

A Godly View of Spiritual Friendship

Matthew 18:1-14 - NCBC, February 14, 2021

Main Point: **Humility is where you must begin in all Christian relationships.**

- **Look Up: Humbly admit your need for salvation (1-4)**
 - God gives grace to the humble
 - God saves sinners who turn from pride
- **Look Out: Humbly consider your spiritual influence on others (5-7)**
 - God unites believers together in Jesus
 - God judges those who lead believers into sin
- **Look In: Humbly remove all sinful influences towards you (8-9)**
 - Amputate whatever hinders your personal purity
 - Amputate whatever hinders your community's purity
- **Look Down: Humbly pursue the weak for restoration (10-14)**
 - Do not despise believers who are going astray
 - Do not forget God's joy over any believer who repents

Application: **For the sake of others' joy, pursue humility.**

Opening Announcements:

- We congratulate **Cecilia Knott** in her baptism today!!
- **Join our Loving Your Community Online Class.** Everyone is invited to join this special online training opportunity for this 8-week class, beginning March 7th. Weekly videos and discussion questions will guide you through the book *Loving Your Community*, to help you grow in reaching farther with Christ!
- Today we welcome the scouts from our local troop! Welcome!

<<Yet Not I but through Christ in Me>>



Amen. We have been crucified in Christ. Christ now lives in us. So now we live by faith in the Son of God, who loved us, and gave Himself for us!¹

Please open your copy of God's Word to **Matthew chapter 18**. **Matthew 18** is one of the most important chapters in the entire Bible about Spiritual Friendship, so today we return to our *Beholding King Jesus* series by reading the first half of Jesus' teaching on Christian's relationships within His church.

¹ Galatians 2:20
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I want to welcome those worshipping online or in our Extra Precautions Chapel. For those online, please use the links alongside the livestream for fill-in-the-blank sermon notes, the preaching manuscript, and children’s coloring pages. At any time you may pause this video, print those files, and then rejoin our worship with those notes in front of you.

Since we’ve been away from our Matthew series for a couple of months, let’s quickly review where we are in our study.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW				
1-3 Presentation of the King				
4-7 Proclamation of the King <i>Sermon on the Mount (5-7)</i>	8-10 Power of the King <i>Sending out the 12 Apostles (10)</i>	11-13 Rejection of the King <i>Kingdom Parables (13)</i>	14-20 Priorities of the King <i>Topsy-Turvy Values (18)</i>	21-25 Progress of the King <i>Olivet Discourse (24-25)</i>
Kingdom offered to Israel			Kingdom offered to all Nations	
26-28 Passion & Proof of the King				

The Gospel of Matthew is written so we can see Jesus as the Messiah – God’s anointed King – who fulfills all of the Old Testament promises.

The body of **Matthew’s** gospel is arranged into 5 topical sections. Each section begins highlighting some of the works of King Jesus, and then each of these five sections conclude with an extended discourse of Jesus’ words.

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So **Matthew 18** marks this transition from Jesus works to His words in this fourth section of the book. **Matthew 18** contains Jesus’ teaching about the Topsy-Turvy, or radically unexpected, values of His kingdom citizens’ relationships with each other in His church.

So if you’re able, I’d invite you to stand for the public reading of God’s Word, as I read from **Matthew 18**, in the English Standard Version:

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” 2 And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them 3 and said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

5 “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, 6 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.

7 *“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! 8 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. 9 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.*

10 *“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. 12 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? 13 And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. 14 So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.*

This is the reading of God's Word.

Let's Pray Together.

When's the last time you appealed to a higher authority to settle an argument?

Children – maybe you and your brother and sister got into an argument, and you went to a parent to see which one of you were right. Teens - maybe some discussion in a group project only ended after someone got the teacher's input. Some of us have appealed to an official counselor or judge to settle an argument. I'm sure

there's been times when we've all appealed to some authority-figure to settle a dispute we are having with someone else.

So let me ask ... have you ever gone to Jesus to settle an argument you're having with another Christian?

Because that is what's happening here in **Matthew 18**, isn't it? Let's quickly review what led up to this topsy-turvy teaching of Jesus.

