



The King and His Kingdom *Matthew 18*

Life Lessons About Living Your Kingdom Faith

Lessons on Pride and Humility: (18:1-14)

"Who is the greatest?" *I should be!* is what our self-centered, sinful nature answers. This is Satan's twisted view of greatness, what follows is God's:

Rom 12:10 *Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another **above yourselves**. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.*

1 Peter 5:5-7 *All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." 6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, **that he may lift you up in due time.***

Jesus gives us the example of a child like faith. Children are clearly not sinless but they do have the characteristics Jesus values and says we should value as well: they trust, hunger to learn, are simple in their wants, have hopeful outlooks, and depend on their parents to meet their needs.

The Parable of the Lost Sheep 18:10-14) teach us about how God values each of us individually and His persistent pursuit of us when we wander.

Lessons on Forgiveness (18:15-35)

Christ is dealing with "family matters" and He moves now from children to the relationship between brethren. If all Christians were perfect, there would be no need for these instructions, but because we fail and sin, we need to know how to keep the church family happy and holy.

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Church Discipline (15-20) God's tool for keeping the body healthy and protected.

There is no doubt that things can and do go wrong between Christians. God calls us to **act quickly** so Satan doesn't get a foothold on us so this root of bitterness can grow into hatred and death.

The pattern for dealing with sin between believers is clear:

- First a private meeting to bring about reconciliation, if this fails...
- then bring two or three witnesses, if this fails
- take it to the church so the sin has nowhere to hide in the darkness and secretly grow like an undetected cancer , if this fails
- treat him as a pagan and a tax collector, which means to avoid him or her in the hopes that this treatment will finally get his or her attention and as a warning to the church. Note the ultimate goal: "You have gained a brother" (v, 15)

A point of clarification on "judging:" We are not called to judge those outside of the church but we are to judge, on the basis of God's Word, fellow Christians who have wandered into sinful behavior.

1 Cor. 5:12-13 *It isn't my responsibility to judge outsiders, but it **certainly is your responsibility to judge those inside the church who are sinning.** 13 God will judge those on the outside; but as the Scriptures say, "You must remove the evil person from among you." (Deut.17:7)*

Lessons on Mercy (18:21-35) "The Unmerciful Servant" The last verse explains what this parable really means: *"This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."* Matt 18:35

Just as we love because we were first loved, we forgive because we were first forgiven. Discuss this and what it means to forgive from the heart with your small group. Only with Christ's power can we do this!