

SG Discussion Questions

for Personal Study and Small Groups 8/18/13

Entering the Kingdom of Heaven **Matthew 18:1-14**

Purpose of SG: to foster in its members the biblical values of worship (God), discipleship (church), and outreach (lost).

2013 Annual Focus: Drawing Near to the Good and Mighty King.

Announcements: (1) Baptism at the lake 9/8, (2) Hope Counselor training starts 9/15 and (3) SGL Day Retreat is 9/21 from 9am-4:30pm at Durant Nature Park, (4) Men's Retreat 10/4-6.

SG Discussion Questions:

Focus: To make sure that we, and those in our community, enter the kingdom of heaven.

Read Matthew 18:1-4

(1) What most likely prompted the disciples to ask the question, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven"? (see Matt 17:24-27). (2) Why does Jesus use a child as an object lesson? Is it because children are naturally humble or because of their low status in society? Do you agree with Dale Brunner who states, "It is not so much the child's subjective innocence or purity that is in view as it is the child's objective smallness and low status"? (3) Jesus does not assume that the disciples have entered or will enter the kingdom of heaven but states that they must turn (be converted). What are some reasons that we might be tempted to assume we have entered the kingdom?

Read Matthew 18:5-6

What are some ways (beliefs or lifestyle) that we might cause others to stumble? Why is it better to have a millstone hung around your neck and be thrown in the sea than to lead a vulnerable believer astray?

Read Mathew 18:7

What are some specific ways that our (1) family, (2) friends, or (3) other "Christians" might hinder us from entering the kingdom?

Read Matthew 18:8-9

How do we know that Jesus is using exaggerated language? What is the point of Jesus' teaching? What is a specific way in which you think God is calling to deal seriously with sin?

Read Mathew 18:10-14

What is God's attitude towards "sheep" that go astray ("sheep" here probably refers to those who stray after being part of the Christian community)? Is there someone you know who is straying? How might you be able to bring them back to the Good Shepherd?