

Next Steps:

Matthew 18 is packed full of character qualities that we all need to emulate more in our lives. We need to be more humble. We need to be more caring. We need to be more merciful.

Read Matthew 18:1-10. Jesus tells us we are supposed to emulate little children (their lowly position). Why is this important? Here are some other verses to consider.

Matthew 11:28-30 – who is “humble of heart?”

James 4:6 – who does God “oppose” and who does he “show favor” to?

1 Peter 5:5-6 – what should we “clothe ourselves with” and whom do we “humble” ourselves before?

Read Matthew 18:12-14. Jesus tells us that we are supposed to care so much about others that we leave the 99 to search for the one lost sheep. In the Old Testament this kind of loving care was demonstrated by the Hebrew word, “hesed” which describes God’s great, compassionate love. In the New Testament this kind of concern is demonstrated by the Greek word, “agape” which describes God’s unconditional love.

Read Hosea 14. Israel has wandered away. But God promises to care for them if they return to Him. What words describe God’s loving care?

Read Micah 6:8. What are the three commands in this verse?

Read John 15:9-17. What sacrifice did Jesus make to show his loving care toward us? What does Jesus command us to do? What would it look like to risk everything to go after the one that has wandered away?

Read Matthew 18:15-35. Jesus uses a very powerful illustration to help us learn about forgiveness. Why is it so hard to forgive others? The expectation is that since we are forgiven much, we should be forgiving of others. Are there some people in your life that have “sinned against you?” What are the steps Jesus teaches in this passage? (hint: there are 4 of them)

Read Colossians 3:12-14. In the end, this verse commands us to “forgive as the Lord forgave you.” This is where we put these words into practice. It is time to offer this kind of forgiveness to those that have “sinned against you.”