

# Matthew 18:1-10

December 15, 2019 – Rev. Rick Lyon

**Intro** - When you were little--*what did you want to be when you grew up?*

## What It Takes To Be Great In God's Eyes

**Matthew 18:1** - At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who then is *greatest in the kingdom of heaven?*”

### **1. If you want to be great in God's eyes--be patient with the slow.**

**Matthew 15:32** - Jesus said to His disciples, "I have compassion for these people; they've already been with Me three days and have nothing to eat. I don't want to send them away hungry."

**Matthew 15:33** - His disciples answered, "Where could we get enough bread in this remote place to feed such a crowd?"

**Matthew 16:21** - Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.

**Mark 9:9-10** - As they came down from the mountain, He commanded them to tell no one the things they'd seen, till the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, *questioning what the rising from the dead meant.*

**1 Thessalonians 5:14** - We urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

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### **2. If you want to be great in God's eyes--serve the low.**

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**"The greatest among you shall be your servant." (Mt. 23:11)**

**v.2** - Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you're converted and become as little children, you'll by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

## **How to Develop Humility**

**1. Enthusiastically do something someone else's way.**

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**2. Listen carefully when others speak**

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**3. Admit, without excuse, when you're wrong.**

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## **4. Be thankful and don't complain.**

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## **5. Do what you consider to be a menial task.**

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## **6. Read God's Word.**

**Isaiah 6** - I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple... Then I said: “Woe is me, for I'm ruined, because I'm a man of unclean lips dwelling among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of Hosts.”

**Psalms 8:3-4** - When I behold Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You've set in place—what is man that You're mindful of him, or the son of man that You care for him?

**Timothy Keller**: "The gospel is this: We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope."

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### **3. If you want to be great in God's eyes--help others grow.**

**v.5** - Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.

*The Christmas Guest* by Helen Steiner Rice:

It happened one day at December's end,  
Two neighbors called on an old-time friend  
And they found his shop so meager and mean,  
Made splendid with a thousand boughs of green,  
And Conrad was sitting with face a-shine  
When he suddenly stopped as he stitched a twine  
And said, "Old friends, at dawn today,  
When the rooster was crowing the night away,  
The Lord appeared in a dream to me  
And said, 'I'm coming your guest to be'.  
So I've been busy with feet astir,  
Strewing my shop with branches of fir,  
The table is spread and the kettle is shined  
And over the rafters the holly is twined,  
And now I'll wait for my Lord to appear  
And listen closely so I will hear  
His step as He nears my humble place,  
And I open the door and look in His face."  
So his friends went home and left Conrad alone,  
For this was the happiest day he had known,  
For, long since, his family had passed away  
And Conrad has spent many a sad Christmas Day.  
But he knew with the Lord as his Christmas guest  
This Christmas would be the dearest and best,  
So he listened with only joy in his heart.  
And with every sound he would rise with a start  
And look for the Lord to be standing there  
In answer to his earnest prayer

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So he ran to the window after hearing a sound,  
But all that he saw on the snow-covered ground  
Was a shabby beggar whose shoes were torn  
And all of his clothes were ragged and worn.  
So Conrad was touched and went to the door  
And he said, “Your feet must be frozen and sore,  
I have some shoes in my shop for you  
And a coat that will keep you warmer, too.”  
So with grateful heart the man went away,  
But Conrad noticed the time of day  
He wondered what made the dear Lord so late  
And how much longer he’d have to wait,  
Then he heard a knock and ran to the door,  
But it was only a stranger once more,  
A bent, old lady with a shawl of black,  
A bundle of kindling piled on her back.  
She asked for only a place to rest,  
A place that was reserved for Conrad’s Great Guest.  
But her voice seemed to plead, “Don’t send me away  
Let me rest awhile on Christmas day.”  
So Conrad brewed her a steaming cup  
And told her to sit at the table and sup.  
But after she left he was filled with dismay  
For he saw that the hours were slipping away  
And the Lord hadn't come as He said He would,  
And Conrad felt sure he had misunderstood.  
When out of the stillness he heard a cry,  
“Please help me and tell me where am I.”  
So again he opened his friendly door  
And stood disappointed as twice before,  
It was only a child who had wandered away  
And was lost from her family on Christmas Day.  
Again Conrad’s heart was heavy and sad,  
But he knew he could make this little child glad,  
So he called her in and wiped her tears  
And quieted all her childish fears.  
Then he led her back to her home once more  
But as he entered his own darkened door,

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He knew that the Lord wasn't coming today  
For the hours of Christmas had all passed away.  
So he went to his room and knelt down to pray  
And he said, "Lord, why did you delay,  
What kept You from coming to call on me,  
For I wanted so much Your face to see."  
Then softly in the silence a voice he heard,  
"Lift up your head--I've kept My word--  
Three times My shadow crossed your floor--  
Three times I came to your lowly door--  
I was the beggar with bruised, cold feet,  
I was the woman you gave something to eat,  
And I was the child on the homeless street."  
Three times I knocked, three times I came in,  
And each time I found the warmth of a friend.  
Of all the gifts, love is the best  
I was honored to be your Christmas guest.

**v.6** - "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

That phrase "causes to sin" is the Greek word *skandalon*.

**v.7** - Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes! "If your hand or foot causes *you to sin*,

**Mark 7:20-23** - Jesus said, "From within, out of the *heart* of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery... All these evil things come from *within*, and they defile a person."