

Matthew 18

Day 1

Relationships. Read Matthew 18:1-5

4TH DISCOURSE 18:1-35

True Greatness

1. What question did the disciples have? 18:1 (See what preceded this question in Luke 9:46.)
 - What does the disciples arguments over greatness show about their hearts and their idea of leadership? *Think about the things some of the disciples had seen and done. Why would it have been tempting to start feeling proud and better than others?*

2. How did Jesus respond to the question? 18:2 What effect do you think a child standing among them had?
 - What else did Jesus do? Mark 9:36 What does this reveal about Jesus' attitude and manner in the midst of all the animosity and chaos He was facing?

3. What two things did Jesus say a person must do to enter the kingdom? 18:3
 - What are some qualities you think He was referring to when He said "*become as little children?*" (What do you think Jesus was conveying about trust, dependence, and receptiveness? What was He saying about merit and standing?)

Food for Thought: This child "had no status, no importance, except as a responsibility for others to care for. To become like a child is to renounce any notions of self-importance and to embrace insignificance. This is true humility (Phil. 2:6-11)...We must welcome each other in the church as people who all have the same status - that is, no status (See James 2:1-4). Powerlessness is a good quality in the upside-down kingdom of heaven. To be a citizen of heaven means abandoning one's rights and living to serve, not to gain power." - Africa Bible Commentary (1146)

4. How did Jesus define greatness? 18:4
 - Mark 9:35 adds to this account: "*Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, 'If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all.'*" NIV How would you explain what Jesus was saying?

5. What did Jesus connect with receiving a child in His name? 18:5 (Cf. 10:42) (What value does this give to every individual in God’s eyes? What value does it give to every action?)

6. How should we regard others? Philippians 2:3,4

- What attitude should we have? 2:5-7 (See also Matthew 20:28)

7. Read 1 Peter 5:1-4. List the contrasts given in verses 2 and 3.

	“not”	“but”
Vs. 2		
Vs. 2		
Vs. 3		

- What does the command to “shepherd” (v. 2a) convey?
- What picture do these instructions give of servanthood and “greatness.”

Applying the Word: What are some of the most constructive qualities in leaders that you have served under? How did they model the kind of greatness Jesus talked about? How did they most encourage you?

Day 2
Read Matthew 18:6-20

Stumbling Blocks

8. How does the Lord regard actions that cause another person to stumble (“offend, trip up”)? 18:6 (What did Jesus say about the religious leaders? Luke 11:46)

9. What did Jesus say about “stumbling blocks/offences/sin” in the world *versus* being a part of it? 18:7

Offense/stumbling block *skandalon* Strong's NT:4625 "scandal"; probably from a derivative of NT:2578; a trap-stick (bent sapling), i.e. snare (figuratively, cause of displeasure or sin)

Skandalon originally was "the name of the part of a trap to which the bait is attached, hence, the trap or snare itself...In NT *skandalon* is always used metaphorically, and ordinarily of anything that arouses prejudice, or becomes a hindrance to others, or causes them to fall by the way." - Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

10. How should we regard stumbling blocks in our own life? 18:8,9 (Cf. 5:29,30)

- Besides pointing to preventive measures, what do these instructions indicate about the intensity of battling sin? Romans 8:12-13; Colossians 3:5

FYI: Cut it off... "There are significant problems in taking these words as literal instruction instead of conveying an attitude. The problem is not only from the obvious physical harm that one might bring upon themselves, but more so in the problem that bodily mutilation does not go *far enough* in controlling sin. We need to be transformed from the inside out. If I cut off my right hand, I can still sin with my left. If my left eye is gouged out, my right eye can still sin - and if all such members are gone, I can still sin in my heart and mind. God calls us to a far more radical transformation than any sort of bodily mutilation can address." - David Guzik

11. What types of stumbling blocks did Paul encounter against him and his ministry? (Look up two.)

- Acts 13:50; 14:2; 15:24
- Romans 16:17,18
- 1 Corinthians 3:1-4; 11:18,19
- Galatians 1:6-7; 2:4,5
- Colossians 2:8
- 2 Timothy 4:10, 14-16

