

FOLLOW ME

The Gospel of Matthew

WEEK 4 - THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM OVERVIEW

Despite Jesus' consistent inversion of the world's values throughout the gospel of Matthew, his disciples routinely miss the point and desire power, fame, and influence. In this passage, Jesus sets the record straight. The kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are like little children. God cares about those the world has forgotten (like a shepherd pursuing the one lost sheep when he has 99 others). Jesus also presents some scathing warnings to those who would lead astray the "little ones" who believe in him. Yet again, we are invited to do some significant soul searching by our rabbi. Are we obeying the values of our broken world, or the values of the "upside-down" kingdom?

Anyone who becomes as humble as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Matthew 18:4

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Give an example of a story where the last becomes first; a nobody becomes a somebody.
2. How does the position of children in the ancient world compare to the position of children in society today?
3. How would you describe the way of Jesus to people living in a world obsessed with greatness? (see Matthew 18:1-5, 10-14, Matthew 19:28-30 NSRV, Matthew 5:3-5, Matthew 20:25-28)
4. Read Matthew 18:4 and Philippians 2:7-8. What must we do to matter in the kingdom of God?
5. Barry asked us to consider some practical questions in light of Matthew 23:11-12:
 - a. Who are the heroes that I look up to?
 - b. What is the goal of my career?
 - c. How often do I notice the "little ones" of my world?
6. How often does your behavior reveal a kingdom that is upside-down? Have you ever *left the 99* to find the one?
7. What would it look like to reject the allure of greatness and embrace the humility of Christ?