

A Study of Matthew 18

I. Outline.

1. Greatest in the kingdom (Matthew 18.1-5; cf. Mark 9.33-37; Luke 9.46-48).
2. Temptations to sin (Mt 18.6-9; cf. Mk 9.42-48; Lk 17.1-2).
3. PARABLE of the Lost Sheep (Mt 18.10-14; cf. Lk 15.37).
- 4 A Brother Who Sins (Mt 18.15-20; cf. Lk 17.3).
5. PARABLE of the Unforgiving Servant (Mt 18.21-35).

II. Summary.

Matthew 18:1–35 comprises the fourth discourse of Jesus in Matthew. Like the first three discourses, it has a narrative setting (18:1) and is concluded with the characteristic “when Jesus had finished” (19:1). The setting is somewhat vague in that “about that time” seems to refer only to the general time frame when Jesus began to tell his disciples about his death and resurrection. Though the disciples grieved at this announcement (17:23), their grief sadly turned to speculation over who was or would be the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven (18:1; cf. 20:20–28). The fourth discourse is Jesus’ answer to this question and a subsequent question by Peter about forgiveness (18:21). A unique feature of this discourse is Jesus’ use of a child as a visual aid (18:2) prior to his verbal response to the disciples’ question. The fourth discourse concerns genuine spiritual greatness. Jesus used a child as the ultimate object lesson of humility and the duty of hospitality to fellow disciples (18:3–5). Then he turned to the opposite of hospitality, giving offense, and spoke in vivid language about the horrible end of anyone who causes a disciple to fall into sin (18:6–14). Next come instructions on handling brothers who sin (18:15–20), and the answer to Peter’s question about longsuffering in forgiveness, which leads to the parable of the unmerciful servant (18:21–35). The discourse holds together along the lines of God’s concern for the “little ones” who believe. Their humble status is zealously guarded by the heavenly Father (18:7). His little ones must deal promptly with sin in their midst, yet the solemnity of the process of discipline underlines once again the Father’s concern for his children (18:15–20). Peter’s question with Jesus’ answer underlines the absolute necessity of the rule of forgiveness in the Kingdom community (18:35) [Turner, D., & Bock, D. L. (2005). *Cornerstone biblical commentary, Vol 11: Matthew and Mark* (pp. 237–238). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers].

III. Chronology.

BIBLE PERIOD: The Period of the Christ.

If you are not familiar with the 15 Bible Periods, please click here:

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IV. Aids in Exposition.

Matthew 18.1... WHO IS THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN?—“The term ‘greatest’ is actually ‘greater’ in the Greek, but the meaning is the same. The apostles had been disputing among themselves concerning preeminence and places of honor in the approaching kingdom. The events of the last chapter had revived their hopes of an earthly kingdom; and the prospect of Jesus’ death (they seemed continually blinded to the repeated promises of his resurrection)

accentuated their concern over who would be head man afterwards! A great proportion of earth's sorrows flow directly from the vain ambitions of men for preferment and advantage” [Burton Coffman Online: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/matthew-18.html> Visited 160602].

Matthew 18.3... EXCEPT YE BE CONVERTED, AND BECOME AS LITTLE CHILDREN, YE SHALL NOT ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN—“Keeping in mind that these remarks were addressed to the twelve, the conversion was that of these apostles. Conversion means to be changed from one form to another, to be turned from one course of life to another. Since these men were children of God by virtue of their birth (they were all Jews), and were already followers of Christ, the conversion meant was from their selfish ambition and worldly outlook. If they expected to enter the coming kingdom, and if they wished to be invited into the eternal abode of heaven, they must make this change and become as a little child. There are certain characteristics of children which are cultivated by Christians. The trait primarily enjoined here is that of humility. Children generally are willing to accept instruction; they recognize that their parent or teacher is more knowledgeable than they; they can be molded and shaped; they are docile, and free from ambitious aims. What children are by nature, Christians are to become by design. The characteristic of humility the Lord required of the twelve is likewise required of any who wish to be translated into the kingdom and eventually to be invited into heaven” [Bob Winton, *Book of Matthew*, pp., 213-214].

