

## “Life Lessons We Learned as Kids: Wonder”

Scripture: Mark 1:21-28, Genesis 1, Psalm 77:14-20

Graphics: children, kids, bikes, summer

Big Truth: We learn all kinds of lessons as kids. Most of them we don't even know we're learning until much later in life. Yet, many of the lessons we learn as kids are God's lessons for us, since when we are young, we are more open to learning and growing. Four of those lessons are to welcome others, wonder about the world, forgive others, and share what we have. Each of those lessons is 100% biblical - lessons that Jesus taught to his disciples. As we grow in discipleship, these lessons are for us, too.

Focus Phrase: Being filled with awe and wonder about God opens us to the power and presence of God.

### 1. Introduction

- A. **PRAY!** (Jesus, you are Lord...)
- B. Robert Fulgham wrote a transformative little book called *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*. This little book has been a #1 bestseller, not because it contains such incredible wisdom that no one but Mr. Fulgham knows these things, but because everyone knows them. The problem we have is that **we forget the lessons** we learned early in life...or at least we forget to apply them to our lives as we age.
- C. At the beginning of the book, Fulgham writes this: All I really need to know about how to live and what to do and how to be I learned in kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate school mountain, but there in the sand pile at school. These are the things I learned:
  - i. Share everything.
  - ii. Play fair.
  - iii. Don't hit people.
  - iv. Put things back where you found them.
  - v. Clean up your own mess.
  - vi. Don't take things that aren't yours.
  - vii. Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody.
  - viii. Wash your hands before you eat.
  - ix. Flush.
  - x. Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you.
  - xi. Live a balanced life – learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some.
  - xii. Take a nap every afternoon.

- xiii. When you go out in the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands and stick together.
  - xiv. Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the Styrofoam cup: the roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that.
  - xv. Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even the little seed in the Styrofoam cup – they all die. So do we.
  - xvi. And then remember the Dick-and-Jane books and the first word you learned – the biggest word of all – LOOK.
- D. As I read that list, my mind began to not only agree, but to begin to hear the words of Jesus to his disciples and to US!
  - E. Here’s what our own kids ministry kids had to say about this idea of WONDER: **VIDEO**
  - F. Our kids are spot on!
  - G. This series is called *Life Lessons We Learned as Kids*. As followers of Jesus - who’ve made the decision to center our lives around the fact that there is a Savior and His name is Jesus - the lessons we learned when we were young are critical to living life as sold out Jesus people.
  - H. So...here we are. Going back to our childhood to mine the lessons that we were hopefully taught, in order to re-apply them today...in the world...in the church...in our families.
  - I. Last week we started with **Welcome**...this idea of **radical hospitality** which shares the presence of Christ with others - especially strangers. I pray you had at least one opportunity to welcome someone this week...to love them.
  - J. Today, as Robert Fulgham pointed out, we need to Be Aware of **Wonder**. Kids have this figured out.
    - i. On Christmas morning, life is full of wonder for a 7 year old. The anticipation and the awe. It’s at that age that we aren’t sure about this magical guy named Santa Claus and how that whole thing happens.
    - ii. Or the first time you experience something like Disney World, or a powerful movie. We’re not sure how that all works, but it’s amazing.
    - iii. If you were alive in the 1960s, the moon landing was a thing of wonder. So many things had to go right in order for that to happen and we barely know what any of those things were.
    - iv. If you’ve ever stood at the edge of the Grand Canyon or Niagara Falls, there are just so many more questions than answers about HOW...even as it takes your breath away.

- v. My favorite times of wonder growing up were while standing in a big open field away from lights at Camp Findley staring into the night sky and wondering HOW. How did God do all that? What really is out there? WHO really is out there? And the only words that can begin to describe it is AWE and AWESOME and WOW and HUMBLING.
- K. Church: God is AWESOME! God is WOW! God is HUMBLING!
- L. Have we, as a Christian church, especially in America, lost our child-like wonder of the God who put the stars in place? Have we lost our wonder of the mysteries and miracles of God?
- M. If we have, then what we're also missing is our willingness to be filled with the power and presence of our awesome God right here in our midst every day!
- N. Today, we're going to go back to kindergarten to recapture our sense of WONDER and, hopefully, when we leave here, we'll be like little children ready to stare into the night sky and praise our awe-inspiring God.
- O. If you're taking notes, here's where we're heading: **Being filled with awe and wonder about God opens us to the power and presence of God.**
- P. To begin, let's go to the beginning, so that we can get a little reminder about the God who made everything...

