

**“The Model Citizen – Part II”**

**Leader Others Astray**

**Matt 18:v5-11**

**Scripture Ref: Matt 5:3-9; Heb 10:31; John 13:33; Gal 4:19; 1 John; 1 Peter 4:3-4; Prov 23:17; Heb 1:14; Ps 1:1-3**

1. In the first part we looked at pride and humility, basically our relationship with ourselves.
    - a. That is what pride is – thinking too much of ourselves
    - b. Humility is having the proper perspective of ourselves
  2. In our second part of this series, we are going to look at our relationships with others –
    - a. Specifically the influence we have over other people – am I drawing others to the Lord, or am I leading them astray?
    - b. What about the people I associate with – are they a blessing or a curse?
- 5 Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.
3. So... if we like kids, we are that makes us a Christian? Not quite...
    - a. Remember that Jesus is responding to the disciples argument over who was going to be the greatest in the Kingdom of God
    - b. And Jesus brought the child over as an example – *“become small in your own eyes like this child, and you will be the greatest”*
    - c. And so this comment ties in with that same line of thought – *“How you treat others – especially the ‘small ones’ of society – it’s as if you are treating me that same way.”*
  4. See, you can tell a lot about a person based on how they treat others who are “smaller” – children, the less important, the downtrodden, the poor.
    - a. Do they treat them with respect? Dignity? Love?
    - b. Or is there a sense of dismissiveness, disdain, judgement?
    - c. See a prideful person would see those people as less important-why? Because the smaller people cant do anything for that person.
    - d. Again – pride and self-centeredness is the root.
    - e. And Jesus is telling us *“I identify with those people – children, the less important, the downtrodden, the poor”*

**Matt 5:3-9**

*3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*4 Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.*

*5 Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.*

*6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.*

*7 Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.*

*8 Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.*

*9 Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.*

**5. Then Jesus takes it to the next level...**

6 "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

**6. This is a startling statement for an Israelite, because they were not a sea-faring people, in fact they had a great fear of the ocean,**

a. And to suggest that you would have a millstone – 7-8 foot diameter stone – tied to your neck and then dropped into the sea... that was a scary thought to an Israelite!

b. So it is a bit of an inflammatory statement – why?

**7. Jesus is telling us “true disciples of mine are like little children – harmless as doves, gentle as a lamb”**

a. If we are like Jesus we are humble – not defensive and aggressive

b. Meek, merciful, pure in heart....

c. In other words “my disciples are by nature – pure in heart, humble, meek, trusting...

d. ...someone that an evil person would see as a target.

e. And so if you see my little ones that way, and you do something to hurt them, lead them astray – you will answer to ME!”

*Heb 10:31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

**8. I believe there is a dual meaning in this statement - Dealing with “little ones” – children**

a. I believe God is very protective of children –

b. And I believe that this is a clear warning to those that would lead children into sin – corrupting their young minds

c. People that harm children, molest them, teach them to sin... they will fall into the hands of the living God.

**9. The other side of this is dealing with “little ones” – other believers**

a. Why other believers? John 13:33, Gal 4:19, and all through 1 John – believers are referred to as “little children”

b. See, there is sin that a person would do themselves...

c. There is sin that a person might do to another person

d. Then there is sin that a person would entice others into

**10. My mom used to say “sin loves company”, and it is true.**

- a. I know I always wanted a partner in crime, a running buddy who would run with me.
- b. It made me feel better about myself, whatever it was I was involved with, I wasn't the only one!
- c. But Jesus is talking about the person that entices one of HIS to go astray
- d. And to that person – Jesus says “woe...”

7 Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!

**11. Two woes...**

- a. Woe to the world – a cry of pity to the world in danger of offenses – the fact that God will bring judgment against sin.
- b. Woe to that man - But Jesus personalizes this – the person who leads a Christian into sin – woe!

8 "If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire. 9 And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire.

**12. We discussed this earlier; Jesus is not telling us to cut off our hand or foot.**

- a. *(You can cut off your hand, and still sin – just with the other hand!)*
- b. Rather if there is anything in my life that is tempting me, that is drawing me into sin – then it needs to go!
- c. Could be a number of things – TV, books, internet – things that are not in and of themselves “bad” – but things that by their proximity cause me problems, I need to cut them out of my life!

**13. Taken in context, it would seem to me that He is talking about the people we hang out with...**

- a. Are my friends leading me closer to God, or leading me away from God?
- b. I remember that there were some people that my mom didn't want me to hang around with, because she thought that they would be a bad influence on me.
- c. I fought that tooth and nail – “those are my friends mom!”

- d. But you know what? Mom was right – that group of friends led me astray – most were older and more experienced in sin (which is why I wanted to hang out with them!)
14. How many people have come to the Lord, been cleansed and freed from sin, and ended up going right back to the pit – because they went back to the people that they used to run with?
- a. Twenty years ago when I came to the Lord, I faltered several times, and it was ALWAYS preceded by my going back to the people I used to sin with.
  - b. I had to cut those people off – and some were good friends – it felt like cutting off a hand – but in order for me to walk with the Lord, it was an amputation that had to be done.

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**1 Peter 4:3-4**

*3 For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles -- when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. 4 In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you*

**Prov 23:17** *Do not let your heart envy sinners, but be zealous for the fear of the LORD all the day;*

- c. God is telling us it is better to ‘cut them off’ than to go back to the pit!

10 "Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven.

**15. We should take heed at how we treat God’s ‘little ones’, those who have humbled themselves to God**

- a. Think about this – how protective are we of our children? If someone were hurting one of our children, or trying to corrupt them, what would our reaction be?
- b. I never want to have God find bruises on one of His children that I have put there!

**16. God looks out for His little ones – He even has His angels watching over us: *In heaven their angels always see the face of My Father***

- a. This scripture, along with Hebrews 1:14, indicate that we have angels watching over us!
- b. Man what a cool picture – angels, watching over us – there to minister to us

**Heb 1:14** *Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?*

**17. So there is a sense that – God is watching, God is able to take care of His children!**

- a. And so if – if something is done to one of His children – we need not take matters into our own hands**
- b. God will be our strength – God will bring justice and judgment**
- c. And we can rest in that – and even forgive those who have harmed us – or even our children**

***Ps 1:1-3***

*Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. 3 He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, those leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.*

11 For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.

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