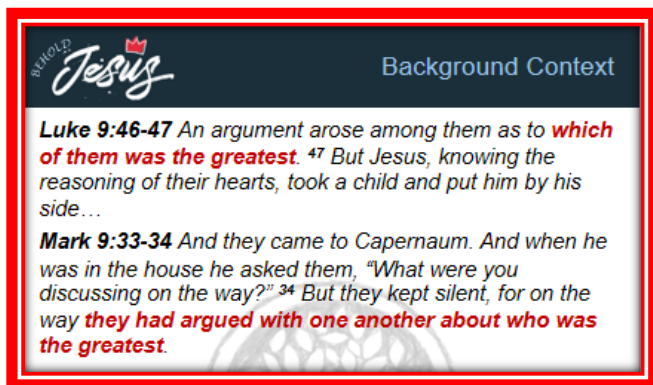
Remember **chapter 17** began with Jesus inviting Peter, James, and John to go on a private prayer retreat where His glory was revealed, and God testified from Heaven that Jesus is the Messiah in fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets.

But while Peter, James, and John were having their mountain-top experience with Jesus, the other 9 disciples were left where? Back continuing ministry to a crowd of needy people around Caesarea Philippi, right? While Jesus and the three were experiencing glory... the 9 were experiencing frustration and heartache.

In fact, when Jesus returned he found the 9 disciples arguing about why they were not able cast a demon out of a little boy.

So Jesus returns, heals the boy, rebukes the disciples for their poor quality of faith, reminds them that His glory will be shown through His death and resurrection before it will ever be shown through grand displays of wonder and awe... and then leads all the disciples on the 25-mile hike back towards Peter's home in Capernaum, on the shore of the Sea of Galilee.

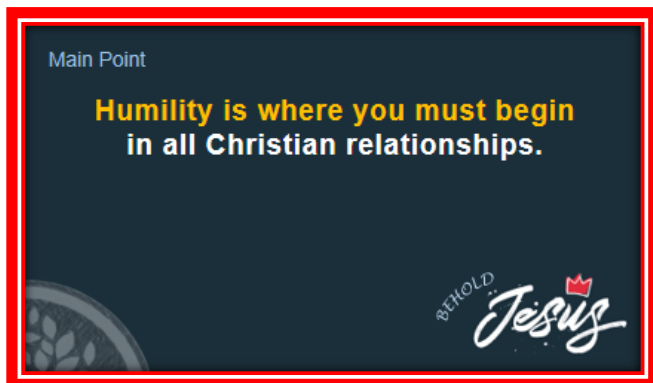
And **Luke** and **Mark** tell us what the disciples talked about on the way back to Capernaum.



Do you remember their argument?

On the way back to Peter's home, *An argument rose among them as to which of them was the greatest.*

And so now, in **Matthew 18**, Jesus asks a little child to come near him, and teaches His bickering disciples that,



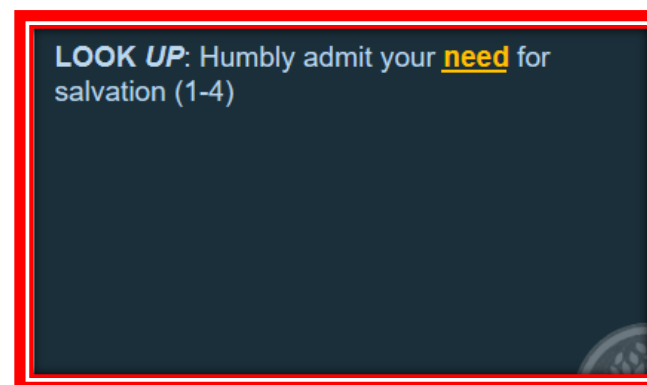
Humility is where you must begin in all Christian relationships. Jesus' disciples must never seek to

selfishly use others to get ahead themselves. Selfish ambition and competition have no place in God's church.

Instead, Christ-followers are to be humble – like a small dependent child – who trusts God's good rule for all that they need.

So Jesus takes a child – perhaps one of Peter's children that was close by – and wraps his arms around² this little one that the disciples would have considered insignificant to their concerns, and teaches the topsy-turvy value of humility.

First, in **verses 3 and 4**, Jesus calls all who would follow Him to a vertical humility before God.



Look Up! Jesus is saying. Get your focus off the other people around you and whether or not they are getting more money or more friends or more recognition than you. Your horizontal relationships with other Christians will never fulfill God's good design until you have first *Looked Up*, and **Humbly admit your own need for salvation** to God Himself.

² Mark 9:36

You see, the disciples had assumed that their close *association* with Jesus guaranteed their future honor in God's kingdom. We must be careful we don't fall into the same trap. Sometimes we believe God owes us some heavenly honor because all of the things we've done for God, all the times we've gone to church, all that we've sacrificed in some way for His glory.