Matthew 18.4... HUMBLE HIMSELF AS THIS LITTLE CHILD—“He who wants to be great must be little. He must renounce the world’s values and humbly accept the rank of a child. This isn’t a call for phoniness or false modesty, but for an attitude devoid of any speck of self-importance or significance This discourse thus starts as did the Sermon on the Mount, by emphasizing humility (5.3)—the first requisite for entering the kingdom” [Kenneth Chumbley, *The Gospel of Matthew*, pp. 322-323]. ||||| “Christ did not mean being childish and immature (cf. 1 Cor. 14:20; Eph. 4:14; Heb. 5:13-14), but childlike in the sense of acting toward Jehovah as a child is toward his parents, being dependent, obedient, trusting, and humble. An innocent child almost instinctively realizes his comparative smallness and does not join (until much later) the mad scramble for prominence in our competitive world of inferior ideals, which in turn leads to ambitious and wicked strife. Even a child with terrible parents never thinks he can face life by himself and for himself, but is trustingly content to stay with those who may even mistreat him, eternally expecting them to provide his clothing, food, and shelter. We have all known allegedly "mature" adults who are capable of holding grudges for decades, but we notice that a young child maintains an almost immediate power to ‘forgive and forget’.” [Terry M. Hightower, “Jesus’ Teaching on Offenders, Offences, Forgiveness, Divorce, and Riches,” in *Studies in Matthew*, Editor: Dub McClish, p. 129].

Matthew 18.5... WHOSO SHALL RECEIVE ONE SUCH LITTLE CHILD IN MY NAME RECEIVETH ME—“To encourage his followers Jesus promised to take care of them; he makes common cause with his faithful disciples (Mt 25.35-40; Mark 9.38-40; Luke 9.49-50). Jesus here passed from the symbol to the things symbolized, from the child by nature to the child by grace. Those who receive the humble unpretending disciples of Jesus receive him, because these disciples belong to him. It is a blessed thought to be so closely identified with Jesus, that the one who receives his disciple receives him” [H. Leo Boles, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to Matthew*, Gospel

Advocate, p. 369]. ||||| “This remark does not have reference to physical children, but rather to the humble Christian” [Bob Winton, p. 214].

Matthew 18.6... WHOSO SHALL OFFEND ONE OF THESE LITTLE ONES WHICH BELIEVE IN ME—“Having identified the kingdom as a fellowship of children, Christ now discusses how children should treat each other. His warning centers around the word OFFEND (*skandalizo*, vv. 6, 7, 8, 9). This is a favorite word in Matthew, occurring more often in this Gospel than in any other NT book. It includes a wide spectrum of obstacles that can be placed in the path of another that makes their discipleship difficult (e.g., Mt 5.32). It ‘means “cause to stumble,” often in the sense of “cause to sin” (see Mt 5.29-30; 18.8-9) or “cause to lose one’s faith” (Mt 24.10, perhaps 26.31, 33), but sometimes merely “give offense to,” and thus in the passive “become offended” (Mt 11.6; 15.12)’ (Hare, 206-207). While every man is ultimately responsible for his actions (Mt 16.27), there is sometimes more to sin than just the wrong done by the sinner. A disparaging attitude, a lack of concern, or the refusal to forgive can provoke another to sin as readily as blatant temptation. And God views few sins more seriously than the lack of love that leads another to do wrong” [Kenneth Chumbley, p 323, Emphasis mine, DRL]. ||||| “If receiving them hospitably is tantamount to receiving Jesus himself (Mt 10:40-41; John 13:20), causing them to sin is tantamount to rejecting Jesus himself, which brings consequences immeasurably more severe than drowning with a large millstone around one’s neck (cf. Josephus *Antiquities* 14.450). “Heavy millstone” is more literally “millstone for a donkey,” a large millstone turned by a donkey. This detail along with the stress on the depth of the sea vividly portrays the horrible consequences of causing a believer to fall into sin. To cause someone to fall into sin is to corrupt that person morally and spiritually and, as 18:7-9 points out, to render him or her liable to eternal punishment (5:29-30; 17:27). ... The point of the metaphor is that disciples should be humble and demonstrate this humility by welcoming other disciples, not causing them to sin” [Turner, D., & Bock, D. L. (2005). *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, Vol 11: Matthew and Mark* (p. 236). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers].

