

“The Model Citizen – Part I”

The Danger of Pride

Matt 18:v1-5

Scripture Ref: Luke 9:46; Mark 9:33-34; Prov 11:2; James 4:6; 1 Tim6:4-5; Rom 8:25; 1 Pet 1:22-24; Rom 12:9-10

- 1. In the Matthews gospel Jesus gives several discourses**
 - a. Chapters 5-7 the Beatitudes**
 - b. Chapter 10 He instructed his disciples before sending them out**
 - c. Chapter 13 He got into a boat on the Sea of Galilee and taught a series of parables**
 - d. In Chapter 24 He taught about the end of the world, and His return in glory**
- 2. Today we will begin another series – a series taken from the entirety of Matthew chapter 18; a series where we’ll look at Jesus teaching on the topics of harmony in the fellowship of believers.**
 - a. All of these seem to me to fit together and help us to assemble a picture of the “Model Citizen” in the Kingdom.**
 - b. In this chapter Jesus covers...**
 - i. The danger of pride,**
 - ii. The danger of leading others astray**
 - iii. God’s heart towards the straying Christian**
 - iv. How we deal with a sinning Christian**
 - v. And Forgiveness**
 - c. In other words – Jesus is teaching on relationships!**

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

- 3. This cracks me up – I mean here are these disciples of Jesus, supposed to be the future leaders of the church, and here they are arguing over which one of them was going to be the greatest in the kingdom.**
 - a. How do I know they were arguing about this? Because in Luke’s account, chapter 9 v46, Luke gives us the full account:**

***Luke 9:46** Then a dispute arose among them as to which of them would be greatest.*

- b. Mark confirms it in his account – chapter 9 v33**

Mark 9:33-34

Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, "What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?" 34 But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who would be the greatest.

4. You would think that the recent events would have had an effect on these men – well it had an effect, a negative affect!
 - a. I guess with Peter walking on water, getting a new name,
 - b. and then he, James, and John being with Jesus when He was transfigured and revealed His glory,
 - c. Apparently some competition had taken root!
 - d. Really, it would have been odd for Peter to *not* share his 'experience' with Jesus with the others.
 - i. *"yea, it was really cool, He just glowed, like He was the sun... oh you should have seen it."*
 - ii. *"it was just incredible – I felt the same way I did when I walked on water..."*
 - iii. After all of that happened to Peter, there was probably no living with him!
5. Haven't you ever been around someone who shared their spiritual experience with you, and you got that feeling that they were covertly bragging?
 - a. Or maybe you have done a little 'covert bragging' yourself – making sure that someone knew about some great thing God did in you, or through you.
6. Its human nature to want to make ourselves look better, to seem more spiritual, and that is my point – its *human nature, not God's nature!*
 - a. In our human nature, we all want to be celebrities instead of servants
 - b. That is because human nature is based in pride – that is what drives people in all different directions – all of them leading away from God.
 - c. Pride can infiltrate into our lives on so many levels:
 - i. Our financial status
 - ii. Our looks
 - iii. Our abilities
 - d. Pride even infects our spiritual lives, we can become prideful about:
 - i. Our knowledge of the bible
 - ii. Our prayer life
 - iii. Our righteousness
 - iv. Our gifts

- v. We can even become prideful about our humility! (*in other words, if you think you are humble, then that is pride!*)

7. What does the bible say about pride?

Prov 11:2 When pride comes, then comes shame; But with the humble is wisdom.

James 4:6 "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."

1 Tim 6:4-5 (**the proud man**) he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, 5 useless wranglings

8. So what is the answer to pride? Jesus gives us in interesting, real-life metaphor – a child

2 Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, 3 and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

9. How is it that Jesus wants us to become like little children; should we run around and play, just having fun? (*sounds like fun, but I don't think this is what Jesus has in mind!*)

- a. Perhaps Jesus is trying to get us to look at something in the nature of a child
- b. Perhaps we can learn something about being a model Christian citizen from a child...

#1 Children are trusting

10. I remember years ago when we started having to teach children that they shouldn't talk to or go with strangers.

- a. Why? Because children are trusting – they have this open nature about them
- b. They trust adults – they'll believe anything you tell them (EX: Theory of Relativity) \
- c. They also especially trust their parents – they trust that there will always be food in the fridge, that the TV will always work...

#2 Children are dependant

11. Ever notice something about your kids? They don't have a care in the world!

- a. They wake up – eat food, do school, play, go to bed – then get up and do it all over again! What a life!
- b. They don't worry about bills or mortgage payments – "my dad takes care of that!"

- c. (My son Chandler used to think that when I travelled on business, I collected money at the places I went, then brought it home to pay for our stuff!)

#3 Children are pure in heart and mind

12. Not saying that they are without sin – but they are undefiled

- a. It makes me sad at times when I have to explain something to my youngest – like when someone we know is getting a divorce, or is all messed up on drugs or alcohol.
- b. Because his view of them is pure – “aunt so-and-so would never do that...”
- c. They always believe the best about people

#4 Children desire to make others happy

13. Sure kids are self-centered – but they love to make others happy

- a. “Mom, I picked these flowers for you”

#5 Children don't worry about how important they are

14. This hits right where the disciples were – children don't have any idea about superiority

- a. Who has more money – who looks different –
- b. When we go to a park or place where there other kids, my son Carrington just dives right in and makes friends with all the kids
- c. He could care less where they live, what kind of job their dad has, what kind of car they have- it just doesn't matter to him – he just wants to play!

How does this apply to us?

15. We have to ask ourselves, in light of what Jesus is saying – am I humbling myself like a little child before God?

16. Am I willing to trust God with that child-like trust?

- a. Believing in His promises, resting in his provision?

I heard the story recently of the rich father who went on vacation with his children and their families. The father had told the kids “I'm going to buy dinner for everyone each night.” But one of the son-in-laws didn't know it, and each night they ate at nice restaurants, and he would scour the menu for the cheapest appetizer, and that was all he ordered.

But after a few nights his wife told him “didn't you know, dad is paying for dinner?” He replied “Man, if I had known that, I would have ordered differently”

- b. If we knew who was paying the bill, we would order differently from the menu!

17. Am I dependant on God?

- a. **Do I realize this, going into every situation, every problem we encounter – God isn't surprised!**
- b. **Our part is to pray, and wait on the Lord!**

Rom 8:25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.

- c. **That doesn't mean we are passive, but we do what are called to do, waiting on God to do what only God can do!**

18. Do I seek to keep my mind and heart pure?

- a. **There are so many ways that we can allow our minds to be polluted**

1 Peter 1:22-24

Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, 23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,

19. Do I think about others over myself?

Rom 12:9-10 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. 10 Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;

20. Do I care how important I am compared to someone else?

21. See humility is not having an attitude of "I'm such a loser!"

- a. **Humility is understanding that God is God, and we are not!**
- b. **Humility is realizing who we are – children of God**
- c. **Humility is realizing that we are no different from any other person – no more or less important to God.**
- d. **Humility is being able to walk in the role and gifts that God has ordained for us, without becoming prideful.**

22. When we realize that all that we have – all that we are – is given to us by God – it helps us to see that we can't take credit for any of it.

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