

## DISCUSSION GUIDE :: SESSION 3

**SPEAK UP!**  
**THOSE WHO HAVE LOST EVERYTHING**  
**PROVERBS 22:9, MATTHEW 10:42**  
02/26/2017



### MAIN POINT

Following Jesus means extending mercy and meeting needs.

### INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**Have you ever been in a position where you truly needed something that you couldn't provide for yourself? What was that like?**

**If you've never been in that position, why should you listen to the stories of people who have been there?**

Anyone can participate in a service project. You've likely been to an event where, for a donation of a canned good, clothes, or an unused toy, got you a discount on admission or some other service. Or you may have seen the social media phenomenon of the "ice bucket challenge" meant to raise money for ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) research. People love to participate in these causes. But is there a difference between a Christian participating in them and a non-Christian? What about Christian conviction and beliefs would lead a follower of Jesus to meet a basic need like this? Let's look more closely at this question throughout the Scriptures.

### UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PROVERBS 22:9.**

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**Why is this proverb more meaningful when you consider it in light of Jesus' words?**

**What blessings have you found that come with being a generous person? Why are the blessings we receive from being generous different from the blessings we receive while pursuing other types of ministry?**

**We often think of generosity as only dealing with our finances and material possessions, but in what other ways can we be generous?**

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 10:40-42.**

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**Who was Jesus speaking to in these verses? What was significant about His relationship with these individuals? What was Jesus sending them to do?**

**How do these words continue to apply to the church in the 21st century?**

These words were spoken to Jesus' 12 disciples as He sent them out to do work in His name. Jesus said that when they did ministry, they represented Him. When people received the apostles, they received Jesus. When people believed their teaching, they believed Jesus. The church is based on the apostles' teaching (Acts 2:42); when we carry out ministry today, we represent Jesus. Therefore, we need to make sure our message and approach aligns with His.

**Jesus referred to His disciples as "little ones," a term of affection. Though the direct context applies to people treating Jesus' disciples with compassion, why can we as believers extend this compassion to non-believers?**

**Why did Jesus use a cup of water as an offering? Who would be able to afford a cup of cold water?**

Our God is a God of mercy and compassion that extends beyond His chosen people in the church to those who have not yet believed. We are called to give generously to the mission of the church which is to all people regardless of nationality, race, level of income, gender, or any other human dividing line. Also, Jesus made it clear that giving is the work of all Christians. A cup of water would have been an offering even the poorest people in Israel, so whether you are a person of few means or significant wealth, you can make a difference for the kingdom of God.

**Read 1 Corinthians 3:10-15. What bearing does the way we serve Jesus today have on how we will serve Him for eternity?**

**Does the thought of rewards ever cross your mind? Should it? Explain.**

Jesus will reward us according to how well we serve Him. While this belief is not particularly present in modern Christianity, we would do well to think about it. We are called to serve those in need; how well we do this matters both for here and eternity.

## **APPLICATION**

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**How will you be generous with your resources, your time, and your abilities over the next month?**

**What would it look like for this group to organize a food drive or other need-based event to support a local ministry? Who will you support?**

**When you give to a ministry, what are you allowing them to do in the lives of people to whom they minister?**

## **PRAY**

Praise God for all the blessings He has given you. Thank Him for taking care of your needs and ask that He would help you meet the needs of others.

## **COMMENTARY**

## PROVERBS 22:8-9

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A generous person is literally “the good of eye”; the opposite is the “evil eye” of the “stingy” or “greedy” person (23:6; 28:22).

## MATTHEW 10:40-42

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Here Jesus returned to thoughts about the hosts of the disciples as they went from city to city (10:11-14) and continued his thoughts about reward.

An apostle was one who, if he conducted himself in a worthy manner, was to be treated exactly as the one he represented. He had the same authority and conveyed the same message as the person he represented. Jesus was an “apostle” from the Father, and the Twelve were apostles from Jesus. Through this chain of representation, the authority of God the Father was conveyed through the Twelve. And the response of those to whom they went was not a response to human beings, but a response to the Father whom they represented (10:40). Jesus focused on the positive response of “receiving” rather than on the negative response of rejection.

In the Old Testament, a person who accepted a prophet and his message had accepted God’s will. Those who provided for the prophets were rewarded like the prophets. Similarly, to receive a righteous person or a disciple for Christ’s sake would mean sharing in their reward for faithfulness. Matthew 10:41-42 has some characteristics of Hebrew poetry. In keeping with the rules of Hebrew parallelism, Jesus varied his wording for aesthetic value in the parallel statements about reward.

Little ones (10:42) was a term of affection that Jesus used toward his disciples, particularly when they followed him with the innocence and faith of a child (18:1-6; 19:13-15). He would use the same terminology in 25:31-46, asserting that those he sent represented him, and any kind of response to them was equivalent to a response to him in person. A cup of cold water was a gift that even the poorest person could give.

He will certainly not lose his reward (10:42) is not so much a statement allowing for the loss of reward as it is a different way to say that the person would be rewarded. Throughout this lengthy discussion (10:32-42), Jesus seemed to assume that the matter of rewards in his kingdom was understood by his disciples. But the vast majority of Christians today know little about rewards. We have lost this reality of kingdom service. Whether through simple ignorance or some kind of false piety, we have shied away from this biblical doctrine. Jesus will evaluate the service of every one of us, his servants. And our eternal reward is dependent upon our service in this life. How you serve him in this life determines how you will serve him in eternity (1 Cor. 3:10-15).