

God's Care for His Children, Part 1
Matthew 18:5-14; Mark 9:37-50; Luke 9:48-50

Introduction

How much do parents care for their children? One way to measure parents' care for their children is to evaluate the protection that they provide for their children. Parents of young children will often rearrange their home to make sure it is safe for those young ones to crawl and toddle around in. As the children get older, mom and dad spend a lot of time trying to teach their children to be safety conscious such as not touching fire or a hot stove, looking before crossing the street, avoiding strangers, how to use tools properly, etc. Teenagers do not always like their parents asking them what, where, when and with whom they are doing things, but good parents ask anyway and get involved because they love their kids and want to protect and guide them as much as possible through the dangers that are around us. Every decent parent loves their children and wants to prevent them from getting hurt. And if someone does hurt their child, then it is time to beware of a parent's wrath. These are God given responsibilities that every parent must take seriously.

It is exciting to find out that is the model God has given us in His own care for those who are His children. In this morning's texts, we will find that God is protective of His children and He will bring His justice to bear on anyone that harms one of His children. Turn with me to Matthew 18:5, Mark 9:37 and Luke 9:48

REVIEW - Matthew 18:1-4

This chapter was introduced last week in examining Jesus' answer to the disciples' question in verse 1, "*Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?*" The disciples were correctly embarrassed that they had been arguing with one another about which of them was the greatest, but Jesus gently brings out their question and then deals with it. Jesus' answer goes straight to the heart of the problem.

The disciples were arguing about greatness based on the things that the world values as being great. They had assumed that they were already in the kingdom, so why not strive to be the greatest in it and let the others know that you are? Jesus challenges His disciples about whether they were even going to enter the kingdom. Jesus calls a young child to Himself and tells His disciples that unless they are converted and become like that child, they would not enter into the kingdom of heaven. A person has to be turned from sin to righteousness by the Holy Spirit, and that only happens in conjunction with a person emulating the nature of a child in regard to the Savior. They must have a simple, humble, dependent, genuine trust in Jesus alone for salvation. A proud man wants to save himself and refuses the Savior.

Jesus' challenge to them about whether they were in the kingdom was genuine regardless of the fact that they had left their homes and family to follow Him. Motive and belief are key factors in salvation, and their quibbling about who was the greatest in the kingdom brought both into question. It must be remembered that Judas was also standing there among the twelve and he never entered the kingdom despite all that he experienced traveling with Jesus and the warnings that were given to him. Jesus' challenge went to the heart of the matter for it was silly for them to argue about who was the greatest in the kingdom if they were not qualified to enter it, and if they were qualified, then such displays of pride were out of character.

Several passages of Scripture in the New Testament challenge the person who professes to know the Lord Jesus Christ to make sure of that salvation. For example, Paul says in 2 Corinthians 13:5, "*Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about*

yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?” Contrary to those who think such a challenge is an attack on the doctrine of the security of salvation, it is actually a confirmation of it. The problem is that so many people believe a false gospel and think they are saved because of what they do or that they are good in comparison with other people. But one sinner considering himself better than another sinner still leaves him a sinner. Salvation is not about doing, it is about being. It is about a faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, not in yourself or something you have done, and that requires coming to Him as a child would and being converted.

Jesus spells out the test of greatness specifically in Matthew 18:4, *“Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”* True greatness in the kingdom is marked by humility, not by bragging on one’s accomplishments. Someone who is truly great does not need to point out that fact to anyone else. Someone who is truly great would not even be aware of being great because they would be self-effacing. They would not be interested in comparing themselves with other people to see if they are better. A truly great person in the kingdom of God is concerned only with how much glory the Lord Jesus Christ receives. Every Christian should strive to be that identified with the Lord Jesus Christ. We get an insight into God’s identification with the believer in verse 5.