But Jesus knew this kind of self-focused thinking is dead wrong. In fact Judas – one of the twelve disciples – would never enter heaven.³

So His warning is stern in **verse 3**. *Truly I say to you...* in others words, Listen very carefully to me right now...

Unless you turn... unless you change how you're thinking... unless you repent...and embrace the nature of a little child...unless you become someone different on the inside than your present argument for greatness betrays... you will never enter the kingdom of heaven!

So let me ask you: do you think God owes you salvation? Do you think God got a good deal when He saved you? Do you honestly believe God should give you more greatness in His kingdom than He will give another redeemed sinner?

Look up and bring your own sins to God! Turn from your selfish ambition. Humbly admit your own profound need for salvation.

LOOK UP: Humbly admit your **need** for salvation (1-4)

- God gives grace to the **humble**

God gives grace to the **humble**, but He opposes the proud.⁴ Recognize all your own efforts will only merit God's judgment in eternity. The only way you and I can be saved is through God's mercy. So stop trusting yourself, and like a child, humble yourself before God.

Remember what we learned about humility a few weeks ago:

What is Humility?

Vertical: (Towards God)	
Faith	Trusting God instead of myself
Horizontal: (Towards Others)	
Love	Serving Others instead of myself

Humility has both a vertical and a horizontal expression in Scripture. Vertical humility is an expression of faith, which trusts God instead of self. Vertical humility is

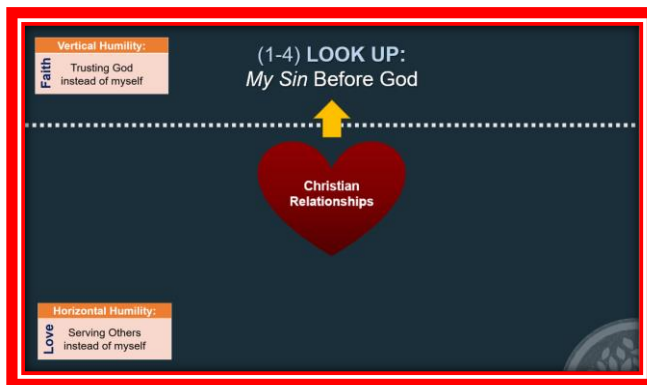
³ John 13:26-27; 17:12
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⁴ Proverbs 3:34; 1 Peter 5:5; James 4:6

expressed by obeying God's Word,⁵ resting from your own efforts,⁶ praying and fasting,⁷ and repenting of sin.⁸

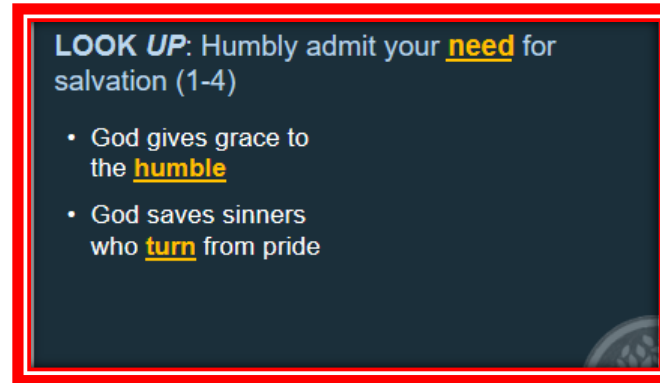
Horizontal Humility is an expression of love which seeks to serve others instead of self. Horizontal humility regards others as more important than self,⁹ serves others,¹⁰ and forgives and bears with others in love.¹¹

So if we were to draw a diagram of God's design for Christian relationships,



It might look like this. All my Christian relationships must begin with me humbly admitting my own sin before God. It's very humbling to confess your sins to God and admit that I don't deserve to be in God's kingdom.

But listen carefully friends,



God saves sinners who turn from pride

Only when you confess your sins to God, and turn, and ask God to give you life in Christ, can you begin to experience the greatness of the kingdom of heaven.

The measure of greatness in God's family is never based on power, prestige, position, or possessions. Turn from such worldly thinking. Greatness in God's family is always measured by the topsy-turvy value of humility.

But as Jesus goes on now to teach in **verses 5-7**, your relationships with other Christians must be an expression of horizontal humility as well.

