

## AMBER ALERT!

You drop your child off at school, you watch as he is greeted by the teacher and disappears into the building. You go to work and go about the day's chores. You get a frantic call from the school saying there was some sort of mix-up on the play ground and your child is missing. As you rush to your car a thousand thoughts and emotions flood your mind! *"I thought he was safe there, I should have done something differently!"*

As you are driving to the school you notice the **"Amber alert"** signs are already flashing the news, ***"Missing, 6 Year Old male, Brown Hair, Blue Eyes, Red shirt, blue Jeans, white sneakers, Last Seen at Midtown Elementary School"*** It crushes you to see the description of your own child on that sign, as you have seen so many others over the years.

When you arrive at the school, the press is already there, cameras and reporters everywhere, your spouse is surrounded by people, the questions are coming at what seems like 100 per second, when they see that you are there, you and your spouse are taken into an office where you both are bombarded by frantic questions.

You learn that an organized search is already underway. Local law enforcement, emergency management personal and an army of volunteers are searching all over town. About all you can do is sit with your head in your hands and pray to God that your child is returned unharmed.

Then the word comes in that he has been found! Cheers go up from the crowd. You are told that he is being brought to you at this moment. You have never been this anxious before in your entire life! As the child is ushered into the room and the man who found him is being congratulated you look, and the child standing there is obviously older than 6, he has blond hair and blue eyes and is wearing a brown shirt and tan pants and brown shoes!

This is not my child! You shout frantically! *"Well"*, said the man who found the child, *"It's a boy and one boy is as good as another right!"* *"I thought you would be happy with just any child!"* *"Besides, I have more important things to do than to spend the whole day searching for your child, so take this one and accept it and be glad you have it!"*

An extreme example, perhaps, but the principle is this. **In so many areas of our lives, we expect God to accept whatever we offer. God has told us what He expects of us, and yet we often expect Him to be happy with whatever we give.**

In the areas of worship and daily service to God our best is expected (John 4:24; Romans 12:1-2), but we sometimes try to force God to accept less than our best. This is a not a new thing. Cain was rejected along with his offering and Able was accepted along with his offering Genesis 4:4-5. Attitude was as much a part of their offering as were the elements offered.

Of course, it starts at the leadership level and goes through the ranks! It starts with those of us who should know better? Could it be that those who fill pulpits across the world and those who serve as elders have left the example that God will accept our worship no matter with what attitude it is offered? Is God anymore pleased with us than He was with the O.T. priests who acted likewise (see Malachi 2:7-9).

**The chief lesson from all of this is that God expects the best from His people.** A half-hearted attitude is not enough either in worship or in our daily service. **Now back to the story.** Suppose the searcher who brought you the wrong child sees how heart-broken you are and he apologizes profusely. He then goes out and diligently searches until he finds your child and brings him home safely. God gives us all numerous chances to repent, as long as there is life there is hope!