

THE STEWARDSHIP PAPERS

All You Have to Do Is Ask

Somehow, the word always gets back to a parent when a child has tried something “for himself.”

There was the day, for instance, when I walked into the kitchen and stuck to the floor. Now, the first day, I didn’t think too much of it, but merely washed the floor and went about my business. But the second day, I realized that something was “afoot.”

On the third day, I was in time to peek around the corner and see a tiny pair of hands pouring orange juice from a very large container into a very small cup. The inevitable spill occurred; but a “halo” shone (albeit, somewhat crookedly) when a towel was produced in an attempt to clean up the mess. It was used in good faith to smear the orange juice all over the rest of the floor.

“Practicing pouring?” I inquired.

“Yes,” came the reply, “and cleaning up.”

Not so different from “adults,” I thought, and wondered if the Lord watches us in much the same way that I watched this child...for we do what we feel we ought to, and still the messes occur. And when we try to straighten things without the help of our Father, we

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find that eventually someone (maybe even ourselves) gets mired down in the original mess.

“Would you like some help?” I offered.

“No! I can do it myself!” came the reply; so I leaned my back against a wall and watched for a bit.

I suppose it’s a learning process, Lord; but sometimes it’s prudent to ask for help...though it takes a certain maturity to realize it.

The “pouring exercise” continued with such a look of concentration that the child soon forgot all about me...until, that is, the glass, newly filled, was tipped inadvertently and its contents spilled all over the floor, again. She looked up, pathetically, with tears in her eyes; and the words came haltingly, “I...need some...help.”

And I hurried over to bundle her in my arms...

“It’s O.K., sweetie. We’ll clean it up and try again. That was a pretty big pitcher...Should we get something smaller to pour from?”

And the tiny arms encircled my neck as she nodded her assent.

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Much later, I remembered what Jesus said:

“I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you.” [John 14:18]

and wondered at how (like a child who learns to pour from a pitcher by watching the parent) we learn to “pour of ourselves,” by embracing the Son.

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