Verses 5-7 urge all Christ-followers to,

⁵ Exodus 10:3; 2 Chronicles 30:8-9, 11-12; Proverbs 22:4; Isaiah 66:2; Jeremiah 44:10; Zephaniah 2:3; Philippians 2:8; James 4:7

⁶ Leviticus 16:29, 31; 23:27, 29, 32 (NASB); Numbers 29:7 (NASB)

⁷ Ezra 8:21; Psalm 69:10; Isaiah 58:3-5, 10; Daniel 10:12; Zephaniah 3:12; 1 Peter 5:6-7

⁸ Leviticus 26:40-41; 1 Kings 21:27-29; 2 Kings 22:19; 2 Chronicles 7:14, 12:6-8, 34:27; Proverbs 6:3 (NASB); James 1:21, 4:8-10

⁹ Romans 12:3; Philippians 2:3-4

¹⁰ Luke 14:10-11; Romans 12:16; 2 Corinthians 11:7-9

¹¹ Ephesians 4:1-3; Colossians 3:12-14; 1 Peter 3:8, 5:5

LOOK OUT: Humbly consider your spiritual influence on others (5-7)

Look Out, and Humbly consider your spiritual influence on others.

Now let **verse 5** amaze your soul! Jesus is still holding this little child, and He says,

Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me...

Remember Jesus is using this child as an illustration of a humble believer. We know this because in **verse 6** Jesus clearly refers to “little ones” as those who *believe* in Him.

In other words, **Matthew 18** is not talking about how we relate with young people or physical children. Jesus is using the little child as an object lesson for a humble Christian. Jesus is trying to teach His disciples how we should think about other believers – other Christians – other souls who have humbled themselves in profound dependence upon God’s mercy and grace.

¹² C.f. the phrase “in Christ” is found over 90x in the New Testament, and describes the reality of the true Christian’s connectedness with Jesus and His blessed life and righteousness: John 14:16-18; 15:4-5; Romans 6:6;

And did you catch His point? **Verse 5** is teaching that,

LOOK OUT: Humbly consider your spiritual influence on others (5-7)

- God unites believers together in Jesus

God unites all believers together in Jesus.

Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, Jesus says. When you welcome another Christian, you are welcoming Jesus Himself. Every Christian you ever interact with is “in Christ!”

Time doesn’t now permit us to unpack the full glories of our union with Christ,¹² but let me at least make sure we understand that Christianity is a supernatural religion. No one can become a Christian simply by agreeing to a list of facts, or physically joining a church. No one becomes a Christian by getting baptized or taking communion.

No – the only way anyone is rescued from sin’s eternal penalty of hell is if God gives you a brand-new identity “in Christ!” God’s salvation hides a soul “in Christ.” **Verse 5** teaches that it is impossible to separate Jesus from His

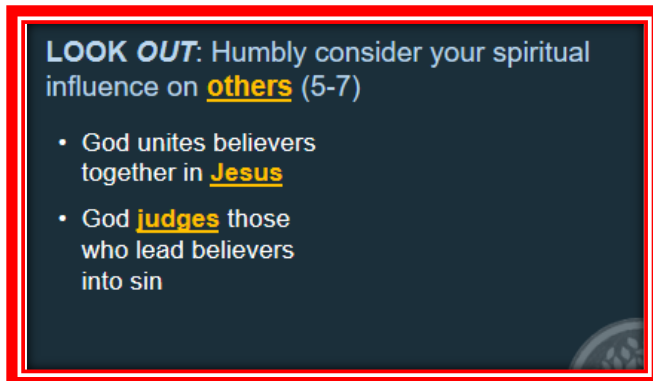
8:10; 14:8; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 3:16; 15:22; 2 Corinthians 5:17, 21; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 1:4, 7; 2:4-5, 10; 3:16-17; 4:16; Philippians 3:8-9; Colossians 1:13-14; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Revelation 14:13

people, and how you and I treat other Christians is actually the way we treat Jesus Himself!

So look out, and humbly consider your spiritual influence on other Christians. Because **verse 6** warns that,

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.

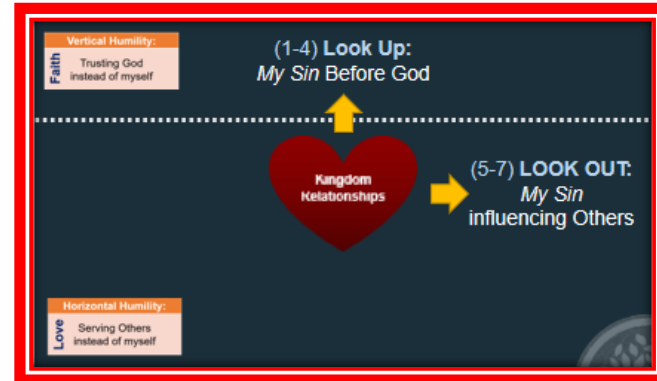
Whoa! Jesus is saying whenever you mistreat a Christian, you're actually mistreating Jesus Himself, and therefore bringing God's judgment upon yourself.