Matthew 18.7... WOE UNTO THE WORLD BECAUSE OF OFFENCES! FOR IT MUST NEEDS BE THAT OFFENCES COME; BUT WOE TO THAT MAN BY WHOM THE OFFENCE COMETH!—“The divine plan calls for man to be tried, tested, and tempted. Satan and the forbidden tree were in Eden **BEFORE** sin entered. God desires the love of his children; and true love requires that there be freedom of the will and opportunity to make a choice. The opportunity for temptation does not reduce the guilt of sinners, nor does the necessity for temptation mitigate the guilt of those through whom temptation comes” [Burton Coffman]. ||||| “In view of man’s being careless, selfish, and greedy for power, we must never on earth expect the Utopian day to arrive when there will be absolutely no offense, ‘for it must needs be’ (Mt 18.7; cf., 1 Cor 11.19); but woe to the stumbling block who should instead be a stepping stone!” [Hightower, p. 129].

Matthew 18.8... IF THY HAND OR THY FOOT OFFEND THEE, CUT THEM OFF, AND CAST THEM FROM THEE—“It is better to give up some pleasure, opportunity, position, state, practice, etc., if the thing involved causes one to commit sin. It is better to forego such if the result is to lose one’s soul in eternal punishment. ... It is better to be alive spiritually here (and eternally in heaven) while deprived of certain things which cause sin, than to enjoy the pleasure of those sinful things which culminates in one’s being cast into Gehenna. What verse eight calls ‘everlasting fire,’ verse nine calls ‘hell fire’ (Gehenna). Again, the view that there is no punishment of sinners after death is false” [Bob Winton, p. 215]. ||||| “In the physical realm, amputations of various kinds daily

illustrate the validity of our Lord's words. Removal of a mortally infected member is required for the preservation of life. The use of strong metaphor, as in the case here, frequently marked the teaching of Christ" [Burton Coffman].

Matthew 18.10... **TAKE HEED THAT YE DESPISE NOT ONE OF THESE LITTLE ONES**—"To despise is to regard with contempt. We are warned against having this attitude toward another Christian. The little ones under consideration are still those identified in verses 4-6, and which are characterized by the good traits of children. God has promised to avenge those who mistreat his people. 'That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified' (1 Th 4.6; cf., James 5.1-9)" [Bob Winton, p. 216].

Matthew 18.10... **IN HEAVEN THEIR ANGELS DO ALWAYS BEHOLD THE FACE OF MY FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN**—Does this text teach that "Guardian Angels" exist? My friend Travis Quertermous has written a 406-page book on angels—*The Hosts of Heaven: A Biblical Study of Angels*, published by Hester Publications in 2002. Included in the book is a chapter of some 34 pages dealing with the subject of "GUARDIAN ANGELS." I would like to quote from that study. "...the verse still does not teach that every Christian and/or child has his own personal guardian angel. It is true the passage does establish a relationship between the heavenly host and 'THESE LITTLE ONES' by the use of the possessive pronoun 'THEIR' to modify the 'LITTLE ONES' under discussion. Notice, however, that the word 'ANGELS' in Matthew 18.10 is plural. It is therefore not the case that there is only a single angel interested in the welfare of one of God's children, but many of them. Furthermore, the angels referred to by Jesus are explicitly said to be 'IN HEAVEN' and not upon the earth. H. Leo Boles has correctly said, 'They are represented as beholding the "face of My Father who is in heaven." To "behold the face" of God is to be present before his immediate glory, and entrusted with high commissions and power.' Thus, whatever those specific commissions might be in relationship to the children of God, the heavenly messengers carry them out in heaven. Finally, Christ did not detail just what these angels do for the little ones and it is fruitless to speculate. All the verse is teaching is that we dare not abuse those [whom] the angels and their Creator take such a special interest in. It does establish a relationship between the angels and the children of God, but beyond that the Lord does not say. Had our Savior wanted us to know the details of this, He would have supplied them. It is best to trust His silence and simply exercise the childlike faith He taught us to have in Him, believing what our Lord said even though we do not have all the details we might like to have. ... **Conclusion:** The doctrine of guardian angels has no support in the Bible. Its origins lie in the erroneous angelology of Jews developed during the intertestamental period combined with the speculations of the medieval Catholic scholar Thomas Aquinas, the so-called 'angelic doctor.' God certainly has used, and may still use, angels to guard certain persons and nations in His providence. But Scripture nowhere teaches that each person, Christian, or child has a personal angel assigned to him to directly guide and guard him. In addition to being without support in the Bible, it contradicts its teachings on the freedom of the human will, the sufficiency of the Scriptures, and the manner of divine influence on the soul. Thus, it ought to be abandoned by all serious Bible students" [Travis Quertermous, p. 263-264].