A Believers Relationship with the Father - Matthew 18:5; Mark 9:37; Luke 9:48

Matthew 18:5, *“And whoever receives one such child in (on) my Name receives Me.”* Mark 9:37 and Luke 9:48 further add, *“and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me,”* and Luke further records, *“for the one who is least among all of you, this is the one who is great.”*

What *“one such child”* is Jesus talking about? The child Jesus was holding at the time or any young child? Is Jesus talking about child evangelism? The answer is no to all of those. The child Jesus was holding at the time was only being used to represent what a person was to become like if they were to enter into His kingdom. The child represented the nature required to be qualified to enter the kingdom. You must be humble and trust Jesus. The *“one such child”* could be young or old in chronological age. This is the person who is the *“child of God.”*

Jesus made a similar statement in Matthew 10:40 when He said to His disciples as He was sending them out on their first mission, *“He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.”* The point of the verse is simple. Whenever we receive anyone who belongs to Jesus Christ, no matter how significant or insignificant they may appear to be, we are welcoming Jesus Christ Himself, for that is how close of an identification Jesus makes with those who believe in Him. He is the head and His followers are His body (1 Corinthians 12). He is the vine and true Christians are the branches (John 15:5).

What is meant by *“receiving”* someone in Christ’s name is to deliberately and readily welcome a person in the manner that Jesus has commanded. You are to treat them with the same hospitality and graciousness that you would give to the Lord Himself, for according to our text, you are in a sense receiving Jesus when you receive them. You are to welcome fellow believers because of whom Jesus is and what He has done for you and not because you think you can get something from them. By using a child to illustrate this point Jesus turns the normal social order on its head. People usually welcomed people who were of the same social status or above them, but children were at the bottom. Do not fall prey to the Christianized version of social climbing. Receiving people with an eye to improve your own situation, standing or reputation is at best diplomacy or politics and is not what Jesus is talking about here. Be welcoming to every believer, not just those you think are worthy of you or will advance your own position.

When we receive another believer, we receive Christ too because Jesus identifies that much with those who follow after Him, and not only that, but we receive the Father who sent Jesus. That is part of the Father’s care for us.

Clarifying the Issue - March 9:38-41; Luke 9:49-50

At this point, according to Mark 9:38 and Luke 9:49, John interrupts. He, and probably the other disciples too, is confused by this idea of the least being the greatest and welcoming every believer. John tells Jesus about an incident that had apparently occurred not long before. Luke 9:49, *John answered and said, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name; and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow along with us."*

This becomes even more interesting when you remember that only shortly before Jesus, Peter, James and John had come down from the Mount of Transfiguration and the disciples that had been left behind were unable to cast out a demon from a boy though they had cast out demons previously. Jesus intervened and cast the demon out. He later reminded the disciples that the ability to do such miracles was dependent on faith in God and hence the need to pray. God, not their position as Jesus' disciples, is the power that casts demons out.

John now recounts their actions when they saw someone successfully casting demons out in Jesus' name. Though this man was doing what some of the disciples had recently failed to do, they thought it was improper for him to be doing that because they believed that was reserved for those with the special status they had assumed for themselves. They are confused because Jesus was turning social conventions upside down. Jesus clarifies the issue and its application in Mark 9:39-41.

³⁹ *But Jesus said, "Do not hinder him, for there is no one who will perform a miracle in My name, and be able soon afterward to speak evil of Me."* ⁴⁰ *"For he who is not against us is for us."* ⁴¹ *"For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because of your name as followers of Christ, truly I say to you, he will not lose his reward."*

The kingdom was already much broader than they assumed, a lesson that would be reinforced in the future when Jesus would send out the seventy (Luke 10). This is a point we must take to heart in our own time for it is easy to fall in into the trap of Job's friends and act as if we are the people and wisdom will die with us (Job 12:2). Other Christians do not have to be in our associations or agree with us on every point of doctrine to rejoice at God using them to accomplish His will. We rejoice and strive to cooperate with all professing Christians that share with us the fundamental doctrines of the faith necessary for salvation. Secondary issues such as church structure and style of worship are to remain secondary. Extend grace and praise God when He is glorified by the ministry of those in other Christian associations.

Jesus extends this point a little farther in saying *"For he who is not against us is for us"* followed by a promise of reward to those that help His followers. We should rejoice in whatever helps advance God's kingdom even if received from those who are not part of that kingdom. Even something as simple as a cup of water given because you are a follower of Jesus Christ will bring a reward. I have often been blessed at the hands of non-Christians and I give God praise for it while praying the Lord will draw those people to Himself.

This was not an easy lesson for the disciples. Their pride would erupt in the future over the same issues and they would still have a hard time accepting others outside their group as part of the kingdom. It is a hard lesson for us too because pride and self-interest continue to be common problems even for Christians. That is why we must work hard to humble ourselves and see the world from Jesus' perspective.