Write this down: God **judges** those who lead believers into sin. It would be better to suffer a horrific execution by drowning than to cause another Christian to sin.

The word “Woe” in **verse 7** refers to God’s judgment. We might summarize **verse 7** this way: Jesus says, It’s not possible for anyone to live in this broken world of sin

without encountering temptation. But God will severely judge the person who tempts one of His children to sin.



So **verses 5-7** give us the second principle of all **Spiritual Friendships**. The first principle of Spiritual Friendship is to humble yourself vertically and focus first on your own sin before God.¹³

But humility then horizontally recognizes that since all Christians are connected with Jesus – I must make sure my own sin never influences another believer to sin.

Please listen, every one of us influences other Christians. Whether other Christians live with you in your home, or you go to work or school with other Christians, or whether you serve alongside other believers in the local church... every one of us has some influence on other Christians.

So in light of Jesus’ strong warning here... have you ever thought about how easy it can be to cause another Christian to sin?

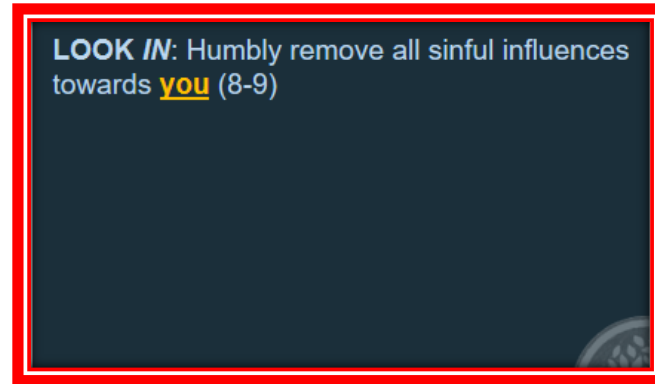
¹³ C.f. Matthew 7:1-5

You could lead a Christian astray with false teaching or ungodly counsel.¹⁴ You could directly tempt another believer to lie, gossip, or disobey God in some way.¹⁵ And those are pretty blatant and direct examples, right?

But what about the more indirect influence we exert on one another? Parents, every time we provoke our children to anger, we indirectly tempt them to sin.¹⁶ Or we can indirectly lead Christians to sin through a sinful example.¹⁷ When we flaunt one of our liberties before a weaker brother or sister, we can cause them to stumble.¹⁸ Or perhaps one of the most common ways we all influence one another towards sin is through silent omission... when we fail to encourage each other towards righteousness through prayer or mutual encouragement.¹⁹

Jesus is teaching His competitive disciples that they'd be better off dead than to cause other Christian to sin. Do you approach your spiritual friendships with this kind of servant-hearted humility?

Next, in **verses 8-9** Jesus calls us to,



Look In, and Humbly remove all sinful influences towards you.

You can't read **Matthew 18** without understanding that Jesus takes sin seriously, and He desires for you and me to take sin seriously. He teaches in **verse 8**,

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. 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.

Now Jesus is obviously using figurative language here to make a very strong point: we must do whatever is necessary – no matter how painful or extreme it may seem – to keep ourselves from sinning and from causing others to sin. He's not suggesting that we physically

¹⁴ 2 Timothy 3:6-8; Revelation 2:20

¹⁵ Job 2:9; Matthew 16:22-23

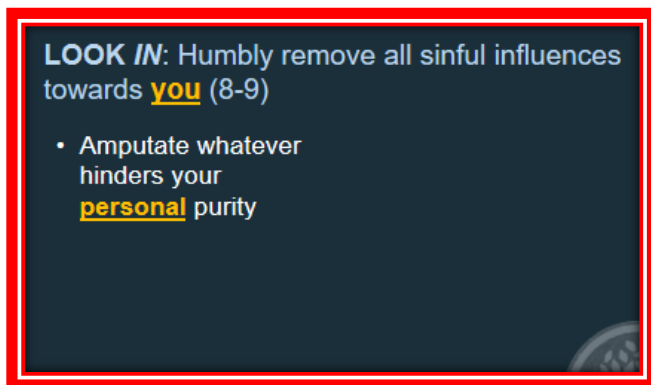
¹⁶ Ephesians 6:4

¹⁷ Matthew 23:3ff; Romans 14:20-21

¹⁸ 1 Corinthians 8:9-13

¹⁹ Hebrews 10:24; c.f. 1 Samuel 12:23

harm our bodies... since sin originates in our heart desires²⁰ rather than our physical appendages.