Matthew 18.11... **FOR THE SON OF MAN IS COME TO SAVE THAT WHICH IS LOST**—"The Lord warned against despising one of his followers (v. 10), and gives as a reason for avoiding such the fact that 'their angels' are in the presence of God. In the present verse he gives another reason, that being the fact that the Son of man had come for the purpose of saving those who are lost. Since he was

willing to forego the position he occupied in heaven and come to earth to live and die for fallen man, woe to those who would oppose his great effort to save the lost by despising those who have accepted his mercy!" [Bob Winton, p. 217]. ||||| "Verse eleven is omitted in the Revised Version because the ancient manuscripts and versions do not have it. Some think that it is quoted from Luke 19.10, where it is genuine" [H. Leo Boles, p. 373].

Matthew 18.12... IF A MAN HAVE AN HUNDRED SHEEP, AND ONE OF THEM BE GONE ASTRAY, DOTH HE NOT LEAVE THE NINETY AND NINE, AND GOETH INTO THE MOUNTAINS, AND SEEKETH THAT WHICH IS GONE ASTRAY?—"When a sheep strays ... from the flock the shepherd's entire routine is altered. Though only one is missing, he concentrates all his energy on finding that one. 'IF' (a third-class condition, which recognizes the possibility that a lost sheep might not be found) he finds it, he is more delighted over it than the ninety-nine that never strayed. This is not said to disparage the ninety-nine, but to emphasize the preciousness of a soul" [Kenneth Chumbley, p. 326].

Matthew 18.14... IT IS NOT THE WILL OF YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN, THAT ONE OF THESE LITTLE ONES SHOULD PERISH—"False teachers use verse 14 in a vain attempt to teach that a child of God can never so fall as to be eternally lost. The verse simply states that God wants all men to be saved. However, God will not override man's free moral agency and force him to be saved against his will. It is the will of God that all men everywhere believe in him but there are multiplied millions who do not do so. It is the will of God that all men everywhere repent, but very few do. It is the will of God that men everywhere believe that Jesus is the Son of God, but most do not. It is God's will that no man take another man's life, but many do so anyway. God will not force any man to be obedient to his will. It is God's will that everyone who becomes a Christian continue faithfully unto death, but not all will do so. God will not force an alien to obey the gospel and he will not force a Christian to remain faithful. God gives all the motives and opportunities that men need, but each individual must make the personal decision and commitment to follow God" [Bob Winton, p. 218].

Matthew 18.15... MOREOVER IF THY BROTHER SHALL TRESPASS AGAINST THEE, GO AND TELL HIM HIS FAULT BETWEEN THEE AND HIM ALONE—"Note that this verse enjoins the reverse of Matthew 5.23-24. There the offender is told to go to the offended; here, the offended is to go to the offender. Christ's point is that whenever sin alienates brethren it doesn't matter who is guilty or innocent. What does matter is reconciliation and to have it both sides are told to 'go to the other.' But 'how often personal confrontation is the last stage rather than the first in Christian complaints! It frequently seems as if the whole world knows of someone's grievances against us before we are personally approached' (Blomberg, 278). 'A great deal of tension in Christian congregations would be eased if we obeyed this plain command of Jesus: "Go and tell him his fault between you and him alone." Instead of having the courage to face a person with his fault, frankly but privately, we whisper behind his back and poison other people's minds against him. The whole atmosphere of the church becomes foul' (Stott, *Confess Your Sins*, 34)" [Kenneth Chumbley, p. 328].

