

## → Small Group Study – Matthew 18:1-14; Mark 10:14

### Matthew 18: 1-14

<sup>1</sup>At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" <sup>2</sup>And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them <sup>3</sup>and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. <sup>4</sup>Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>5</sup>"Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, <sup>6</sup>but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea. <sup>7</sup>"Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes! <sup>8</sup> And 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 crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. <sup>9</sup>And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire. <sup>10</sup>"See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven. <sup>12</sup>What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? <sup>13</sup>And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. <sup>14</sup>So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

### Mark 10:14

<sup>14</sup>But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.

What is one thing you've implemented from last weeks study?

What stood out to you from this week's message?

On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being high) – how favorable are you to being around children? Why did you choose that number?

What experiences do you have working with at-risk children? What did you learn about them?  
What did you learn about yourself?

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, stated, "the ultimate test of a society's morality is how it treats its children."  
What is your reaction to this quote?

**Read Matthew 18: 1-14 and Mark 10:14**

Mark 10:14 reports that Jesus rebuked his disciples for not letting the children come to him. Do you think of Jesus as being someone who cares about children greatly? Why do you think Jesus became so angry with his disciples when they interfered with the children?

In Matthew 18:10-14 Jesus instructs his disciples to value children. Describe his reasons in your own words. Do any of these reasons present a new angle for you on the importance of children in God's eyes?

What are some ways we can each value children more. Do you naturally put these into practice? Why or why not?

In Matthew 18:6-9 Jesus uses vivid and even intense language to describe God's concern for children that are caused to stumble. What are ways we can cause children to stumble? What emotions are stirred in you when you read the words of Jesus?

If we assumed that the disciples were not the direct cause of children stumbling, why do you suppose Jesus directed this level of intensity towards them in his teaching?

A quote was read from Marian Wright Edelman called, "America's 6<sup>th</sup> Child." Did you have any reactions to this? What do you think are the responsibilities of followers of Jesus in today's context when it comes to America's 6<sup>th</sup> child?

In Matthew 18:1-4 Jesus says that we are to come to Jesus as little children. What traits might Jesus be describing when he says this? What is one area in which you could apply this to your life?

What are 2 or 3 practical steps you can take to see and act with Children as Jesus would have us?



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