12. What tender care does the Lord have toward little ones? 18:10 (See Hebrews 1:14)

Look down on/despise NT:2706 *kataphroneo*; to think against, i.e. disesteem

Little *mikros* NT:3398, "little, small" (the opposite of *megos*, "great"), is used (a) of persons, with regard to (1) station, or age...(2) rank or influence." - Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

"**Little ones** means all disciples, not just literal children (11:25; 25:40)." - Africa Bible Commentary (1146)
[See John 13:33]

13. What does Jesus' mission (18:11) say about Him? What does it say about us?

(Matt 18:11 is not included in some modern translations of the Bible because it is not found in the earliest Greek manuscripts. Some believe a copyist inserted it from Luke 19:10 which reads "*For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.*")

Applying the Word: *When have you had the most success at serving and putting others first? In what areas are you most challenged to do that? How has someone been the "wind beneath your wings."*

Day 3

Read Matthew 18:12-20

Parable of the Lost Sheep

14. In the parable of the lost sheep (18:12-14):

- Who took the initiative when a sheep was lost and what did he do?
- How did the shepherd react when he found the lost sheep?
- What does this say about the love and care of the Father for each "one"?

Digging Deeper

For a beautiful picture of God's shepherding care for His people, see Ezekiel 34:11-16

15. What did Jesus call Himself in John 11:11-14, and how did He describe His love for the sheep?

Confronting Sin

16. When we have been offended, how should we first confront our brother? 18:15 How does this make reconciliation easier? What issues does it help avoid?

- Besides resolving the problem, what good outcome can that bring?

17. When are others to be brought in and why? 18:16 Cf. Deut. 19:15 (What protection would two or three witnesses give?)

18. To whom should the man be held accountable if there is still no resolution? 18:17a

- What is the last action to be taken? 18:17b Cf. Deuteronomy 19:15 (What did Paul add to this? 2 Thessalonians 3:14,15)

FYI: "The unrepentant one must be treated just as we should treat a heathen and a tax collector - with great love, with the goal of bringing about a full repentance and reconciliation."
- David Guzik

19. In the following verses, underline how "*rebuking*" (16:3) should be done. Circle the goal of the confrontation.

- Galatians 6:1 Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. NIV
- 2 Timothy 2:25 Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, NIV

20. Underline what scripture says about wise correction.

- Proverbs 9:9 Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning. NIV
- Proverbs 25:11,12 Timely advice is lovely, like golden apples in a silver basket.12 To one who listens, valid criticism is like a gold earring or other gold jewelry. NLT
- Proverbs 1:5 let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance-- NIV
- Proverbs 13:18 He who ignores discipline comes to poverty and shame, but whoever heeds correction is honored. NIV
- Proverbs 15:31-32 If you listen to constructive criticism, you will be at home among the wise. 32 If you reject discipline, you only harm yourself; but if you listen to correction, you grow in understanding. NLT

Digging Deeper

What did Paul encounter in the Corinthian church? 1 Cor. 5:1,2

What did Paul advise? 1 Cor 5:2

Later, after the person had turned from this lifestyle, what did Paul say? 2 Cor. 2:6-8

21. How did Jesus affirm the disciples' authority on earth? 18:18,19

- How did He encourage them? 18:20

FYI: "The expressions '**bind**' and '**loose**' were common to Jewish legal phraseology meaning to declare something forbidden or to declare it allowed...The apostles did not usurp Christ's lordship and authority over individual believers and their eternal destiny, but they did exercise the authority to discipline." - got questions.org

Bind...loose "As in 16:19, the (perfect) tenses imply that what is loosed or bound on earth will have been determined already in heaven." - The Nelson Study Bible (1607)

"Peter accomplishes this binding and loosing by proclaiming a gospel that has already been given and by making personal application on that basis (Simon Magus)." - Expositor's Bible Commentary