Matthew 18.16... IF HE WILL NOT HEAR THEE, THEN TAKE WITH THEE ONE OR TWO MORE, THAT IN THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY WORD MAY BE ESTABLISHED—"The erring brother, like the lost sheep, has strayed away, and has been found; if the one who has found him cannot restore him, then he should get others to help him bring the lost back to the flock and safety. The Jews required at least two witnesses to every act of crime and offense against the law (Deut 17.6; 19.15). ... This was wise or else God would not have commanded it. The design of taking two

witnesses may be twofold: first, the offending brother may be possibly induced to repent and return, if he has been proud and refractory, when he sees that persons of serious character and candid judgment are condemning his fault; and second, that in administering the discipline, the church later may have certain grounds on which to base its discipline and not upon imaginary or prejudiced ground” [H. Leo Boles, p. 376].

Matthew 18.17... AND IF HE SHALL NEGLECT TO HEAR THEM, TELL IT UNTO THE CHURCH: BUT IF HE NEGLECT TO HEAR THE CHURCH, LET HIM BE UNTO THEE AS AN HEATHEN MAN AND A PUBLICAN—“If he does not repent even after these two efforts, tell it to the church. These words were spoken prior to the establishment of the Lord’s church, but it was given with the coming of the church in mind. It was prospective in nature, and would have its main fulfillment only after the church came into actual being.” [Bob Winton, p. 220]. ||||| “The rule of procedure is given only for cases of personal offense, where one individual has sinned against another. We are to learn from other portions of the New Testament how to deal with offenses of other kinds” [J.W. McGarvey, *New Testament Commentary, Volume I: Matthew and Mark*, Gospel Light, p. 159].

Matthew 18.18... WHATSOEVER YE SHALL BIND ON EARTH SHALL BE BOUND IN HEAVEN: AND WHATSOEVER YE SHALL LOOSE ON EARTH SHALL BE LOOSED IN HEAVEN—Checking the grammar on this expression: SHALL BE BOUND IN HEAVEN, we find it to be in the Future Perfect Passive, which would better be translated—Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth SHALL HAVE BEEN BOUND in heaven. In other words, when the promise of John 16.13 is fulfilled and the apostles are guided into all truth, they will be binding (teaching) that which the Holy Spirit guides them to bind (teach), which will already have been bound in heaven.

Matthew 18.19-20... IF TWO OF YOU SHALL AGREE ON EARTH AS TOUCHING ANY THING THAT THEY SHALL ASK, IT SHALL BE DONE FOR THEM OF MY FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN—“These verses continue the thought of verse 18. They are not referring to the number of believers necessary to constitute a church, nor do they state a general principle about prayer and worship The **‘TWO OR THREE’** refers to those introduced in verse 16. When witnesses to a dispute are in agreement (*sumphoneo*, ‘symphony,’ to be harmonious, concur) concerning any thing—i.e., the facts about a backsliding brother—their recommendation to the church (**‘ANY THING THAT THEY SHALL ASK’**) carries the authority of God (1 Cor 5.4ff)” [Kenneth Chumbley, p. 330].

Matthew 18.21-22... HOW OFT SHALL MY BROTHER SIN AGAINST ME, AND I FORGIVE HIM? UNTIL SEVEN TIMES? ... UNTIL SEVENTY TIMES SEVEN—“Christ did not mean that Christians should keep a ledger, exactly calculating a precise number such as 490, or using a variant reading, 70 times and 7. This simply means that a Christian must have the spiritual resources to keep on forgiving. Forgiveness of others was made a constant pre-condition of man's forgiveness by the Father, not only in these words of Jesus here, but upon other occasions as well. The business of forgiveness is so important that Christ immediately introduced one of his longest parables in order to reinforce the teaching and repeat the absolute necessity of forgiveness at the conclusion of it” [Burton Coffman].

Matthew 18.23-24... ONE WAS BROUGHT UNTO HIM, WHICH OWED HIM TEN THOUSAND TALENTS—“To illustrate, Christ tells a parable about a king who settles his accounts with his servants. A servant is brought in who is in arrears to the tune of ten thousand talents. Due to a number of variables (whether the talents were silver or gold, inflation, the price fluctuation of precious metals, etc.) there is no way to know the amount owed in today’s dollars, but estimates have ranged from several million (NIV margin) to one trillion dollars. In the Roman Empire the talent

was the largest monetary unit and ‘ten thousand’ was the highest number for which the Greeks had a specific word (*murioi*, myriads). By combining the largest denomination of currency with the largest number, Christ is hyperbolically indicating an astronomical sum that was completely beyond the servant’s ability to repay. ‘If one talent equaled ten thousand denarii, as some suggest, the debt would be equivalent to a hundred million working days [approximately 273,973 years] for the day laborers mentioned in Matthew 20.2’ (Garland, 194)” [Kenneth Chumbley, pp., 331-332].