Rather Jesus is calling us to radically amputate whatever hinders your personal purity. Rid your life of any influence that diminishes your satisfaction in the manifold perfections of Christ!

Never flirt with sin or simply try to manage sin. Just like Jesus taught in **Matthew 5:27-30** – any habit, or relationship, or entertainment, or technology, or media that causes us to stumble, or can cause others to sin, must be radically forsaken and replaced with a superior affection for Christ Himself.

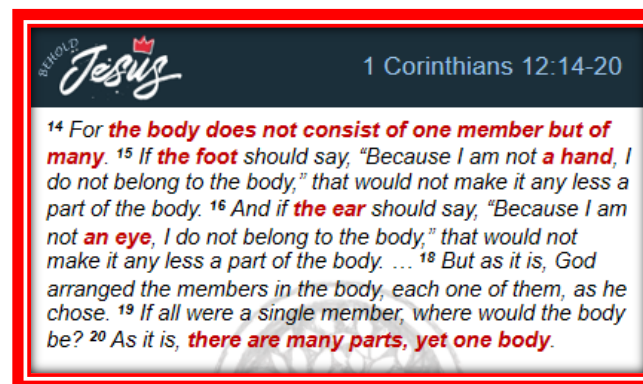
Notice Jesus holds life and death in front of us in **verses 8-9**. You might underline the two instances of, “It is better for you to enter life” and then also underline “the eternal fire” and “the hell of fire.”

Heaven and Hell are real, loved ones. And hell is the eternal destination for all who play with sin and give themselves to its deceptive influence.

²⁰ James 1:14-15; c.f. Matthew 15:19
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So pursue life loved ones! Commit to fight sin with drastic intentionality. The best prevention against causing others to sin is to take whatever action is necessary to protect *oneself* from sin.

But there’s another way to look at **verses 8 and 9** that is compelling, given its surrounding context. Since the rest of this entire chapter all speaks of Christians’ relationships with other Christians... I believe it is likely that **verses 8-9** are also referring to Christians’ relationships with other Christians.



In other words, I believe the “hand” and the “foot” and the “eye” mentioned in **Matthew 18** are actually referring to other *people* – in a similar way to how Paul describes the church in **1 Corinthians 12** as being one body with many different members.²¹

Taken this way, Jesus is calling His disciples to,

²¹ 1 Corinthians 12:14-20

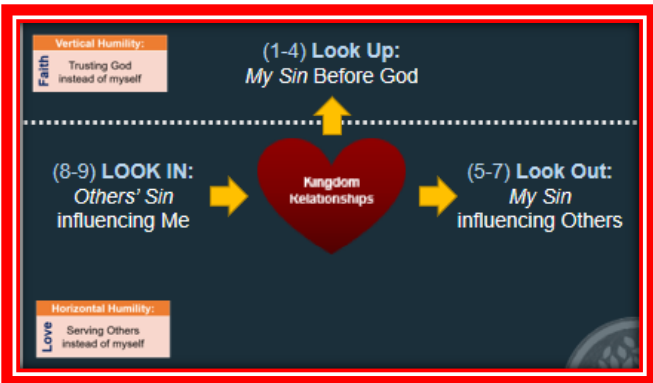
LOOK IN: Humbly remove all sinful influences towards you (8-9)

- Amputate whatever hinders your personal purity
- Amputate whatever hinders your community's purity

Amputate whatever hinders your community's purity.

They must excommunicate or cut off any person's influence from among them who is continuing to exert an unrepentant influence of sin upon the rest of the body.

Eternal life and death is at stake; sin's influence must never be taken lightly. Have you humbly considered how others' sin may be influencing you?



Humility is foundational to all Christian relationships. For in our Christian relationships with others, we must beware of how my sin is influencing others, and how others' sin is influencing me.

Finally, **verses 10-14** make sure that our strong fight against sin never creates a judgmental or competitive spirit within God's family. Instead, these verses call us to,

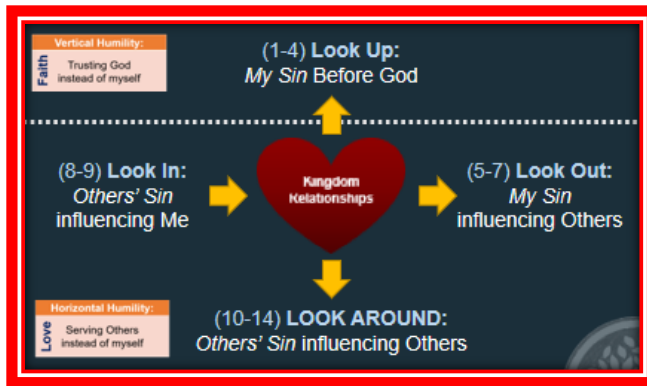
LOOK AROUND: Humbly pursue the weak for restoration (10-14)

Look Around, and Humbly pursue the weak for restoration.

