than he actually is.

What’s the best slave? One who believes he’s free. Like the old towns where mining companies owned the homes and stores and people thought they were free to make their own choices in a system rigged to service the owners, so satan offers man *“all the kingdoms of the world”* (Lk. 4:5b) whispering promises that “YOU can be anything you want” ; “YOU can make your dreams come true” ; “Make YOUR choices, it’s your life.” Satan gives man endless ways to spend his life in his kingdom, but the “house” always wins, for *“the wages of sin is death”* (Rom. 6:23a), because these childish fantasies retain us in our fallen state and our bondage. The promises of the flesh keep these children enslaved to the will of the flesh, which is easily manipulated by the “elemental spiritual forces,” so that these children don’t see the promise of God’s Word.

But God’s Word is not powerless—it actually can reconcile man to God, changing “illegitimate children” (Heb. 12:8b) into “sons of God” (Gal. 3:26b) and freeing slaves from the spiritual forces abusing them. God’s promise of reconciliation comes by adoption—a change in man’s position through faith in Jesus Christ. We remain children after our adoption, but our identity has changed from slaves of the world to *“heirs of the Kingdom”* (Jm. 2:5b).

HOWEVER, we bring many of our illegitimate attitudes with us when we enter God’s spiritual household. We also remain physically in the world, living in its rebellions and distractions, sometimes caught up in the fantasies of satan’s spiritual manipulation. We can find ourselves emulating the rebellious children around us, and we throw tantrums at our Father, crying, “Give me my dreams!” ; “How dare you take away what I want!” ; “How can you love me if you won’t give me what I want?” The more we play the will of the flesh, the less prepared we are to deal with the realities of our fallen nature—disappointment, suffering, and death, for *“in the world you will have tribulation”* (Jn. 16:33b). And when we *“have been grieved by various trials”* (1 Pt. 1:6b), how will we behave? Will we respond in rebellion or in obedience to our Father?

May we examine ourselves by the Spirit to see what attitudes and thoughts we have brought into our Father’s house—whether from our own time as illegitimate children before we were adopted, or perhaps from the time we spend today playing their games through TV, news, internet, etc. So much of our anger, bitterness, or frustration towards our Father, Brothers, and Sisters is a holdover from satan’s lies, which distort reality to make us think like *“children of wrath”* (Eph. 2:3b).

Praise to God our Father that through the Spirit of His Son indwelling us, we have overcome the deceiver *“who is in the world”* (1 Jn. 4:4) and are no longer his slaves—may we not behave like one to our Father’s face! Amen!