## 2. Scripture

### A. READ Genesis 1:1-5

- i. The Creation narrative continues, of course, with God creating sky and oceans, and the sun, the moon, and the STARS...and animals and people.
  - ii. In Genesis 1:27 we read, "So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."
  - iii. I don't know about you, but I have a hard time putting a simple lego set together without having to redo things...God put THIS (body) together in my mother's womb!
  - iv. Awesome! How? I have no clue!
- B. And because we have no clue how God did that, then the best we can say is what the psalmist wrote in Psalm 77:11-20: "I will call to mind the deeds of the Lord; I will remember your wonders of old. I will meditate on all your work and muse on your mighty deeds. Your way, O God, is holy. What god is so great as our God? You are the God who works wonders; you have displayed your might among the peoples. With your strong arm you redeemed your people, the descendants of Jacob and Joseph. When the waters saw you, O God, when the waters saw you, they were afraid; the very deep trembled. The clouds poured out water; the skies thundered; your arrows flashed on every side. The crash of your thunder was in the whirlwind; your lightnings lit

up the world; the earth trembled and shook. Your way was through the sea, your path through the mighty waters, yet your footprints were unseen. You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.”

- C. Throughout all human history, there have been incredible things that we have not been able to explain. And we have to acknowledge that God knows a vast number of things that we don't and can't know.
- D. Now, with the advance of medical science and other technologies, there are things that the ancient church didn't and couldn't know that we know.
- E. However, the new things we know are but a drop in the bucket of what we still DON'T know that God knows.
- F. That's humbling for us. And I think it inspires us to want to be in right-relationship with this God who is far more than we can imagine.
- G. Now, it's one thing to be in awe of God because of creation or the stars in the sky or the world He created. Those things makes us go, “Hmmm.” And we have to admit we DON'T know how the universe was made. We've tried to come up with some theories...but because we don't have all the information we need, nor are we eternal, are ideas are but theories and always will be.
- H. And many times, we're content with not knowing about things like creation of the universe or how many stars are out there. In general, it doesn't impact our daily lives or faith as followers of Jesus. Yes, we have faith that there is a God who created and He has it all under control, but we don't have to figure it out...or even really explain it or defend it.
- I. Yet, there ARE some things that we are confronted with in the bible that tell of incredible events that are way more tangible, that are just as amazing and incredible.
- J. I mean, let's start with the fact that we serve a risen Lord who is risen today! The resurrection of Jesus is THE most important event in the history of the universe. How did God do that? We have no idea! In fact, there are less 'theories' that hold water about THAT than the ones that focus on the creation of the universe.
- K. And if you back up from the resurrection, to the miracles of Jesus, you begin to see that there are a WHOLE LOT of things in the New Testament (and the Old) that leave us with only a state of wonder.
- L. Like a child staring at a juggler who has 10 balls in the air, or at a magician who just made someone disappear, we read about the incredible miracles of Jesus, and all we can DO is wonder with our mouths hanging open...in awe of something we can not explain.
- M. Let me illustrate this with just one example from the gospel of Mark (and there are MANY others). Turn with me to Mark 1:21-28...

## N. READ Mark 1:21-28

- i. The people around Jesus were astounded at his teaching. They were amazed when he cast out the demon and healed (freed) the man with the unclean spirit.
- ii. Did they know how Jesus knew how to teach what he was teaching? No.
- iii. Did they know how Jesus cast out that demon? No.
- iv. Were they filled with awe and wonder? You bet! Why? Because what Jesus was doing was miraculous and filled with the authority of God.