Stumbling Block Danger - Matthew 18:6-7; Mark 9:42-50

Remember that Jesus still has the child standing next to Him, and He now turns to focus back to this child who was the illustration for the lessons He was teaching the disciples. Starting in Matthew 18:6, Jesus presents the defensive side of the Father's care for His children. He begins by explaining its seriousness.

Matthew 18:6-7, ⁶ *but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.* ⁷ *“Woe to the world because of its stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; but woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes!”*

Being a stumbling block to “*one of these little ones that believe in me*” is a serious offense. The reference here is again to a person that has been converted and become humble like a child. Jesus portrays the seriousness of causing a believer to fall into sin in a very graphic manner in verse 6 by saying it would be better to have been killed in the unusual manner of being drowned in the deepest sea with a heavy millstone around your neck. The millstone described here is the heavy and large rock that would be hewn into a wheel shape and pulled around by a donkey or ox. There would be no escape from it. This form of execution was used on occasion by the Romans to kill a criminal. This type of pagan execution would have been unimaginably horrible to Jews, yet Jesus said that suffering such a terrible death would be better than to cause even one of His people to sin.

In verse 7 Jesus expands and pronounces “*woe*” upon those that are such stumbling blocks. A “*woe*” is the exact opposite of a blessing. It is the equivalent to saying, “*cursed is the man for His punishment will be great.*” The double pronouncement of “*woe*” in the verse stresses that the judgement will be very severe.

Jesus states that stumbling blocks are inevitable. It is certain that they are going to occur for two primary reasons. The first is that the world is sinful and hates God. Jesus said in John 15:18-19, “*If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.*” Because the world hates God, it also hates those that belong to Christ, and those who are worldly will use multiple means to try and cause you to stray from God. Methods used will range from the extremes of physical persecution to false doctrine to enticements to your desires. Some of those efforts will be demonically inspired and empowered (Ephesians 6:12). Much will be by people who are friendly and appear to want to do something good for you. The common element in all of it will be lies that depart from the truths of God’s word.

Stumbling blocks are also inevitable because even Christians are still battling sin and will tear one another down instead of building each other up. That ought not to be, but that is reality as seen both in the Bible and in the experience of your own lives. Let me expand this point, for our danger is to think that only those who are not Christians will be stumbling blocks.

You need to be fully aware that Christians can also become stumbling blocks. There are several warnings concerning this. Romans 14:13 tells believers to determine “*not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother’s way.*” 1 Corinthians 10:32 warns believers not to be an “*offense*” or a point of “*stumbling*” to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the church of God. Christians are not to cause fellow believers to fall into sin, and neither are they to hinder non-Christians from coming to Christ because of their own promotion of sin. What are some of the ways that believers may entice or be enticed into sin? You need to be aware of this so that you may be careful not to do it to another believer and so that you can protect yourself from temptation.

You can be caused to fall into sin’s trap in many ways. The most obvious is direct temptation. Adam and Eve and the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil is a classic example of this. After being beguiled by the serpent and falling into sin herself, Eve offered the fruit to Adam resulting in him also stumbling into sin by eating it. Aaron the High Priest led the whole nation into the sin of worshiping the Golden Calf. King Jeroboam of Israel not only led the rebellion that split the nation, but he also enticed the northern tribes to worship an idol that he made. His name became a byword throughout the Old Testament of wickedness. All other evil kings were compared to him.

Direct enticement to sin may come about through counsel that proves to be ungodly. The counsel of the Scribes perverted the Mosaic Law in many areas including divorce. They ended up reinterpreting the

law to justify divorce for nearly any reason with the consequence that they ended up promoting adultery (Matthew 5:32; 19:9). I have heard similar ungodly advice given on “Christian radio” and have read it in “Christian” publications. Advice that discounts the Bible and promotes human wisdom promotes sin, and the one giving such advice is causing God’s children to stumble. Such people are in grave danger of finding themselves one day as those whom the Lord directed these woes against. Jesus’ words in Matthew 7:23 ring out against such evil practice, *“I never knew you; Depart from me, you who practice lawlessness.”* Doing things in the Lord’s name will do you no good if you do not really know the Lord and do what He says!