"**Gathering in the name of Jesus** means gathering according to His character and will, and gathering in a manner Jesus would endorse." - David Guzik

Applying the Word: *When have you seen a conflict handled wisely and lovingly? What was done right in addressing the issue? How was the person treated? What was the result?*

Day 4

Forgiveness. Read Matthew 18:21-35

22. What question did Jesus' instructions raise in Peter's mind? 18:21

FYI: "Actually, Peter was being very generous in his willingness to forgive up to seven times. The traditional limit was three times." - The Nelson Study Bible (1607)

23. How **forgiving** are we to be? 18:22 (See Luke 17:5 for how did the apostles felt about these teachings..)

- Why? Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13

FYI: Seventy-seven times/Seventy times seven "Times without number" - The NIV Study Bible (1468)

24 Forgiveness is an issue that is stressed over and over in scripture? What makes it so critical in the lives of believers and the health of the church? What makes it so challenging? (See 1 Peter 3:8-9)

25. Underline what God does with our sins:

- Psalm 103:12 as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. NIV
- Isaiah 43:25 "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more. NIV
- Micah 7:19 You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea. NIV
- Romans 4:7-8 "Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him." NIV
- Colossians 2:13-14 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, NIV
- 2 Corinthians 5:19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. NIV
- Hebrews 8:12 For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." NIV

Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

26. What things did Jesus compare in the parable illustrating forgiveness? 18:23

27. How big a debt did one of the servants owe the king? 18:24 (What kind of debt do we owe the Lord?)

FYI: "Though commentators list the modern value of 10,000 talents as anywhere between \$12 million and \$1 billion, the figure clearly represents an unpayable debt."
- David Guzik

28. What was the penalty for not being able to pay? 18:25 (See Romans 7:14)

- What was the servant's plea? 18:26

29. List the words that describe the king's response in 18:27. (What is God's response to our helplessness? Ephesians 2:4-7 Note the adjectives describing God.)

FYI: "The king realized that his servant, despite his promises, will never be able to pay back the debt. So he exercises mercy, cancels the debt, and lets the servant go...This parable reminds us that our moral debt to God is incalculable. Every human thought, word or deed, however lofty, is tainted with sin (Psalm 5)."
- Africa Bible Commentary (1147)

30. Afterward, how did the slave treat a fellow slave who owed him a small amount of money? 18:28 What does this reveal about his heart?

FYI: "The servant whose lord forgave him much, ten thousand talents, equivalent to several millions of dollars, was unwilling to forgive another servant who owed him a hundred denarii. A denarius was a day's wage and was worth approximately sixteen cents."
- gotquestions.org

31. How did the fellow slave respond? 18:29 (Compare 18:26)

- List the words that describe the slave's response in 18:30. (Compare 18:27)

32. When the king heard about this treatment, how did he judge the slave? 18:32-35

33. What does a life of unforgiveness and hatred to others indicate? See 1 John 4:20-5:1

FYI: "The principle here is, "the one forgiven much should forgive much." In other words, the principle of forgiveness is that grace or forgiveness to another is without limit... a child of God by faith through Christ has had all sins forgiven. Therefore, when someone offends or sins against us we should be willing to forgive him from a heart of gratitude for the grace to which we ourselves are debtors."
- gotquestions.com

"In the context of the proclamation of the salvation of the Messiah from sin, a person is proclaimed **forgiven** based upon the condition of faith (Matt 9). In the context of describing true and false disciples in the kingdom, those who do not **forgive** are not true disciples (Matt 18)."
- <https://bible.org/article/divine-forgiveness-conditional-or-unconditional-gospel-matthew>

34. How are we enabled to forgive and love others? Ephesians 3:16,17

Applying the Word: *How does forgiveness of another for their wrongdoing free us? (How is forgiving the **offender** different than trying to forget the **offense**? Who alone can avenge and heal the offense or hurt? Read Romans 12:17-21)*