



SPORTS IN FOCUS

CHILDREN OF THE KINGDOM

Matthew 18:1-35 • Lesson Nine

READY

- Jesus loved and welcomed children wherever he went. What are some of your favorite childhood memories?
- What do you miss most about the carefree days of childhood?

SET

Context of Matthew 18:1-35

This chapter is a single sermon by our Lord on the specific theme of the childlikeness of the believer, speaking directly to the reality that we are spiritual children with all the weaknesses that childhood implies. The first lesson in this sermon is that everyone who enters the kingdom does so as a child. Jesus then teaches that all of us in the kingdom must be treated as children, cared for as children, disciplined as children, and forgiven as children. It is no exaggeration to say that this is the single greatest speech our Lord ever gave on life among the redeemed people in His Church.

Keys to Text

Like a Child: The Greek word *paidion*, translated “little child” (18:2) identifies a very young child, sometimes an infant. Jesus loved children, and they loved Him, and as He sat before the disciples, holding the children, He had a great spot for teaching them.

GO

Read Matthew 18:1-35

1. How did Jesus teach His bickering disciples a lesson by hugging a small child?
2. What does Jesus say about a believer who leads others into sin, directly or indirectly?
3. Matthew 18:15-19 speaks about church discipline. What does Jesus call believer to do when a brother is in sin?
4. What was Jesus’ response to Peter’s question about forgiveness?
5. Why are the consequences so severe for those who lead others astray?
6. Have you ever been part of a church that practiced church discipline? What happened?
7. What is the “upside” of church discipline? What are the potential “risks”?
8. How does it alter your view of God to seem Him compared by Matthew to a caring shepherd?
9. Why is forgiveness advocated by Christ so rare? Why is it so hard to forgive?

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In his first public comments since Coach Mike Shanahan questioned Redskins quarterback Donovan McNabb’s ability to finish this past Sunday’s game, McNabb declined Tuesday to criticize his coach’s decision to bench him with 1:50 remaining and Washington trailing Detroit by just six points. “Coach makes his decisions,” McNabb said. “I can only say how I feel and what I feel think is best for me.” Besides all the speculation about McNabb being benched, the Vikings cut future hall of famer, Randy Moss. It’s not easy being humble in the NFL. However, Jesus taught that the person who humbles himself as a child (see Matthew 18:4), is declared the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. The verb behind “humbles” can be literally translated as “making low.” In God’s eyes, the one who lowers himself is the one who is elevated; the one who genuinely considers himself to be the least is the one God considers to be the greatest. www.nebraskafca.org