

All These Things...

by Bill Willis

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. (Matthew 6:33)

Although I am still relatively young, I have seen a disturbing trend in organized evangelical churches that has been going on for decades. You see, the focus of the vast majority of professed Christians has been on receiving personal blessings. A popular comment among Christians has been, “I want everything that I can get from God.” It’s not really surprising, since most of those who preach have spent much time in the pulpit teaching that very thing. For many years, it seemed that the only messages that would supersede these “personal blessing” sermons were those defining the ‘rules of holiness’ (jewelry, makeup, clothing, etc.) or promoting support of the local church.

I’m sure that many of you are wondering what is wrong with receiving God’s blessings. The short answer is that there is nothing wrong with receiving blessings. The problem is with our focus. We were not called to seek the blessings of God – we were called to seek the kingdom of God. In Matthew chapter 6, beginning in verse 25, Jesus tells us not to worry about what we will eat or what we will wear. God takes care of the birds, even though they do nothing to produce food. God beautifully clothes the lilies of the field, even though they do not produce any clothing. This applies as well to other physical and spiritual blessings that we may need or want. Remember, though, that Jesus said to seek first the kingdom of God. If we focus on God’s kingdom instead of our own wants, needs and blessings, all these things will be added to us. Recently, much attention has been given to the principle of sowing and reaping. On the surface, it seems that this principle conforms to the “bless-me” philosophy as long as the focus is on reaping. When the focus is shifted to sowing, though, Christians will find that they concern themselves more with the kingdom of God. I’m sure that nearly every Christian has heard that “you can’t out-give God.” Believe me, though, when I tell you that it’s fun to try. If we concentrate on sowing, we are focused on fulfilling the needs of others, loving others and being what we are called by God to be – first and foremost, witnesses. Of course, God will give the increase and we will reap abundantly. But if we truly seek first the kingdom of God, then that increase will simply provide us more to sow.

Jesus in the 6th chapter of Luke told us,

Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.

Luke 6:30-35)

Jesus clearly spells out the attitude that Christians must have toward the principle of sowing. He states plainly that when we give, to expect nothing in return. God will then reward us greatly, not because we have in any way earned it, but because we will use what we receive to serve others.

In order for Christians to receive God’s blessings, they must turn away from their spiritual selfishness and get to work ministering to a dying world. It will be well worth it.