

STUDYING THE BOOK OF MATTHEW
IN SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Lesson 72 - The Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven - Matthew 18:1-9

Read the following verses in the New International Version or a translation of your choice. Then discuss the questions that follow. Questions should be studied by each individual before your discussion group meets.

Materials may be copied and used for Bible study purposes. Not to be sold.

MT 18:1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

MT 18:2 He called a little child and had him stand among them. [3] And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. [4] Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

MT 18:5 "And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. [6] But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

MT 18:7 "Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin! Such things must come, but woe to the man through whom they come! [8] If your hand or your foot causes you to sin cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. [9] And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lesson 72 - The Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven - Matthew 18:1-9

- 867. What question did the disciples ask Jesus? (18:1)
- 868. What did Christ do to illustrate His answer to the disciples' question? (18:2)
- 869. What did Jesus say one had to be like in order to enter the kingdom of heaven? (18:3)
- 870. How did Jesus finally answer the question that had been put to Him? (18:4)
- 871. What quality makes for true greatness? (18:4)
- 872. Why did Jesus say a person's treatment of children was significant? (18:5)

873. What advice did Jesus give to those who would cause a young follower of Christ to sin? (18:6)

874. What "woes" did Jesus pronounce in this situation? (18:7)

875. What comment did Jesus make that suggests the inevitability of sin in this world? (18:7)

876. What radical figures of speech did Christ use to show the severity of sin? How? (18:8-9)

877. What are the consequences of sin? (18:8-9)

Lesson 73 - The Parable of the Lost Sheep - Matthew 18:10-14

MT 18:10 "See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven. [11] For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost."

MT 18:12 "What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? [13] And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. [14] In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lesson 73 - The Parable of the Lost Sheep - Matthew 18:10-14

878. How does God protect children? (18:10)

879. Who is especially important to God? Why? (18:10)

880. What command about children did Jesus give the disciples? (18:10)

881. What kind of guardians did Jesus suggest children have? (18:10)

882. To whom do angels have constant access? (18:10)

883. What kind of pastoral imagery did Jesus use to illustrate His point about the value of a soul? (18:12)

884. How did Jesus say the owner of one hundred sheep would react if just one of his sheep wandered off? (18:12)

885. According to Jesus, how would the owner of a lost sheep react upon finding his lost sheep? (18:13)

886. How did Jesus compare sheep to the way God views lost children? (18:14)

887. How did Jesus describe God? Why? (18:14)

Lesson 74 - A Brother Who Sins Against You - Matthew 18:15-20

MT 18:15 "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. [16] But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' [17] If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

MT 18:18 "I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

MT 18:19 "Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. [20] For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lesson 74 - A Brother Who Sins Against You - Matthew 18:15-20

888. What situation was Jesus addressing in this context? (18:15)

889. What did Jesus set forth as the first step in resolving conflict? (18:15)

890. What positive consequences can result from resolving conflict? (18:15)

891. What should we do if a person will not listen to correction and does not want to work things out? (18:16)

892. What Old Testament principle is in view here? (18:16)

893. What did Jesus say to do if a person doing wrong won't listen to correction? (18:17)

894. What extreme measures should be used if a wrongdoer turns a deaf ear to all pleas to reconcile? (18:17)

895. How can Christians and/or churches be certain they have authority to exercise discipline? (18:18)

896. What assurance did Jesus give His disciples about answered prayer? (18:19)

897. What special promise did Jesus make to groups that gather in His name? (18:20)

Lesson 75 - The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant - Matthew 18:21-35

MT 18:21 Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?"

MT 18:22 Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

MT 18:23 "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. [24] As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. [25] Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

MT 18:26 "The servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' [27] The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

MT 18:28 "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded.

MT 18:29 "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.'

MT 18:30 "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. [31] When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened.

MT 18:32 "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. [33] Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' [34] In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

MT 18:35 "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lesson 75 - The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant - Matthew 18:21-35

898. What question did Peter ask Jesus? (18:21)
899. What surprising answer did Jesus give Peter? (18:22)
900. How did Jesus illustrate His answer to Peter's question? (18:23)
901. To what did Jesus compare the kingdom of heaven? (18:23)
902. In the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant, what did the king want to do? (18:23)
903. How was the king prepared to get the large amount of money owed him by a particular servant? (18:24-25)
904. What did the indebted servant do? (18:26)
905. How did the king graciously respond to the indebted servant's desperate plea? (18:27)
906. What did the servant go do after his debt was cancelled? (18:28)
907. How did the second servant respond to the demand for payment? (18:29)
908. What effect did the second servant's pleas have on the first servant? (18:30)
909. Who watched with dismay as the first servant refused to have mercy on the second? Why? (18:31)
910. How did the onlookers respond when they saw the first servant throw the second in jail? (18:31)
911. How did the king react to the news he heard? (18:32-34)
912. How did Jesus apply this parable to His followers? (18:35)
913. What individual(s) do you need to "release from their debts" today?