Matthew 18.26... **LORD, HAVE PATIENCE WITH ME, AND I WILL PAY THEE ALL**—“The fault of the unmerciful servant was his failure to realize the enormity and absolute hopelessness of his debt. His earnest promise to repay it showed that he did not have the slightest conception of how much he owed” [Burton Coffman].

Matthew 18.28... **BUT THE SAME SERVANT WENT OUT, AND FOUND ONE OF HIS FELLOWSERVANTS, WHICH OWED HIM AN HUNDRED PENCE: AND HE LAID HANDS ON HIM, AND TOOK HIM BY THE THROAT, SAYING, PAY ME THAT THOU OWEST**—“The sequel to the king’s act of grace is unconscionable. The just-forgiven servant accosts a fellow servant who owed him the paltry sum of one hundred pence (*denarii*; a denarius was the average daily wage for a laborer)—**one six-hundred-thousandth of the debt he owed**. Grabbing him by the throat—as if to choke the money out of him—he demands, ‘Pay up what you owe me!’” [Kenneth Chumbley, pp., 333-334].

Matthew 18.29-30... **HAVE PATIENCE WITH ME, AND I WILL PAY THEE ALL... AND HE WOULD NOT: BUT WENT AND CAST HIM INTO PRISON, TILL HE SHOULD PAY THE DEBT**—“This second servant fell down before the first servant in much the same manner as had the first servant before the king; but whereas the king had forgiven him his debt he did not do so for his fellow-servant. He would not wait to be paid but had the man cast into prison until the debt was paid” [Bob Winton, p. 223]. ||||| “...No matter how much we are inclined to deal harshly with men ourselves, we are always indignant, when, as disinterested witnesses, we behold such conduct in others” [J.W. McGarvey, p. 161].

Matthew 18.32-33... **O THOU WICKED SERVANT, I FORGAVE THEE ALL THAT DEBT, BECAUSE THOU DESIREDST ME: SHOULDEST NOT THOU ALSO HAVE HAD COMPASSION**—“When a Christian allows remaining sin to control an attitude or action, he is being **wicked**, because sin is always sin, whether committed by a believer or unbeliever. The sin of unforgiveness is in some ways even more **wicked** in a believer, because he has infinitely greater motivation and power to be forgiving than does a person who has never experienced God’s redeeming grace. How can a person accept God’s mercy for all his sin, an unpayable debt, and then not forgive some small offense committed against himself?” [John MacArthur, *MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, Vol 3, Kindle Edition, loc32645].

Matthew 18.35... **SO LIKEWISE SHALL MY HEAVENLY FATHER DO ALSO UNTO YOU, IF YE FROM YOUR HEARTS FORGIVE NOT EVERY ONE HIS BROTHER THEIR TRESPASSES**—“Those who are servants of God must be willing to show the same level of mercy to others that God was willing to show them. Harkening back to Peter’s original question: there is nothing a man can do before us that is equal to the forgiveness we need from God. Therefore, there is no sin, or number of sins, which we should not be willing to forgive” [Adam Cozort, *You Shall Call His Name Jesus: A Guide to Matthew*, Kindle Edition, loc2171].

