

## CONNECTION Leader Notes

Matthew 18 & 19:1-15

November 6, 2011

### Key Verses

#### The Little Ones - Matthew 18:1-14

1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" 2 And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, 3 and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 "Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." 5 "And whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me; 6 but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea." 7 "Woe to the world because of its stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; but woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes! 8 "If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or lame, than to have two hands or two feet and be cast into the eternal fire. 9 "If your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than to have two eyes and be cast into the fiery hell. 10 "See that you do not despise one of these **little ones**, for I say to you that their angels in heaven continually see the face of My Father who is in heaven. 11 ["For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.] 12 "What do you think? If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go and search for the one that is straying?" 13 "If it turns out that he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine which have not gone astray." 14 "So it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones perish."

#### Two or Three Believers Together - Matthew 18:15-20

15 "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. 16 "But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED. 17 "If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. 18 "Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven. 19 "Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. 20 "For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst."

#### Forgiveness - Matthew 18:21-35

21 Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" 22 Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven." 23 "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. 24 "When he had begun to settle them, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. 25 "But since he did not have the means to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made. 26 "So the slave fell to the ground and prostrated himself before him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you everything.' 27 "And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. 28 "But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and began to choke him, saying, 'Pay back what you owe.' 29 "So his fellow slave fell to the ground and began to plead with him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you.' 30 "But he was unwilling and went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed. 31 "So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened. 32 "Then summoning him, his lord said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. 33 'Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?' 34 "And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. 35 "My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart."

## Marriage & Divorce - Matthew 19:1-15

1 When Jesus had finished these words, He departed from Galilee and came into the region of Judea beyond the Jordan; 2 and large crowds followed Him, and He healed them there. 3 Some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?" 4 And He answered and said, "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE, 5 and said, 'FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH'? 6 "So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate." 7 They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE AND SEND her AWAY?" 8 He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way." 9 "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery ." 10 The disciples said to Him, "If the relationship of the man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry." 11 But He said to them, "Not all men can accept this statement, but only those to whom it has been given. 12 "For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb; and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men; and there are also eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to accept this, let him accept it." 13 Then some children were brought to Him so that He might lay His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. 14 But Jesus said, "Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." 15 After laying His hands on them, He departed from there.

### Discussion Questions

1. What are some characteristics of being humble as a child (Matthew 18:4) and our resulting entrance into heaven? (Matt.19:13-14, Mark 10:14-16)
2. Describe the potential consequences of causing a little one to stumble as found in Matthew 18:5-14? Why is God so concerned about the "little ones" and the one lost sheep? (Matthew 10:42)
3. What activities are described that "two or three" believers do together in Matthew 18:15-20? What are the benefits or results of doing these things together?
4. What steps can we take to practically apply and live out forgiveness as defined by Jesus in Matthew 18:21-22,35?
5. What key principles are emphasized by Jesus concerning marriage in Matthew 19:4-8 in response to the Pharisee's question concerning divorce?
6. What does Jesus mean in Matthew 19:8 concerning divorce, hardness of heart and "from the beginning"? (Malachi 2:16)

### Supporting Scripture References:

**Mat 10:42** "And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward."

**Mark 10:14-16** But when Jesus saw this, He was indignant and said to them, "Permit the children to come to Me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 15 "Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all."16 And He took them in His arms and began blessing them, laying His hands on them.

### Forgiveness

1. **Forgive others as God in Christ has forgiven us**
  - a. **Ephesians 4:31-32** Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.. 32 Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. (past tense)

- b. **Colossians 3:13** bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.
- c. So - how has God forgiven us?
- ✓ God is a God of forgiveness - Neh 9:17 "They refused to listen, And did not remember Your wondrous deeds which You had performed among them; So they became stubborn and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt. But You are a God of forgiveness, Gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness; .....
  - ✓ God is ready to forgive - Psa 86: 5 For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, And abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon You.
  - ✓ God's forgiveness is complete and abundant - Isaiah 55:7, Isaiah 1:17-18, Colossians 2:13-14
  - ✓ God remembers our sin no more – He forgets it –
    - Jer 31:34 31"Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, .....34 "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." (also Heb.8:12, 10:17)
    - Isa 43:25 God states - "I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, And I will not remember your sins.
  - ✓ God removes our sin far away - Psalms 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.
  - ✓ God's forgiveness is gracious (Rom.5:24, Titus 3:4-7), complete (Eph.1:7, I John 2:12), God is ready and eager (Ps.86:5, II Cor.5:19), certain (Acts 26:18), unequalled (Micah 7:18) .....
2. **Like God's forgiveness, our forgiveness of others should be unlimited – 70 X 7**
- a. **Matthew 18:21-22** Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" 22 Jesus \*said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven."
- b. **Luke 17:3** "Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. 4 "And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him. Sincerity is not even the issue....if someone comes to me then I am to forgive.....
3. **We are to forgive our debtors and those who trespass against us**
- a. **Mat 6:12** 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]'
- b. **Luke 11:4** 'And forgive us our sins, For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.' "
4. **If we do not forgive others then God does not forgive us**
- a. **Mat 6:14** "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 "But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.
- b. **Mark 11:25** "Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions. 26 ["But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your transgressions."] **Don't wait for others to come to you, or repent or forgive you...**
- c. **Mat 18:23-35** For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. 24 "When he had begun to settle {them,} one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. ....27 "And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. 28 "But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and {began} to choke {him,} saying, 'Pay back what you owe.' ....32 "Then summoning him, his lord \*said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. 33 'Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?' 34 "And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. 35 "My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart."
5. **Confession of our sins is for us - not a contingency for God**  
I John 1:9 NASB 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
6. **Example of Joseph exercising forgiveness to his brothers without them asking for it (Gen.44-50)**