

LIFE Group Leader Handout

January 8, 2017

Two—the First Message of the Year of Sowing

Pastor Michael O'Connor

Scripture—Galatians 6:7-10

Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. [8] For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. [9] And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. [10] So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Main Idea—Our Choices Matter Because We Will Reap What We Sow

Resolutions indicate that we have unrealized dreams and desires. They are intentional. They focus our attention and our action.

For the year 2017, as a church we are focusing on “Sowing.” The intentional choice to sow in faith and believe God for a righteous harvest. Don’t eat the “seed corn.”

Two—from Genesis to Revelation, God has set before mankind choices that lead to destinies. They may be hard, but they are simple to conceive. Life and death, living under God’s blessing or His curse. Sowing to the flesh or sowing to the Spirit.

- Sowing to the flesh is to live for self. It is saying, “Other things please me more than God.” It leads to corruption.
- Sowing to the Spirit—aligns us with God’s will so that He is able to bring a righteous and good harvest to our actions and efforts.

We will reap what we sow and nothing else. We will reap in proportion to how we sow. *The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 2 Corinthians 9:6*

The great temptation: To give up. *And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. (v. 9)* God determines what is the “due season.”

Application—

- The truth that we will reap what we sow—how did that truth guide your thoughts and actions this week?
- Is there a situation where you have new energy (faith) to keep sowing where you had “given up” ? (See verse 9 above)

EIGHT ATTRIBUTES OF HEALTHY SMALL GROUP LEADERS—PART ONE

By Michael Mack

One of the fundamental differences between good and great small groups is the spiritual vitality of the leaders. While imperfect, healthy leaders have a soft heart that God can use to accomplish his will. They are highly committed first to God and then to the group. Healthy group leaders have a sense of personal humility and an ambition for God's kingdom. Here are some attributes:

Healthy small group leaders have been transformed. One of your high calls as a small group leader is to build an environment where spiritual transformation is experienced. This usually happens when the leader has first experienced transformation. The apostle Peter is a model of a transformed leader. Compare his attitudes and actions--and more importantly, his faith--between the Gospels and Acts. Peter, like the rest of the apostles, was an unschooled, ordinary man whose life had been transformed by being with Jesus (Acts 4:13). Forty- three days before the events of Acts 4, he and his buddies were anything but bold--falling asleep on Jesus when asked to pray, running away from him in his hours of crisis, and denying they even knew him. They were still self-absorbed, worried and protective of their lives. Just 42 days after Jesus' death, their faith was bold and courageous enough to stand up to the same religious leaders who were responsible for Jesus' crucifixion. What happened in between to bring about this transformation? It was a process that Jesus began three years earlier, but that came to fruition with the power of the resurrection (John 20), the power of reconciliation (John 21), and finally the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2). Then Jesus used these transformed leaders to build a great, world-transforming church. He can do the same through you when you spend time with him and allow him to transform your life!

Healthy small group leaders live surrendered to God. One thing the apostles learned from Jesus was how to live and lead in surrender to God's will. Jesus instructed the apostles in Acts 1 to do one simple thing: wait. Their natural inclination would have been to jump into action, attempting to accomplish Jesus' vision under their own power. But they obeyed and waited in Jerusalem by praying and being patient for God to move. Once they received the promised Spirit, they carried out Jesus' mission in complete reliance upon and surrender to God. Great small group leaders turn to Christ for everything: who will be invited to join the group, the group's purpose, and the biblical content the group will apply during the meetings. To do this, great group leaders pray and then wait before making decisions. This requires humility and self-control over one's emotional urge to act as quickly as possible. Great group leaders know if they surrender their leadership to Christ they will accomplish more than they can do in their own power.

Healthy small group leaders are committed to their calling. God first calls people to lead, then he gifts them to lead, and last, he empowers them to lead. I never twist people's arms to lead a small group at our church. But I do pray regularly for God to send us new leaders and I often ask people if they sense God nudging them to lead a group. I believe God will send us the leaders. He needs to lead groups at our church--and he does! The leadership God has entrusted to you is a precious gift of grace (Ephesians 3:7) you should never take for granted. Accept it willingly, develop it, multiply it by the mighty working of his power. Be a good steward of his gift to you!