Direct inducement to sin also comes when you try to get someone to agree to your own sinful practice. Here are some examples. A man that takes a woman out to some immoral form of entertainment. This is true even if it is a husband taking his wife, for Ephesians 5:25-27 tells husbands to lead their wives into purity, not impurity. Getting your spouse to agree to an income tax deduction for which you are not qualified. Pressuring a co-worker to agree to pad the expense account so that you can both pocket the difference. You are guilty of a double sin whenever you get another person to join you in your sin whatever that sin may be and however you encourage them to join you.

People are also caused to stumble through indirect means. The example you set may lure another person into sin as they imitate you. While we all understand the caution parents need to exercise here because children are so easily impressionable, we should also understand that new Christians and immature Christians are also very impressionable. Because they are not yet well taught, they often end up believing that godliness is whatever the “more mature Christians,” which means you, are doing. You say you are not a mature Christian? If you say so it is probably true, but if you have been a Christian longer than someone else, they will assume you are more mature and watch your example to know right from wrong.

What is your driving like? How do you spend your free time? What is your attitude toward money? What kind of employee are you? How faithful are you to your wife, to your family, to the Lord?

The story is told of a man that snuck out one night to go to his favorite bar. He heard soft footsteps in the snow behind him. There was his five year old boy who said when he caught up to his father, *“I’m trying to follow in your footsteps, Dad.”*

What kind of example are you setting for those who are following you? Each of us needs to heed the admonition that Paul gave Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:12, *“. . . in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.”*

You can also be a stumbling block by the manner in which you deal with others. When you speak, is it the truth in love? Or do you speak with the condemning judgement that Jesus warned about in Matthew 7:1-4? Do you respond to other believers in ways that will build them up or tear them down? Parents are specifically told in Ephesians 6:4, *“Do not provoke your children to anger.”* Colossians 3:21 adds, *“Fathers, do not exasperate your children, that they may not lose heart.”* The principles in those verses have a wider application than just parenting.

Frustration and anger can easily result when you show favoritism or demand unrealistic expectations. If you are critical more than encouraging you can cause another person to lose heart. When you are insensitive, unloving and unkind, you can cause fellow members of the body of Christ to fall into sin.

In addition, when you are insensitive to the weakness of another believer and flaunt your liberty you can also cause a fellow Christian to stumble. Paul addresses this problem of legalism and liberty in Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8 & 10. The weaker brother, the legalist, is not to judge the stronger one who takes advantage of his liberty in Christ. At the same time, the stronger brother is not to flaunt his liberty lest he cause his weaker brother to do something that is against his conscience and thus commit sin (Romans 14:23). We are to voluntarily restrain ourselves out of love for our brothers and sisters in Christ. It is really simple consideration for those around us.

Though you could be the cause of stumbling to your brother or sister, that in no way can be an excuse for the person that sins. They will not be able to say to God, *"It is not my fault that I sinned, so and so caused me to sin."* Each person will be held liable for their own sin and they cannot blame it on anyone else. It did not work for Adam to blame Eve, and it will not work for you to blame anyone else. What Jesus is saying here is that when another person falls into sin as a result of your influence upon them, a double sin is committed. They have sinned and will be held accountable, and you will also be held accountable for your part in inciting that sin. This is serious business. How then do you prevent it?

Stumbling Block Prevention - Matthew 18:8-9; Mark 9:43-48

1 John 2:10 speaks to the primary issue of how to prevent yourself from being a stumbling block saying, *"The one who loves his brother abides in the light and there is no cause for stumbling in him."* The more you abide in the light, that is, walk in the Spirit obeying the directives God has given in the Scriptures, and the more you love your brother, the less you will be a cause of someone else falling into sin.

In Matthew 18:8-9 and Mark 9:43-48, Jesus explains the degree to which you must to fight sin in your own life to both prevent falling to the temptation presented by others and to prevent being a stumbling block to others yourself. The pursuit of holiness is the cure for both problems of either being led astray or leading someone else astray.

