

Sowing and Reaping Small Group Guide

Warm-up Question: (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. Do you look forward to the holidays, or do you brace yourself for the holidays? Explain.
2. How well do you cope with the fewer hours of daylight in the winter?

Read the following passage: Mark 4:24.

“With the measure you use, it will be measured to you” was a proverbial saying among Jews in the first century. It teaches the principle of reciprocity: What you put in is what you will get out; you will reap what you sow. Jesus’ use of the passive voice in the second half of this statement makes it clear that he means “it will be measured to you [by God].” So although the principle of reciprocity sometimes fails to hold in our broken world (we’re treated unjustly, or don’t get our due, or are taken advantage of by others), it always holds true with God.

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. Can you think of times in your life in which you got out of something exactly what you put in (either in the positive sense or in the negative sense)?
2. Jesus told his disciples to “Consider carefully what you hear.” What did he mean by this?
3. Read Mark 4:3-9. Explain what each type of soil represents. What are some things we can do to make sure we’re “good soil”? Can you think of times in your life in which you ignored truth or helpful input? Explain.
4. Jesus warns about being rocky soil which produces plants that quickly wither under the hot sun. How do we know when we should persevere in something and when we should call it quits? What can we do to help ourselves persevere? Can you think of anything in your life in which you’re currently having trouble persevering, but in which you know you should persevere?
5. Jesus warns us that worries, riches, or pleasures can distract us and keep us from producing fruit in our lives. Are there things in your life right now that you think are serving as distractions? What can you do about them?
6. Read Matthew 7:1-2. Explain Jesus’ application of the statement “with the measure you use, it will be measured to you” in this passage. Are there contexts in which you find yourself being particularly critical of others? What’s the difference between making wise judgments concerning situations or people and just being critical? What can we do to keep ourselves from being unhelpfully critical of others? What does Paul

teach in Romans 14:10-13?

7. Read Luke 6:38. What is Jesus' application of the proverbial statement in this context?
8. Why do you think generosity so often makes a profound impression on people?
9. Read Mark 4:24 again. What does Jesus mean by the addition of the comment "and even more"? What does this comment teach us about grace?

Pray