### 3. Application

- A. As I suggested earlier, the American Christian Church has by and large lost its child-like wonder of the power and presence of God to do miraculous things.
- B. The problem with losing our child-like wonder is that with it goes our faith in the power of God to do miracles right here right now...in MY life.
- C. One criticism of the modern church in the West is that we're comfortable and content. We have what we need. If God does amazing things in the midst of our comfort and contentment, we certainly aren't going to stop him.
- D. But as Dr. Jessica Lagrone says, "Miracles are always preceded by desperate people with faith that Jesus can do something miraculous."
- E. We don't have a higher sense of wonder because we often aren't desperately asking for and anticipating that Jesus is going to perform a miracle in our lives...in our church...in our community.
- F. Yet, if we take time to look into the night sky, or call a miracle a miracle, or anticipate that God will make a way where there seems to be no way, then we begin to recapture the child-like wonder and awe in this Jesus who walked out of his own grave...and can do the same for me and you!
- G. I want to be in awe and wonder of God. I want to not know everything there is to know about Him. If I think I do, then God becomes less and we KNOW He is never less than!
- H. So, how DO we recapture the wonder of God so that the power of God is present to heal and transform lives more and more?
  - i. First, **Stop believing that we have it all figured out.**
    - a. We, as a society are pretty smart. We even created robots to everything we used to do, and now they're taking over the world. Scary.
    - b. Yet, we can't truly created a human. We can't put stars in the sky. We have a hard enough time figuring out how to limit Artificial Intelligence.
    - c. We have to stop playing God and let God BE God!

- d. We read in Psalm 77, “What god is so great as our God?” The answer throughout all time has been, “No god.”
- ii. Second, **Keep observing Jesus at work in the bible.**
  - a. If we want to know what God CAN do, we must know what God HAS done. And to know what God HAS done, we only need look into the pages of the bible to read of this incredibly loving and powerful God who chose us and equips us...who heals us and uses us for His glory.
  - b. He parted the seas. He caused the sun and rain to stop. He healed lepers and children who were dead and women who were bleeding for years. Jesus gave sight to the blind and made the lame walk. Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead and then walked out of his own grave.
  - c. Now, you don't have to believe those events ever happened. That's free will. Yet, in order for the power and presence of Jesus to change YOUR life, then faith in those God-events is mandatory.
  - d. Get into the word...let it soak into your life.
- iii. Finally, to recapture our wonder, **Celebrate the power and presence of Jesus in your life today.**
  - a. Jesus is alive! And because Jesus is alive, it means He's not done with the world and he's not done with you or me.
  - b. Be ready to see Jesus at work TODAY...in your life...in the lives of those around you...healing when the doctors said there's no chance. Lives changed from addiction and anger to grace and obedience to God.
  - c. If you're not looking for Jesus at work, then Jesus may be at work but you'll miss. When we miss it, we grow cold to Jesus' miraculous work.
  - d. And the devil would like nothing more than for us to grow cold to the incredible ways that Jesus is at work in the world...to lose our wonder and awe of His power and life-transforming work.
  - e. Jesus was, is, and will continue to be the Lord of miracles and changed lives! Even yours. Even today.
- I. Being filled with awe and wonder about God opens us to the power and presence of God.

#### **4. Conclusion**

- A. I think Robert Fulgham was on to something, but unfortunately I don't think he went deep enough. We may have learned all we really need to know in kindergarten, but if we don't apply that to today, then we haven't learned a thing. And as we follow Jesus, humbly and sacrificially, Jesus commands our wonder and awe. There are things we cannot explain in the church - like what

happens at baptism or during communion. It's a mystery, just like creation and miracles and birth and what happens after death.

- B. Yet, what we DO know, which is equally as amazing and wonderful, is that He continues to love us, even while we're still sinners.
- C. Let me end with the lyrics to a song called The Wonder of it All.

D. **The Wonder of it All**

There's the wonder of sunset at evening,  
The wonder as sunrise I see;  
But the wonder of wonders that thrills my soul  
Is the wonder that God loves me.

O, the wonder of it all! The wonder of it all!  
Just to think that God loves me.  
O, the wonder of it all! The wonder of it all!  
Just to think that God loves me.

There's the wonder of springtime and harvest,  
The sky, the stars, the sun;  
But the wonder of wonders that thrills my soul  
Is a wonder that's only begun.

- E. Being filled with awe and wonder about God opens us to the power and presence of God.
- F. We did it in kindergarten. We can do it today!
- G. Let's pray...