

It is instructive to see how the Lord Jesus Christ handled the situation when His disciples were wrangling about who would be the greatest in the Kingdom. Their discussion reflecting their ambitious spirit came on the heels of the Lord's announcement of His coming suffering.²¹ It is frightening to see how these good men could ignore the prospect of His cross for their own future concerns. Their self-centered thoughts produced envy that threatened to drive them apart. Again A. B. Bruce observes, "...vanity and jealousy lie very near each other."²² The Lord's rebuke came in the form of a little child: "...Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them." (Matt. 18:2)

b. Self-forgetfulness is the key.

The restraint Jesus used as well as the nature of the visual lesson are of great value to those interested in interpersonal relationships. The child provided a living example of unpretentiousness and humility. The innocent, trusting face of the little boy or girl witnessed to an unconsciousness to class, status, upward mobility and the like.

When we grow older, unfortunately, we become more conscious of ourselves as we compare ourselves with others. In this age, this tendency is goaded into an obsession by the unremitting quest for identity, a better self-image, self-awareness, self-actualization, etc.²³

²¹Matt. 18:1-6.

²²Bruce, Training the Twelve, p. 200.

²³Thomas Howard, "Who Am I? Who Am I?," Christianity Today, July 8, 1977.