

The Faith of a Child

I've been thinking a lot about childlike curiosity lately, and what it means to return to being a child. I first started to think more about this after reading *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* by Friedrich Nietzsche, where he discusses the three metamorphoses of the spirit: first, the Camel, then the Lion, and finally, the Child.

First, you are a Camel, carrying as much of the world's weight on your back as you can. Then you become a Lion, carving your own path and living on your own terms. Finally, you transform into a Child.

When I think about the final evolution being a Child, it makes sense: a child has endless potential for growth, isn't yet hardened by societal norms, or trapped by what they think they know about the world. A child has infinite potential.

A Child is a Slave?

Think about it: a child has no rights.

In the ancient Greek and Roman worlds, children were often sold into slavery, forced into labor, and had no rights in society. A child has no identity, relying entirely on the guidance of a parent or figure of authority.

Now, if you think about the child submitting to the ultimate authority, that authority would be God.

If you think about the ultimate hierarchy for a functioning society, it is:

- God
- Tribe
- Land

The Importance of Tribe

I spent a year in a rural village in Zambia, Africa, amongst the Bemba tribe. I learned the local language and worked in fish farming. During my time there, I was integrated into a local family, becoming a surrogate member of the Bemba tribe.

At the center of my village, there was a church. This church was the foundation and the rock that held down the community. Everybody gathered there, and at the center of the church was the altar — the place of sacrifice — where everyone reminded themselves of the archetype, the hero, Jesus Christ.

Because everyone gathered at the church, they submitted to God's will and put Him at the top of the hierarchy.

Everyone in the village was **driving upwards**, sharing land horizontally across families, while striving **vertically** toward God.

The family unit was the ultimate authority. Everyone within the family and the tribe had a role to play:

- Mothers came home with babies on their backs and firewood on their heads every morning.
- Girls woke up to the sound of mortar and pestle, preparing food for the day.
- Boys built bricks with sand and mud.
- Men built churches and homes, or fished at the lake.

There was a certain human thriving I witnessed in these rural villages of Zambia that I have never seen before — and certainly feel is neglected in the West today. I believe it has to do with the correct hierarchy: **God, Tribe, and Land**.

Remove Your Identity

In the United States, we are obsessed with individualism, consumerism, and differentiating ourselves by purchasing things. However, I believe in *true* individualism.

If you look at the word *identity*, it derives from the Latin word *idem*, meaning "**the same.**"

Essentially, the more people consume and the more they identify with external things, the **more they actually become the same** — and not true individuals at all.

A Child Has No Identity

A child does not subscribe to political ideologies, go to stores to buy things, identify with religious practices, or follow dogmas and traditions.

A child is merely a **slave to authority**.

A child has no real idea of what is right or wrong until they engage in play with other children and learn how to form interpersonal relationships.

To be a child, once again, is to have no fixed identity — to be a complete slave to God's will.

In the first book of the Bible, the Old Testament's *Genesis*, God makes a covenant with man, with Abraham.

God's promise to Abraham was:

- **Land** (modern-day Israel)
- **Descendants** (Tribe)
- **Blessings** throughout the nations

Once again: the ultimate hierarchy — **God, Tribe, Land**.

When God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, Isaac voluntarily offered his body for sacrifice, carrying the wood willingly, submitting to God.

As Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son, God intervened and replaced Isaac with a ram.

Fast-forward 2,000 years later:

In the New Testament, we see Jesus carrying his cross, in the same general region of Jerusalem.

Jesus voluntarily sacrificed His flesh and body — the ultimate fulfillment of the New Covenant.

One of Jesus Christ's most famous teachings was that in order to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, you must return to being a child:

"Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

(Matthew 18:3, ESV)

Perhaps to return to being a child is to **strip away your identity, voluntarily pick up your cross**, and **embrace the suffering and burden of life itself**, becoming a slave to God's will.

The Artist's Role: Purity and Creation

Especially as artists, maybe it is most important to embrace life with **purity, innocence, and a natural trust** that everything happens as it should — despite the cynicism and negativity modern society imposes upon us.

The horizontal plane — the material world, wealth, fame, fortune — is merely a distraction.

We must embrace simplicity, the divine connection on the **vertical plane**, striving upwards and beyond the material, toward the metaphysical world through the act of **creation**.

Perhaps, after all, **the creation of art is the closest thing to touching the metaphysical plane**.