You see, whenever we start to take sin seriously ourselves, it's tempting to start despising or looking down on others that aren't taking as drastic of an approach to their sin, as we are taking with our own. And this is the exact kind of competitive pride that Jesus was correcting in His arguing disciples.

So in **verse 10**, Jesus adds an important lesson for our understanding of Spiritual Friendship:

See that you do not despise one of these little ones.



When you look around, and see other Christians' sin influencing others ... do not be the older brother in the story of the prodigal son.²² Do not look down on other believers who are struggling, or treat them with contempt when they go astray.

Humble yourself enough to realize that except for God's grace, you would also be lost in sin.

LOOK DOWN: Humbly pursue the **weak** for restoration (10-14)

- Do not **despise** believers who are going astray

Do not despise other believers who are going astray. Humble yourself enough to care for other believers as much as God Himself does.

Verse 10 makes it clear that each little one – although weak and going astray – is so special to our Heavenly Father that He has a whole assembly of angels ready to dispatch for our aid at any given moment!²³ Since God cares so much for His weak children, that He would dispatch heavenly hosts to help them, why wouldn't we also desire to pursue our weaker brothers and sisters for their repentance and restoration?

In fact, **verses 12-13**²⁴ picture God Himself as a loving shepherd who seeks and finds His wandering child.

So God cares for every individual believer – no matter how humble or weak we are. God always pursues the

²² Luke 15:25ff

²³ C.f. Hebrews 1:14. NOTE: Contrary to the ancient Jewish belief that God gives every believer an individual guardian angel, it seems more consistent with Scriptures' teaching to understand angels' ministry to believers from a "zone coverage" rather than a "man-to-man coverage." In Daniel 12:1, the archangel Michael appears to be a protector of the Jewish people. There is no clear biblical teaching for a specific angel being assigned to each

individual believer.

²⁴ Note verse 11 (*For the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost.*) is not found in the best manuscripts of Matthew, so it is left out of the more accurate English translations. However, this verse is found in Luke 19:10, and because there is no question about its authenticity there, Matthew 18:11 does teach a genuinely Scriptural truth. However, it was not actually originally part of Matthew's gospel.

one. When you are lost, He comes to you! His love is personal and individual. And look at **verse 13**,

Truly, I say to you, when God finds the one who has gone astray, He rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray.

In other words, when you look around and see others' struggling with sin,

LOOK DOWN: Humbly pursue the **weak** for restoration (10-14)

- Do not **despise** believers who are going astray
- Do not forget God's **joy** over any believer who repents

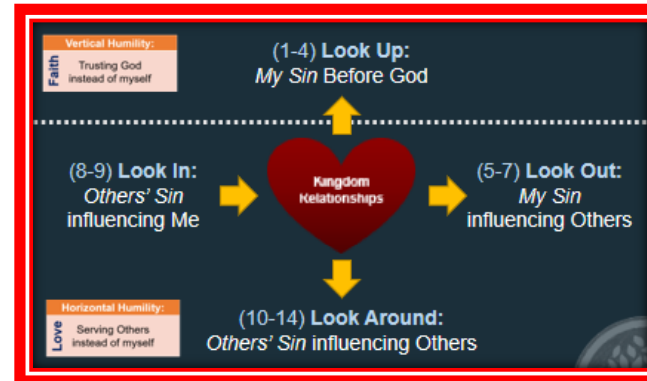
Do not forget God's **joy** over any believer who repents!

