



**Part 2: The Principle of First
Pastor Dave Patterson
Small Group Sermon Notes**

USING THIS SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

We have provided all the Scriptures referenced in the sermon and some discussion questions for you to use to facilitate a discussion.

This Sermon Discussion Guide is only a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. For most groups, there are too many questions to answer in one session together.

While the questions are important, remember your small group's goal is not to pound through the questions but to create an atmosphere that will foster true friendships, so knock yourself out with the discussion questions but spend more time laughing than answering the questions.

***God is a God of order; if Christ is first in your life,
everything else will come into order.***

[Genesis 22.17-18]

I will certainly bless you. I will multiply your descendants beyond number, like thee stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will conquer the cities of

*their enemies. And **through your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed**--all because you have obeyed me.*

THE BLESSED LIFE:

God's favor resting on your life

God's provision flowing through your life

God's will being done in your life

Biblical Knowledge of Church Attendees in our nation
(Current Stats taken from Church attending Evangelicals):

- 80% of Evangelicals could not place Moses, Adam, David, Solomon, & Abraham in chronological order
- Less than 20% knew to look into the book of Acts to find Paul's missionary journeys
- Only one adult in six (of church attendees) claim to read the Bible consistently
- 35% of the adults in Bible-believing churches never read the Bible at all
- 37% do not believe the Bible is totally accurate
- 45% do not believe that Jesus was totally sinless
- 52% do not believe that Satan is real
- 57% believe that doing good works plays a major part in gaining eternal life

[Matthew 22.36-40]

*"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"
Jesus replied: '**Love The Lord your God with all your heart***

*and with all your soul and with all your mind.' **This is the first and greatest commandment.** And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."*

[1 Kings 17.8-15]

*Then the LORD said to Elijah, "Go and live in the village of Zarephath, near the city of Sidon. I have instructed a widow there to feed you." So he went to Zarephath. As he arrived at the gates of the village, he saw a widow gathering sticks, and asked her, "Would you please bring me a little water in a cup?" As she was going to get it, he called to her, "Bring me a bite of bread, too." But she said, "I swear by the LORD your God that I don't have a single piece of bread in the house. And I have only a handful of flour left in the jar and a little cooking oil in the bottom of the jug. I was just gathering a few sticks to cook this last meal, and then my son and I will die." But Elijah said to her, "**Don't be afraid!** Go ahead and do just what you've said, but make a little for me **first**. Then use what's left to prepare a meal for yourself and your son. For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: There will always be flour and olive left in your containers until the time when the LORD sends rain and the crops grow again!"*

When faith, expressed through obedience, comes first - supernatural provision follows.

[1 Kings 17.6]

*So Elijah did as the LORD told him and camped beside Kerith Brook, east of the Jordan. The ravens **brought him bread and meat each morning and evening**, and he drank from the brook.*

[1 Kings 19.5-6]

Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an angel touched him, and said to him, "Arise and eat." Then he looked, and there by his head was a cake baked on coals, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again.

God does not ask us to give the first in order to provide for Him; it's so that He can provide for us.

[Genesis 4.1-7, CEV]

*Adam and Eve had a son. Then Eve said, "I'll name him Cain because I got him with the help of the LORD." Later she had another son and named him Abel. Abel became a sheep farmer, but Cain farmed the land. One day, Cain gave part of his harvest to the LORD, and Abel also gave an offering to the LORD. He killed **the first-born lamb** from one of his sheep and gave the LORD the **best parts of it**. The LORD was pleased with Abel and his offering, but not with Cain and his offering. This made Cain so angry that he could not hide his feelings. The LORD said to Cain: What's wrong with you? Why do you have such an angry look on your face? If you had **done the right thing**, you would be smiling. But **you did the wrong thing**, and now sin is waiting to attack you like a lion. Sin wants to destroy you, but don't let it!*

Two Heart Attitudes in Scripture:

The Heart of Cain (withholds the first = life out of order) way of greed and rebellion

[Jude 1.11, AMP]

*Woe to them! For they have run riotously **in the way of Cain**, and have abandoned themselves for the sake of gain, and have perished in rebellion [like that] of Korah!*

Three reasons people don't give: fear, greed, & rebellion

The Heart of Abel (freely gives the first = life in order)
exemplary, open-handed, and positioned for blessing

When you position yourself through giving, God proves his faithfulness to us: the oil will flow, the bread will be provided!

[Hebrews 11.4, NLT]

*It was **by faith that Abel brought** a more acceptable offering to God than Cain did. **Abel's offering gave evidence that he was a righteous man**, and God showed his approval of his gifts. Although Abel is long dead, he still speaks to us by his example of faith.*

[Proverbs 3.9-10, AMP]

*Honor The Lord with your capital and sufficiency and **with the first fruits of all** your income; So shall your storage places be filled with plenty, and your vats shall be overflowing with new wine.*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. How have you seen people's order of priorities affect the fruit of their lives?**
- 2. How Bible-literate are the majority of the people in your sphere? Why is it important to base our lives and our theology on the truth of God's Word?**
- 3. What are some biblical examples of "first things being holy unto The Lord" in the Bible? What kind of tests come to us today about putting things first for God?**
- 4. When are some situations for you where faith and God's principles did not make logical sense, but God brought a blessing because of it?**
- 5. How is our giving evidence of our heart? How does that reflect the heart of The Lord?**