

ALONG THE WAY: Week 3– “The Way of the Child”

Text: Matt 18:1-4

Date: March 19, 2023

OPENING PRAYER

Have someone in the group invite the Holy Spirit into your presence. Pray for your encounter with God’s Word. Ask God to open your heart and mind to some new understanding and especially to a new way of applying this truth in our daily lives.

SMALL GROUP GUIDELINES

~Safe Group	~Silence	~Sharing
~Confidentiality	~No Cross Talk	~Self-Aware
~Listen	~No Fixing	~”I” Statements
~Pause	~No Rescuing	~Handle Conflict Biblically

“GETTING TO KNOW YOU”

Go around the room and briefly share your answer to the following question: Has a child taught you something unexpectedly? What was it?

INTRODUCTION

We were taught about the way of “The Vine part 2” last week from Pastor Heather. This week, Pastor Daron Earlewine will continue the series, “Along the Way- The Way of the Child.”

THIS WEEK’S KEY SCRIPTURE:

Matt 18:1-4 “At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. And he said: “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.”

DISCUSSION

Go around the room and share from your heart, remembering the group guidelines.

1. Pastor Daron referred to a passage of scripture and asked us to reflect on childlike or childish... 1 Cor 13:11-13 “ When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things. Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then

I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely. Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love.”
NLT

- * Do you believe God wants to grow us up into the freedom of childlike faith? Do you need that for yourself?
- * What do you believe denotes childish behavior? Pastor Daron gave examples of repetitive bad behaviors, lying and hiding failure. “Childish behavior is rooted in selfishness that doesn’t value the relationship. Why do you keep lying? Why do you keep hiding your failure?”
- * Do you only obey the Father because you are scared of the punishment?
- * Do you believe the way of God is obedience and punishment? OR
- * Do you believe the way of God has always been about relationship and freedom?

2. Pastor Daron’s next focus was the way of trust, obedience and freedom. We will never walk in the WAY of the child until we learn to trust the heart of the Father and how to steward our freedom. Have someone read these portions of Psalm 32;

* “Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord.”

And you forgave the guilt of my sin. You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble

and surround me with songs of deliverance. Many are the woes of the wicked, but the Lord’s unfailing love surrounds the one who trusts in him.”

* Is God more interested in WHAT you did wrong or WHY you did it? “It’s easy to mistake obedience for a good relationship.”

* “For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. Timothy 1:7 NLT Take time to have each person name ways of replacing thoughts of punishment and fear with love and freedom.

* “Transformation and childlike faith happen when we start living from the inside out.” When you know you are covered in God’s love and can then feel freedom, does that change your relationship with Him? How?

* Think and pray about a heart connection instead of a head connection with God.

CLOSING PRAYER: Spend some time in prayer as a group. Pray for one another, for those that might be absent and for prayer requests.