Matthew 18:8-9 is the condensed version of Mark 9:43-48 from which we will read,⁴³ *"If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than, having your two hands, to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire,*⁴⁴ *where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.*⁴⁵ *"If your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame, than, having your two feet, to be cast into hell,*⁴⁶ *where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.*⁴⁷ *"If your eye causes you to stumble, throw it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell,*⁴⁸ *where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.*

Jesus does not advocate self inflicted injury or even asceticism as the way to avoid sin. If you cut off one hand, you still have the other hand with which you can sin. If you chop off one foot, you still have the other foot which can cause you to stumble. If you pluck out one eye, your other eye is still left with which you can sin. Jesus is using figurative hyperbole to make clear the seriousness of sin. Jesus is stating that if something is hindering you from living for God, then it is better to be without it than let that drag you into hell. This is a call for a dramatic severing of the sinful impulses which push you to evil action.

Anything that morally or spiritually traps you, causes you to fall into sin or to stay in sin, should be eliminated quickly and totally. You say that is too radical? That is exactly the seriousness with which Jesus is talking. I don't know what your particular area of temptation may be, but whatever it is, do all you can to set it aside that you might live a holy life.

If you are in an immoral relationship, then end it now regardless of how nice that other person makes you feel, and that includes pornography. If TV is dragging you down, then don't just turn it off, you have already shown yourself too weak to do that, get rid of it! The same is true of pulp novels, supermarket tabloids, gossip magazines or anything else that glorifies sin - get rid of them and don't get them anymore. This principle applies to any area of your life which you cannot control. A slave to fashion? Junk the vanity table and cloth yourself with humility and modesty. Can't stop at one drink? Drunkenness is sin, so don't have any. Are you a glutton because you can't resist the junk food? Don't allow it in your house. Entertainment wasting the precious hours of your life? Get rid of the games and devices. Hobbies preventing you from serving Christ? Time to find a new interest. Compulsive gossip? Button your lip and stay off social media. Running ragged in the rat race? Change your definition of success to a Biblical one and get a new job. Every Christian is to consider himself to be crucified with

Christ, dead to sin, and alive to righteousness. That would end the selfishness that prods pettiness, discontentment, being controlled by emotions and a host of other sins. You say that is too radical? Then you do not yet understand the seriousness of sin and its severe consequences. Eternity never ends, so do not risk spending it shut out from God and suffering everlasting punishment.

Salvation comes by faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ and not by how well you walk with Him, but do not be deceived into falsely thinking you have a fire insurance policy if you do not have a love for Jesus Christ that is radically changing your life. Belief is displayed in the actions that correspond to it. Actions reveal belief. Examine yourself and make sure you are in the faith and that Jesus Christ is in you.

God loves His children and He cares for them. He identifies with them so completely that to receive even an immature Christian is to receive Him. God is also protective of His children and His wrath will be upon those who cause any of His children to stumble and fall into sin. Beloved, each of us must be extremely careful that none of us become a stumbling block to others. This is a serious matter and each of us should be radical in our striving against sin. Each of us needs to abide in the light, strive after holiness, and love one another so that there will be no cause of stumbling. How true are those things of you?

Jude 24-25, ²⁴“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling , and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, ²⁵ to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, [be] glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen”

Sermon Notes: GOD'S CARE FOR HIS CHILDREN, PART 1
Matthew 18:5-14; Mark 9:37-50; Luke 9:48-50

Introduction

_____ is one of the ways that parents demonstrate care for their children

God's protection of His children is one of the ways He shows His _____ for them

REVIEW - Matthew 18:1-4

The disciples argued about who was the _____, but they first needed to be sure they were in the kingdom

Entering the kingdom requires _____ and genuine trust in Jesus

2 Corinthians 13:5 - security of salvation is based in genuine _____ in Jesus

True greatness in the kingdom is marked by _____, not by bragging on one's accomplishments

A Believers Relationship with the Father - Matthew 18:5; Mark 9:37; Luke 9:48

The "one such child" is one who has humbly put their _____ in Jesus to become a child of God

To receive anyone that belongs to Jesus is to receive _____

To "receive" someone in Christ's name is to _____ them in the manner Jesus has commanded

Receiving a "child" turned the normal social order upside down - _____ is no longer important

Clarifying the Issue - March 9:38-41; Luke 9:49-50

Luke 9:49-They tried to stop a man from casting out demons in _____ name because he was not one of them