V. Lessons & Applications.

Matthew 18.3... BECOME AS LITTLE CHILDREN—“What are the characteristics of little children which one must cultivate in order to be what the Lord wishes him to be? First, freedom from desire for worldly honor, positions of power, and wealth. Children go about their play with no thought of being rich and exercising power over the others. Next, children do not make distinctions based upon wealth and position. The child of the millionaire will play with the pauper’s child and think nothing of it. It is unchristian for us to make such distinctions (James 2.1-9). And in connection with this it may be added that a child can be satisfied with sufficient clothing and shelter for its comfort, and gives little thought to whether the clothing is fine or ordinary. The child is not embarrassed if its clothing is poor and patched. We have too much pride when we give too much attention to our outward appearance and too little to the care of the inward man. Next, the child is teachable; he has not such pride and conceit that he thinks no one can teach him anything. So the child has an inquiring mind that raises many questions. We must cultivate the hunger and thirst for the knowledge of God, and be willing to learn from anybody regardless of his college training or position in the social world. Next, children are dependent on others for the necessities of life. So we must recognize our state of dependence upon God for the things essential to our spiritual growth. Those who are too proud to admit their dependence on God, must turn and become as humble as the child” [Roy H. Lanier, Sr., *Teacher’s Annual Lesson Commentary*, 1950, p. 61]. ||||| **DRL Note:** Admittedly, as we read this description written of children in 1950, some of the characteristics (especially about clothing) might seem dated, but I feel confident that the descriptions fit well in the time of the first century when Jesus was teaching.

Matthew 18.20... FOR WHERE TWO OR THREE ARE GATHERED TOGETHER IN MY NAME, THERE AM I IN THE MIST OF THEM—No doubt, this is one of the great examples of a passage most often lifted out of its context! When Christians say, “*Well I am away from the local congregation, but I am here with 3 or 4 other Christians and after all, what does Matthew 18.29 say?*”, they abuse this text. The most appropriate thing to do whenever we travel is to give due diligence to finding a local church that is faithful with which to worship. If that is impossible, trying to do the best we can by engaging in all of the authorized acts of worship (singing, praying, teaching, Lord’s Supper, giving—most likely the giving being done by leaving contribution at one’s home congregation or else replacing it upon return), is perhaps the best we can do. However, it is unwise to use this text as authority for such actions, IMHO, DRL. ||||| “Though this verse is often used in reference to worship, contextually it has nothing to do with worship. The statement is made in relationship to the work of the disciples and dealing with problems between brethren. The emphasis of Jesus is in the fact that in all situations, whenever brethren come together in his name (by his authority) he is there with them. Faithful brethren will never be alone when seeking to do what God has commanded as he has commanded it” [Adam Cozort, loc2147]. ||||| “While the oft-made claim that Christ is present in our worship assemblies which bring us together ‘in his name’ may be true from: (1) a general principle derived from Matthew 18.19-20; or (2) other verses teaching the omnipresence of Deity (e.g., Mt 26.29), Matthew 18.19-20 refers contextually to the church discipline being exercised in Matthew 18.17” [Terry M. Hightower, p. 131].

Matthew 18.22... I SAY NOT UNTO THEE, UNTIL SEVEN TIMES: BUT, UNTIL SEVENTY TIMES SEVEN—“Are we to extend this forgiveness without limit and condition as some claim? No! While it is true that we

should always possess an attitude of forgiveness and never harbor hatred or resentment in our hearts (2 Pet. 3:9), Jehovah (and not we) has set up the standards by which we are to forgive others. Note the equation: "**forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye**" (Col. 3:13). Therefore, while it is true that we are not God, and thus we are not able to forgive sins in the ultimate sense of making a person right with Him once again as Christ has done (Eph. 1:7), we are **not** to extend personal forgiveness to others past the terms and conditions He has Biblically specified. The Lord Himself made our forgiveness of others conditional: "**If thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him**" (Luke 17:3; cf. Luke 17:4). Although the Lord did exhibit His longsuffering attitude from the cross in saying: "**Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do**" (Luke 23:34), we know that this was not actually fulfilled for any of them until the offenders repented and were baptized over seven weeks later (Acts 2:38). Stephen and Paul also exhibited their compassionate attitudes, holding no grudges against, refusing to be bitter toward, and wishing that the sins would not be held against those responsible for their sufferings (Acts 7:60; 2 Tim. 4:16). But both men knew that to have the guilt of sin removed would require obedience to the gospel! Thank God that one man, Paul, did not have Stephen's death laid to his charge, but washed away in his baptism into Christ (Acts 22:16)!" [Terry M. Hightower, p. 132]. |||| "Suppose a brother persists in sin, and it becomes necessary for the church to withdraw fellowship from him. In order for him to be forgiven, he must repent (Acts 8:22), confess his sins (1 John 1:8-10), and pray for forgiveness (Acts 8:22). While he continues in his rebellion against God I may and should love him, have tender feelings toward him, be compassionate with him, and not be resentful, but it would be a sin against God and against the sinful brother for me to treat him as if he had not sinned. Such would defeat the purpose of the withdrawal of fellowship, and would encourage the sinful brother to remain impenitent ... Certainly those of us who are Christians should have hearts large enough to love even those who have done us wrong, and to desire that they be forgiven. However, when one congratulates himself for forgiving even those whom God has not forgiven, he shows his contempt for the righteousness of God as well as his failure to comprehend the terribleness of sin. Let us bless them that curse us, do good to them that hate us, and pray for them that despitefully use us and persecute us (Matt. 5:44). But let us not presume to forgive those whom the Almighty holds guilty of sin" [Terry M. Hightower, quoting: Bobby Duncan, *The Edifier*, Bulletin, Pearl Street Church of Christ, Denton, TX (date unknown), p. 3].

