



More Than You Can Handle: Desire | May 15, 2019

Discussion Guide

The Scoop

We like karma when it's good and going to return to us, and we also like it when it's bad and going to return to someone else. But the reality is that grace and karma do not work together. Hear more about this below.

Key Verses

Galatians 6:7-10 (NIV)

"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."

Discussion

If you've ever driven on the highway in a huge snowstorm, you've probably had someone pass you going way too fast, only to think that they'd probably end up in a ditch up ahead. We like the concept of karma when someone else gets what they deserve. We like cause and effect. And there is reason for it, because we see that concept played out in life. If you want to harvest a crop, you have to plant seeds. But on the flip side, we don't like karma when it adds up to bad for us.

1. Have you ever been in a situation like the one above where you wanted someone else to get what they deserved? Why do you think we as humans are prone to think this way?
2. What is so appealing about the concept of cause and effect?

Oftentimes, we treat our faith like it's an if-then statement. There are times in life and in our faith where cause and effect makes sense. But it's not always the case. In Nate Pyle's book, *More Than You Can Handle*, he says that contrary to what we think about cause and effect, grace and karma do not work together. As followers of Jesus, when it comes to our salvation, we don't actually get what we deserve, we get grace instead. So even though we do see cause and effect play out in life, we also get to lean on the fact that God is bigger than our skills, our abilities, and our effort.

3. Would you say that you treat your faith like an if-then statement? Why or why not?
4. How does the concept of grace flip karma on its head? Why is it really good news for us as believers?

In Galatians 6:7-10, we read an analogy about farming. It says that a man reaps what he sows. But it also goes on to say that for those who sow to please the Spirit, they will reap eternal life. It's bigger than the day-to-day decisions we make and agency we have. It's more big picture about our salvation. Regardless, we should continue to sow well in order to see a crop in this life. We need to act in order to have an effect. But at the same time, we can find comfort that although he does not act like a puppeteer, God is not only in control, but also goes with us.

5. How do you reconcile both having agency in this life as well as trusting God with the big picture?
6. How does the concept of Immanuel – God with us – provide hope for you personally?

What's Next?

The truth is that we do have agency in our lives. Our life decisions have impact. When we interact with one another, we either have good or bad interactions and impact. But instead of getting frustrated about when God does and doesn't seem to show up in the midst of things, we should instead think about the concept of Immanuel – God with us. God doesn't work like a GPS, charting our exact path. Instead, he works more like a compass. He goes with us, guiding and directing us along the way.

This week, as you live out and engage your faith, look for the places that you can bring God. Pull your compass out instead of looking for transactional activities. Look for a relationship with God that is both give and take.