Jesus,what do you mean?

***“Whoever humbles himself as this little child, he is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.”***

Or, Becoming great by being small

Matthew 18:4

The Words:

This chapter contains Matthew’s fourth discourse of Jesus. While the previous themes were righteousness (chapters 5-7), ministry (ch. 10), and the Kingdom (ch. 13), here Jesus discusses humility, in the context of body life. To be a follower of His is to be humble, and to seek true greatness in receiving and giving grace.

The Challenge:

It is not unusual to hear talk about humility, but defining it and following it are more difficult that we might at first think. First, we have to tell the difference between “child-like” and “childish.” Second, how do we practice humility without becoming the proverb-ial doormat? Then, how does humility become a lifestyle for us, permeating not only our hearts but our church? Finally, how do we overcome our natural tendency to control others?

The Principle: Humility is not a stray personality trait. It is a healthy awareness of ourselves as God’s children: active members of His family, dependent upon His grace, energized by His life, and competent for our mission. We need . . .

Humility in knowing who we are. Romans 12:3-5; 2 Corinthians 10:12

Humility in leading others. 1 Peter 5:1-7

Humility in dealing with the sins of others. Gal. 6:1-5; 1 Thess. 2:6-12

Humility in forgiving others. Matthew 18:15-35; James 4:6-10

The Application: Loving the Uniqueness of Jesus

Humility is not weakness, denial, or the province of an introverted personality. It is a product of the fruit of the Spirit in the life of God’s children. Galatians 5:22, 23

1. Humble people forgive well because they know their own sins.

The prideful, self-righteous servant ignored the pleas of his fellow-servant (Matthew 18:28-30) because he did not calculate the debt he had been forgiven. Prideful people don’t “get” grace, and so they don’t get grace. This is why the road is narrow and the gate small. Matthew 7:13, 14

2. Humble people lead well because they motivate, not manipulate.

While no one likes being told what to do, many leaders (parents included) enjoy dictating to others. Humility takes the role of servant, and wants what is best for others, not their own will.

See 1Thessalonians 2:1-12

3. Humble people live well because they know their limitations.

Children are weak and vulnerable, as are we. Jesus wants us to recognize this, and rest in the arms of our Father. Because we are safe, and our future secure, we can enjoy life each day and serve others. Phil. 2:1-13