They are _____ because Jesus was turning social conventions upside down

Mark 9:39-41 - the kingdom was already much _____ than they assumed

Rejoice when God uses _____ for His glory even when they are not within your association

Rejoice in whatever help is given to advance God's kingdom even if it comes from _____

Stumbling Block Danger - Matthew 18:6-7; Mark 9:42-50

Being a stumbling block to immature believers is a very _____ offense

Suffering a horrible pagan method of _____ was better than causing one of God's children to stumble

The double pronouncement of "woe" in verse 7 stresses that the _____ will be very severe

Stumbling blocks are inevitable because the _____ hates God and what reflect Him - John 15:18-19

Stumbling blocks are also inevitable because even _____ still sin - Romans 14:13; 1 Cor. 10:32

You can be caused to stumble by _____ temptation - Eve & Adam; Aaron & the Golden Calf; Jeroboam

You can stumble due to _____ that proves to be ungodly - the Scribes view of divorce

You can be induced to sin by others trying to get you to _____ in what they are doing

You can be caused to stumble by indirect means of the _____ of others

Christians are to be examples of _____ - 1 Timothy 4:12

You can be a stumbling block to others by the _____ in which you treat them - Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21

You can be a stumbling block to others by _____ your liberty - Romans 14; 1 Corinthians 8, 10

Every person is responsible for _____, but it is also sin to cause a brother to stumble

Stumbling Block Prevention - Matthew 18:8-9; Mark 9:43-48

1 John 2:10 - the primary prevention is walking in the Spirit and _____ your brother

Matthew 18:8-9 and Mark 9:43-48 express the degree to which you must _____ against sin

Jesus does not advocate self injury or asceticism in battling sin - this is figurative _____

Anything that morally or spiritually traps you in sin should be _____ quickly and totally

Every Christian should consider himself crucified with Christ, _____ and alive to righteousness

Deal with sin _____ because its consequences are severe

Salvation comes by faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ - make sure you are not _____

God loves His children and will protect them - it is very serious to cause one of them to _____

Jude 24-25 _____

KIDS KORNER

Parents, you are responsible to apply God's Word to your children's lives. Here is some help.

Young Children - draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. **Older Children** - Do one or more of the following: 1) Write down all the verses mentioned in the sermon and look them up later. 2) Count how many times the word "stumble" is used. Talk with your parents about how to keep from stumbling into sin and prevent being the cause of stumbling to others.

THINK ABOUT IT!

Questions to consider in discussing the sermon with others. How does parental protection of children demonstrate their care for them? What about in the teen years? Why were the disciples arguing about who was the greatest in the kingdom? Why did Jesus challenge them whether they had entered the kingdom? What is required of someone to be able to enter God's kingdom? Have you met those requirements? Is it wrong to challenge someone about the reality of their salvation? Explain. What is the true sign of greatness according to Jesus? What "one such child" (Matthew 18:5) is Jesus talking about? What does it mean to receive such a child? Why is receiving such a child also receiving Jesus and the Father? How did using a child to illustrate this point turn social convention on its head? Why does this confuse John? Why did the disciples try to stop the man from casting out demons in Jesus' name? Why were they wrong to do so? Explain. What should our response be to other Christians even if they are not part of our association? What is a stumbling block? How does Jesus express the seriousness of causing an immature believer to stumble? What are the two primary reasons that stumbling blocks are inevitable? Can a Christian cause others to stumble? Explain. Give an example for each of the following ways in which you could be caused to stumble into sin: 1) Direct temptation. 2) Ungodly counsel. 3) Someone trying to get you to do what they are doing. 4) Example. Give an example of for each of the following of ways in which you could cause someone else to stumble: 1) Example. 2) Unrighteous actions toward others. 3) Flaunting your freedom in Christ. Can a person excuse their own sin by claiming someone else caused them to stumble? Explain. What are the primary means of keeping yourself from being a stumbling block to others? Does Jesus advocate self inflicted injury or asceticism in the battle against sin? Explain. Why does Jesus use such graphic hyperbole to describe the actions to be taken to keep from stumbling? In what areas in your life are you currently stumbling or are prone to stumble? What practical action can you take to prevent that stumbling? Are you taking those actions? If not, why not? Can a person who stumbles in sin still go to heaven? Explain. What is the relationship between faith and good works? What is demonstrated by your works about your faith?