

LESSON PLAN

WHO IS THE GREATEST?

Matthew 17:14 – 18:35
(Matthew 7:12-29)

Lesson Memory Verse: Matthew 18:4 - "Whoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

Lesson Aim: We should seek to be humble and get rid of all pride in our lives; this will please the Lord.

Lesson Plan: Use the KEY – HE – SEE – WE – BE plan (explained in the Introductory Notes).

KEY (for Attention): Have you ever seen a peacock at a zoo? Show your class a picture of a peacock (see the internet). Why does a peacock remind us of pride? How can you tell if a person is proud or is humble? Get different ideas from the class. Do not correct their ideas at this time; just let them talk. It will help you to know their thinking and it will prepare them for the lesson. In today's Bible memory verse, God tells us who will be the greatest in His kingdom. Do you know who will be the greatest?

HE (for Authority): Our memory verse is Mt 18:4 (read it to them). It says those who have the humility of a little child are the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. It is not the proud that will be great in Christ's Kingdom, but the humble. Jesus chose a little child to be an example of humility. I believe he chose a little child because they are believers. They believe what they are told by their parents and by other adults. We need to be humble like little children and believe what God says to us in the Bible. Humility will open the door for us to enter the Kingdom of Heaven and the most humble person will be the greatest. Who do you think that will be? Yes, it will be Jesus Christ.

SEE (for Apperception) and WE (for Application): PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word. Humility stimulates many good things in our lives. Let's find out what they are in today's lesson.

A. Humility Stimulates Faith - Matthew 17:14-20

The disciples could not cast the demon from the man's son (17:16). Why? They were weak because they did not believe in God's power (17:17, 20). Their unbelief was caused by pride. They tried to cast out the demon by their own power. They did it before so they should be able to do it again. Pride stimulates unbelief in God, while humility stimulates faith in God.

WE: We must replace our pride with humility so we will have faith in God as a little child has faith in his parents.

B. Humility Stimulates Prayer and Fasting - Matthew 17:21

Jesus told His disciples that they also needed to pray and fast to cast out this demon. To do this the disciples needed to be humble and admit that they could not handle this problem by their own power. They needed to pray and fast. ("Fasting" is not found in some manuscripts, but it is a biblical discipline that is stimulated by humility. It must be done in submission to God and not for the esteem of men.)

WE: We need to humble ourselves so that we depend on God to solve our problems. This will cause us to pray and fast to have God's power in our lives.

C. Humility s Stimulates Obedience - Matthew 17:22-23

Jesus humbled Himself to be killed by His enemies in obedience to His Father's will that the Scriptures would be fulfilled (Mt 26:54; Isa 53:3-8). Jesus' humility stimulated obedience.

WE: When we ae humble, we will desire to obey God.

D. Humility Stimulates a Denial of Our Rights - Matthew 17:24-27

All Jewish men were required to pay a tax for the Temple. The Temple belonged to God. Since Jesus is God's Son, He did not have to pay this tax. But most Jews did not believe He was God's Son, so He denied His right to be exempt from the tax; He did not demand that they treat Him as God's Son. That issue would be handled on another day. So He told Peter to pay the tax for both of them. To do this He told Peter to go to the Sea of Galilee and catch a fish with a hook and line. The first fish he caught would

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have a coin in its mouth, which would be enough to pay the tax for both of them. His humility caused Him to be taxed by His own creatures. (This concept may be too hard for the lower grades to understand.)

WE: We will not demand that other children follow our rules, even though we are older, or else we will not play with them.

E. Humility Stimulates Child-likeness - Matthew 18:1-4

Jesus used a little child to teach humility. A little child believes his parents. He or she believes what is told to them. They also believe their parents will give them the things they need like food and water, clothing and shelter. They humbly accept what their parents provide without worry or complaint. This is how Jesus wanted His disciples to act toward God. Then they would be great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

WE: We need to be humble and receive all of God's provisions without worrying or complaining.

F. Humility Stimulates a Love for God's Children - Matthew 18:5-14

Here Jesus tells older believers how to treat His little children that are younger believers. Older believers need humility to stimulate them to love new believers so they do not cause them to stumble into sin. If this happens, God will punish them severely. Humility will keep believers in love with each other and prevent them from sinning against each other. Love also will keep old believers from despising new believers for some of the faults that they may have.

WE: If we love God's children, it will cover a lot of wrong things that they may innocently do or say to us.

G. Humility Stimulates Our Confession of Sins - Matthew 18:15-20

It takes humility to admit that we have wronged someone, but that is what Christians must do if they have sinned. The Bible says we must confess our sins when we have sinned against someone and pay for any damage that we have done (18:15-17; Jam 5:16).

WE: If we have sinned against someone and he tells us about it, the Bible commands us to listen to what he is saying and then confess our sin. Humility will enable you to do it, but pride will keep you from it.

H. Humility Stimulates Forgiveness of Others - Matthew 18:21-35

Jesus told Peter that he must keep on forgiving a person that confesses that he has done wrong to him. It will take humility to forgive someone 490 times, but that is what Jesus told Peter (21-22). That is a hard saying, but that is what God does for us. He forgives us again and again. It all began when God forgave our sins against Him so we would not be sent to Hell. So we should be willing to forgive others of much smaller sins against us. [There are several illustrations of pride and humility in this' parable of Jesus (23-35). It takes humility to forgive. This parable definitely should be a part of the lesson.]

We: We must be humble before we can truly forgive those who sin against us. Forgiving others is not an option, but a command of the Lord.

[TEACHERS: Use any of the eight statements above that you feel will reach the children's hearts in your class. You probably will not be able to use all of them. Pray for God's wisdom as you select which ones you will use in your lesson.]

BE (for Action): Have the children tell you what a person does when he/she is humble. If you have time, ask the children to tell what a person does that is proud.

You will be great in the Kingdom of Heaven, if you are humble as a little child. Who will try to put away all pride in their lives and strive to be humble?

Humility begins with salvation from your sins. You cannot even get into the Kingdom of Heaven if you do not humble yourself and admit that you desperately need Jesus to save you from Hell. How many of you have turned away from your sins by God's help and have received Jesus as your Savior? (Have them raise their hands, so you can see if any do not raise their hands.) Do any of you want me to pray for you to be saved? (This will help you to know which ones are convicted about their sin and the judgment of God.) If some of you want to be saved today, I will help you do it after class is dismissed. It will be the best decision that you have ever made. Jesus will take your load of sins and give you relief so you do not have to worry about going to Hell. He also will help you to become a humble person that pleases Him.