VI. Questions.

True or False

01. ____ There are things worse than having a millstone hung around your neck and then being tossed into the sea.
02. ____ God cares about the one percent.
03. ____ Jesus was the first to use the number SEVEN in His discussion with Peter.
04. ____ **HAVE PATIENCE WITH ME AND I WILL PAY THEE ALL** is repeated in this chapter.
05. ____ In the PARABLE of the Unforgiving Servant the man who owed ten thousand talents had no patience.

I Found it in Verse(s)

- 06. ____ A frightening use of the words **SO LIKEWISE**.
- 07. ____ Older people should become as little children.
- 08. ____ Why Jesus came.
- 09. ____ Tell it to the church.
- 10. ____ A multiplication problem.

Short Answer

11. What the lord asked the unforgiving servant:

12. The five words following **EXCEPT YE BE CONVERTED**:

13. What I should do with an offending foot:

14. The second step in reconciliation according to Jesus' plan:

15. Amount owed by the unforgiving servant:

Each Question is worth 7 Points

My Score is: _____

Answers will be found on next week's handout

ANSWERS to Matthew 17 Questions... **01**—True (27); **02**—True (2); **03**—False (12); **04**—False (16-17); **05**—True (22); **06**—23; **07**—4; **08**—9; **09**—15; **10**—20; **11**—They that received the tribute money (24); **12**—High, Apart (1); **13**—Touched them, and said: Be not afraid (7); **14**—John the Baptizer (13); **15**—Cured from that very hour (18).

VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle. The words may be backwards, diagonal, upside down, etc. See if you can find them all. The more you use the words of the Bible, the greater blessed you will be! You might be surprised at how much this little exercise will help you retain important truths. THANK YOU for the good effort you are putting forth in Bible study. -DRL

J J L Y C S A K F O T W W
 E T T L H T A K E F W D F
 S H I O I M Y K L F K B O
 U E M O L I T T L E I E R
 S N E S D R C G O N N T G
 U C H E A V E N W D G T I
 U T R E S P A S S D D E V
 V B R O T H E R E F O R E
 C D S F R W H Y R I M E L
 T K A F A S E R V A N T O
 C A M E Y K A F A T H E R
 A W E N T E R Y N S A I D
 S O Y C T K L C T I N J L
 T I V E R I L Y H K D W H

ASTRAY	BETTER	BROTHER	CAME	CAST
CHILD	ENTER	FATHER	FELLOWSERVANT	FORGIVE
HAND	HEAR	HEAVEN	JESUS	KINGDOM
LITTLE	LOOSE	LORD	OFFENCE	OFFEND
SAID	SAME	SERVANT	TAKE	THEN
THEREFORE	TIME	TRESPASS	VERILY	WENT

IX. EXTRA CREDIT FOR “SUPER” Bible Students...

Will you please consider answering these three SIMPLE questions based on the Bible text of this chapter? I will try to make use of your answers. Bring them with you next week. Tear out this last sheet from the Study Guide and be prepared to put it in a basket. I think it will be a great help to all of those in the class if you will do so. Thank you in advance for your marvelous cooperation!

W O R D: What word would you like to know more about in this chapter?

W O N D E R: I wonder what this phrase, verse, or series of verses means...

W I S H: I wish myself—or others whom I know or even don’t know—would understand this fact, principle, or concept from this chapter...