O beloved believer... if you have been flirting with sin, or wandering away from God... If you are listening right now and feeling like you're too weak and too lost to ever return to our God, hear the hope of **verse 13**:

No one in our universe will ever be more happy with your repentance than God! Never think that God will punish you or shame you or be stand-offish if you return to Him in repentance. O when you repent from your sin, and turn, and humble yourself before God in true repentance... you will find that God is the Joyful Shepherd who was seeking you the entire time, and His

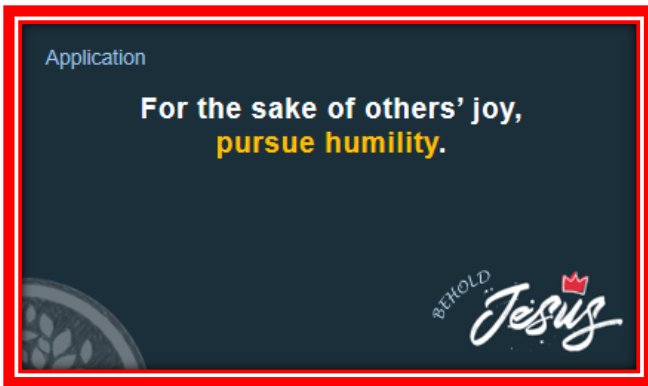
reception of you back into humble fellowship with Him is one of pure and unparalleled joy!!

You know what this means church? This means through God's saving grace, He has made us one body – a community He calls His church – a community of intentional spiritual friendship – where we,



Look seriously at our own sin, and we look seriously at others' sins... but never out of selfish ambition or proud competition. But rather in humble confidence that our Heavenly Father cares for us, and is always working in us and through us so that none of His children should ever perish.

Therefore church,



For the sake of other Christians' joy, pursue humility.

Humbly admit your own need for God's mercy and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for your salvation.

Humbly consider your spiritual influence on others, and humbly seek to remove all sinful influences towards you.

And for the sake of others' joy, humbly pursue the weak for their restoration and God's greater joy.

After all, the greatest in God's kingdom are those who humble themselves like a dependent child, and see their relationships with other Christians from God's joyful perspective.

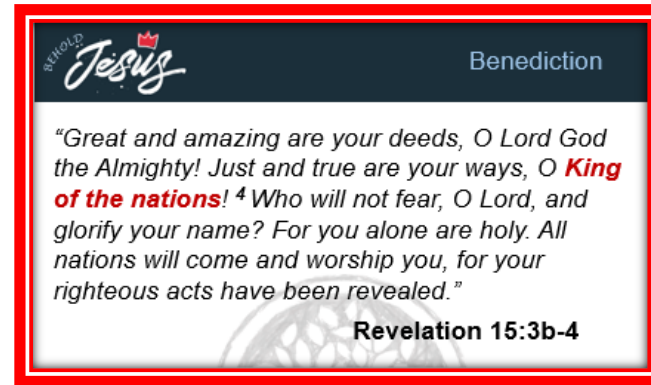


Let's pray.

<<All I Have is Christ>>

Remember to take advantage of the online Downloads and links!

Let's pray our benediction together as we dismiss.



Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.
Revelation 15:3b-4

Recommended Resources on Spiritual Friendship:

- Psalm 23; 100:3
- Proverbs 20:6
- Isaiah 40:11
- Zechariah 2:8
- Matthew 5:29-30; 20:20-28; 23:11-12; 25:31-40
- John 10:28-30
- Roman 14:1-15:13
- 1 Corinthians 12:14-17
- Philippians 2:3-4
- Hebrews 1:14
- James 5:19-20
- 1 John 1:6-10; 3:10, 14; 4:8, 11-12, 20-21; 5:1-2

- <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/cut-off-your-hand>
- <https://graceky.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Four-A-s-of-Fighting-Sin-Cleveland-Bruellman.pdf>
- <https://gospelinlife.com/downloads/spiritual-friendship-6582/>

- *Side by Side*, Edward Welch
- *Caring for One Another*, Edward Welch
- *The Company We Keep*, Jonathan Holmes
- *The Compelling Community*, Dever & Dunlop
- *Life in the Body of Christ*, Curtis Thomas

Growing Deeper: Life Group Questions

1. Review Matthew 18:1-4. What does it practically mean to “humble yourself like a child”?
2. Read Matthew 18:5. Think about how salvation unites a soul in Christ. (C.f. 1 Cor 6:17 and Gal 2:20) How should this change the way we think about and relate with our Christian spouses? Christian Children? Other believers we interact with?
3. Read Matthew 18:6-9. How seriously do you take sin? Where do you find yourself most likely to flirt with sin, or just try to manage it? What would radical amputation look like for you practically, in your personal fight against sin?
4. Read Matthew 18:12-14, John 10:27-30, and Psalm 23:1-3. What surprises you about these passages? How do you think God thinks about you when you sin? How do these Scriptures encourage your personal repentance after you’ve sinfully gone astray?
5. Review Matthew 18:6. Are you aware of any way you may be directly or indirectly causing other believers to sin? What would it look like for you to humble yourself and better serve other believers’ joy in Christ?