

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

OBJECTIVES:

- To understand that God will give you the money you need and to keep giving generously. We don't need to worry.
- To learn how to discern when to give by looking for "the nudge".
- To develop an accountability plan as a group to practice The God Pocket.

THE REPLENISHMENT PRINCIPLE

One fear in giving away money is that we will run out of money for ourselves. This is a real concern that we don't want to take lightly. So let's look at what God's word says about it.

Paul talks about our sufficiency in Christ as it relates to giving to meet the needs of others. He is encouraging the Corinthians to give generously. Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-12

2 Corinthians 9:6-9 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 7 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. 9 As it is written: "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever."

- In verse 6, we see how our amount of sowing corresponds to our amount of reaping. How is this described? How is Paul's prescription for sowing different than worrying about resources?
We can't outgive God. If we sow sparingly, we will reap sparingly. The more we give, the more God blesses. Don't try and hold on to our resources, but store up treasures in heaven and trust God to provide on earth. The antidote to worrying, is giving...seeking first the kingdom & His righteousness.
- Grace is the God-given ability/power to do His will. In verse 8 God says He gives grace in abundance. This verse is in the context of giving, so what kind of grace is Paul specifically talking about here?

Money

- Based on verse 8, why does God provide this grace? How does this better define the purpose of the reaping in verse 6?

God gives us more grace (money) to be able to help others and do good works. The purpose of the reaping generously is to have more money for good works, not so that we get rich. God doesn't promise us riches in this life, but the ability to help others and sufficiency to live.

- This verse states that the purpose of reaping generously is to have more money for good works. That flies in the face of the health and wealth gospel. What messages are you hearing from others in Christian circles who are viewing the accumulation of wealth in more of a self-serving way? Discuss how we might respond to this perspective even when seen in Christian circles.

- Why would God want us to be equipped for good works?

Think about if your child wanted to help someone in need. That would make you feel good that they were displaying a generous heart. Now, if they didn't have the resources to give, wouldn't you meet their need? Read the story found on pgs 80-82 in the book, *The God Pocket*.

- According to verse 7, what kind of giver are we to be? What kind of giver are we not to be?

Cheerful. Not reluctant or feeling forced.

- With all this in mind, we need to decide in our heart how much to give. Why do you think it's described as a decision in the heart? How should we pre-decide to give to the different opportunities before us and what are the advantages? Such as to support the ministry of our local church, support of missionaries who make their appeals to us; appeals which come in the mail or by social media; and funding *The God Pocket*?

- Let's look at some proverbs that also talk about God's blessing to those who are generous. What does each passage teach us about this? And remember, proverbs are principals, not promises. They usually work, but there are exceptions.

1. Proverbs 11:25 When we refresh others, we will also be refreshed.
2. Proverbs 22:9 When we are generous, we will be blessed.
3. Proverbs 19:17 When we help the poor, we are lending to God. That means God is in our debt (His Words). So God will repay that debt. Of course this is figurative, because all our money is God's money in reality.

THE NUDGE

So, we don't need to worry about having the resources to give, but does that mean we need to give to every person in need? No. Remember we are called to give what we've decided in our heart to give. That means there is a limit to what we do. We don't see Jesus healing every person and we don't see the apostles giving to every person who asks. There does need to be discernment. This is where the nudge comes in. Bruce Wilkinson describes the nudge as "an inner push that directs us toward a person, a place, or an action. It is a signal from God that unexpectedly focuses our attention on someone, directing us to something God wants done." This is the fourth step in The God Pocket delivery process "Depend on God to lead you to the exact person He has in mind" (pg. 38).

The qualities of a nudge that Wilkinson points out are that it is:

- Unexpected and out of context.
- Uncomfortable.
- Subtle but clear.

Wilkinson also describes ways to confirm if what we received was a nudge or not. He calls these signals a "cue" and a "bump".

- A cue is an outward sign of need in another person.
- A bump is a question intended to surface a hidden need.

Read the story on page 50-52 for an example of these tools in action. Other stories of nudges are found on pages 35-38. If you have time, it is worth reading these in your group.

- How have you experienced God's nudge in the past? Perhaps it was to talk to someone, to give, or to make some life-changing decision.
- Have you ever had a giving opportunity that didn't go well? What might you learn from that situation?
- How do you think practicing The God Pocket will change your relationship with God and how you live your life?

Since God is working with you to deliver His money, He will lead you to the right person at the right time. We hear God more when we are in communion with Him. As you practice The God Pocket, you will begin to walk more in step with God because you are looking for opportunities to partner with Him to do good works. Naturally, your relationship with God will grow and you will begin to perceive the nudge better and better. Don't worry about making mistakes.

THE PLAN

- As a group, commit to practicing The God Pocket this month.
- Decide to reunite at the end of the period to share your God Pocket stories.
- Then share your stories with the leaders in the church.