

## God's Big Ideas

### The Gospel of Matthew – Bible study (for personal or group use)

In using this study, you may find it helpful to have the transcript of the teaching and/or the PowerPoint presentation to hand for reference.

*Read Matthew 18:1-22*

1. In what sense do you think becoming like children is necessary for entering the kingdom of heaven (18:3, 6)? And what in particular is the measure of greatness within it (18:4; compare 20:25-28)? What might this look like in practice?
2. How does Jesus' parable of the lost sheep (18:12-13) illustrate the principle of verse 14? To whom might the straying sheep correspond? What implications does this teaching have for our pastoral care?
3. How are we to discipline Christian brothers and sisters who sin (18:15-17)? With whom does authority finally lie in this process, and how might this work? What guarantee is given that it will function properly (18:18-20)?
4. What principle should govern our practice of forgiveness (18:21-22)? Why might forgiveness be so important in a congregation? Why does it matter for those who forgive as well as for those who are forgiven (compare 18:34-35)?

*Read Matthew 23:8-12; 7:15-20*

5. These verses restate the necessity and importance of humility and service (23:11-12). How then should we understand our relationships with each other (23:8-10)? How might we structure our churches' life accordingly?
6. Matthew's churches are supported by prophets and (probably) 'scribes' (compare 13:51-52). On what criterion is prophetic ministry to be evaluated (7:16-20)? What is the danger of not testing those who claim to be prophets (7:15).