

STUDY GUIDE

Matthew 18:1-20

“The Cost of Humility”

“Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 18:3-4

1) Discuss your thoughts about the story of the conflict at Emmanuel Baptist Church. Most problems involving people are the result of one of miscommunication, wounded pride, or spiritual immaturity - What do these three look like in the church?

2) What is pride? Where do you see pride in your life? Where we see pride in the world? Discuss William Farley’s statement that, “We cannot see pride - even though it is our most grievous, disabling sin - because its very nature is *blindness*, and the first thing to which it is blind is *its own existence*.”

3) Why did Jesus use a “*child*” as an example of humility? What characteristics of a child are contrary to humility? Who was Jesus speaking of when he talked about a “*child*” and “*little ones*”?

4) What does it mean to “*receive*” such “*a child*”? Why is receiving such a child also receiving Jesus? What does Jesus say will happen to those who cause “*little ones*” to sin? In what ways can we become stumbling blocks for new and spiritually immature followers of Jesus?

5) What is the cost of humility? Why is humility so important to our faith in Jesus Christ? Why does Jesus use such graphic hyperbole to describe what we should do in order to be truly humble? Share examples of things that we should remove from our lives so might grow in humility.

6) What did Jesus tell us we must do when new and spiritually immature Christians go “*astray*” in their walk with Jesus? What are the results when we do so? What are the results when we do not?

7) What does Jesus tell us we must do when another Christian sins “*against*” us? What are the results when we do so and that Christian repents? What are the results when we do so and they do not repent? What is the primary and ultimate purpose of discipline in the church?