

Small Group Discussion Outline



Going Beyond

In this study we will touch on a sensitive subject, but one which has the potential to release incredible blessing and faith to us if we learn to apply it.



Read: *Deuteronomy 5:32-33; 28:11; 30:9; 30:15*
Joshua 1:8; 1 Kings 2:1-4; Psalm 1:1-6
John 15:7; James 1:17; Philippians 4:19



Do you believe God's Word when He says He desires to bless us?



Read: *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

If we agree that the Bible is God's Word then it is clear that God's desire is for His people to prosper. That prosperity is in all areas of our lives, but because it is so often ignored, we will focus on financial prosperity.



So why aren't all Christians prosperous?

The answer comes from a basic understanding of Biblical Principles. Far too often people discount areas of the Bible because their experience does not line up with what the Bible says.

It's like being told about the Theory of Gravity and the means by which we can prove it is true but declining to test it and claiming that it's not real!

The Kingdom of God



Read: *Matthew 5:20; Matthew 18:3; John 3:1-6; Romans 10:8-10*



What is required for us to be saved?
What is required of us to enter the Kingdom of Heaven?

To be saved we need to believe that Jesus is God, died on our behalf and rose again. To enter the Kingdom of Heaven, or the Kingdom of God is an entirely different matter.

We can be saved and yet not enter the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is God's will, His rule, His desires fulfilled on earth at this present time.

Jesus spent His entire ministry teaching about the Kingdom of God. All the things He taught, beyond salvation, are keys for living in the Kingdom of God.

16 of Jesus' 38 parables are on the subject of finances. In the Bible we find one key principal for experiencing God's financial blessing.

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WAIUKU ASSEMBLY OF GOD
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PO Box 196
Waiuku 1852
New Zealand

Sowing and Reaping

This principal is "Sowing and Reaping" or "Seedtime and Harvest."



Read: *Genesis 8:22; Proverbs 3:9-10; Luke 6:38*



What do these verses mean?

God has ordained this principal of giving and receiving, of sowing and reaping, of seedtime and harvest. First comes the sowing - the giving.

When we give, God's promise to us is blessing and prosperity. It does not make sense to us, but it is God's Word and God never changes and never lies. This is where we come to our first problem - many Christians tithe faithfully and God meets their needs, but they are not experiencing prosperity. So what's wrong?

Tithes and Offerings



Read: *Leviticus 27:30; Malachi 3:8-10*

These passages make it clear that the tithe, 10% of our income, belongs to God by right - it is His. Tithing is not giving, it is paying. That is why the prophet Malachi can write that it is stealing from God when the Israelites were not tithing. Stealing is taking, or keeping something that belongs to someone else.

Unless we go beyond the tithe we haven't given anything. Unless we've given then we haven't fulfilled the conditions of the Biblical principal of sowing and reaping.

The Kingdom of God is inhabited by people who choose to go beyond in all areas of following God. In this case it is the area of generous giving. It is not a command to give, just as it is not a command or a requirement to enter the Kingdom of God. But entering the Kingdom of God and experiencing the fullness of God's blessing in our lives today requires living by these principals and, voluntarily, going beyond.



Why do you think God established this principal? What does it achieve?



Read: *Luke 16:13; Matthew 6:21*

God doesn't need our money, but because it is an essential element of life and because it is so easy for it to become our focus God knows that if we can demonstrate in a practical and physical sense that we value and honour God more than money by giving to Him from whatever we have then we demonstrate to both ourselves and to God that He has first place in our hearts.



Why is it important to be able to demonstrate our faith practically for ourselves?

Is it harder to do something which costs us in a physical sense than to mentally acknowledge it?

When we give to God financially through His Church we demonstrate that God is our first love. We also apply the principals of sowing and reaping and release God's blessing in our lives. A result of this is that our faith grows as we learn to live by God's resources rather than our own - and this is actually the whole point of the matter: that we grow in faith and reliance on God in a way that is not possible unless we actually 'do something' on a physical and spiritual level by giving.

WAIUKU ASSEMBLY OF GOD

Ph: (09) 235 7341 **Mob:** (021) 187 1928 **Email:** waiukuag@wag.org.nz **Web:** www.wag.org.nz