

HOW BIG ARE YOU?

We often hear someone tell a child, "Oh, you're getting to be a big boy/girl". They grow up in a hurry, don't they? It seems like one day you have a little child and the next a young adult. Well, that's what we want them to do isn't it, grow up? Who would want their child to always remain a child?

The Bible portrays Christians as being the "children" of God. John said that those who received Christ had the "power to become the sons of God" (John 1:12). Later, John wrote, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God..." (I John 3:1). Paul wrote, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:16).

Now if we be the children of God, we KNOW that our heavenly Father desires that we grow up also. He tells us through one of His inspired penmen, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 3:18). And, He inspired the Hebrew writer to write, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe" (Heb. 5:12-13).

So, how big are you? Have you grown up as a child of God? We often use the word "matured". Are you a mature child of God or are you still a babe? Consider the following as indicators of which you are.

(1) How well do you know the word of God? Are you able to teach the plan of salvation to any that you come in contact with that will give you the opportunity? (I Peter 3:15)

(2) How about your desire to teach the lost? Only a babe could possibly fail to have a real desire to see those lost souls around him/her saved. (Jude 23)

(3) How much desire do you have to spend time with your brethren and in the worship of the Lord? If one truly loves the Lord, they will desire to be present at every opportunity. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

(4) What is really important to you in life? Is it the things of this life or the proper preparation for the next? (Mark 8:36-37)

Brethren, if you have been a child of God for some time and still have not grown up, you are in danger of loosing your soul. *Tilis*

SWALLOWING CAMELS

The Pharisees were famous for camel swallowing! What is "camel swallowing" one might ask. Let Jesus explain it for you. Jesus said, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel" (Matt. 23:23-24). One of the most extreme examples of hypocrisy on the part of the Pharisees can be found shortly after the Lord was arrested. These Pharisees had sought means by which they could kill the Son of God. They were finally able to falsely arrest Him, go through a mock trial and convince Pilate to condemn Him and to then crucify the Son of God. But, when Judas, after having betrayed the Lord, came back to them and cast down the thirty pieces of silver in the temple, they said, "It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood" (Matt. 27:6).

Now, let me get this straight. Lying, bribery, violating the law of Moses, as well as Roman law numerous times is alright, but putting the money that was paid for the betrayal of the Lord back into the treasury from which it came was not to be tolerated. In fact, it was not "blood money" yet. It would not be, until they completed what they intended to do! Many commentators cite Deuteronomy 23:18 as the law forbidding them to put "blood money" into the treasure. There is nothing in that verse about "blood money". It is likely that the "blood money law" was just another of the traditions of their fathers, such as the one about failing to care for their parents because what they had was called a gift (Matt. 15:4-6).

It would seem that there are many today who have many of these traditions of their fathers that they hold to dearly while ignoring those things that the Lord actually commanded them to do. They go around professing themselves to be righteous, but refusing to obey God which in fact means that they are not righteous. It may be in many of these cases that they are as Paul's Roman brethren that had "a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:2-3). Just spit out the camels and swallow God's word! *Tilis*