Four Week Small Group Leader’s Guide
Four-Week Plan

This four-week plan is intended to be a guide for small group leaders as you lead your groups in discussion around the Robert Morris book, *The Blessed Life*. Your goal as a group leader is to help lead those in your group in the discovery of God’s truth, and to guide them as the Holy Spirit begins to adjust their life to God’s pattern for living.

As a Spiritual Formation Leadership Team we are confident that this book will be transformational, not only financially, but in every area of life: marriage, family, health and relationships. As Robert Morris says, “For when God changes your heart from selfishness to generosity, every part of your life-journey is affected.” We are praying for each of you as you lead this study and are excited to see the ways in which God continues to impact the lives of those in your group.

Overview:
Here is an overview about how the next 4 weeks are planned:  

Week Focus:
1. The Principal of the First: Chapters 1&2
2. The Principal of Multiplication: Chapters 3&4
3. Breaking the Spirit of Mammon/It’s All About the Heart: Chapters 5&7
4. The Gift of Giving & God’s Rewards: Chapters 8-12

Tip… As you enter the particular week’s content, challenge your group participants to read that week’s chapters. Also, you may want to send them the icebreaker or perhaps one or two questions from that week’s study to prepare them for discussion.
The Principle of the First — Week 1: Chapters 1 & 2

Icebreaker:
In chapter one, Robert Morris (RM) tells about a time when he received a love offering and then was compelled by God to give it all away. He wanted to stick his fingers in his ears and sing loudly, “La, La, La...I can't hear you.” Has there ever been a time in your life when you have had the same reaction to doing the right thing?

Message Overview:
This is the first in a four-week series covering the book, The Blessed Life.

Chapter one is aptly titled “The Unexpected Adventure,” and it relates RM’s journey as he discovered the power and joy of Spirit-led giving. He and his wife discovered that you truly cannot out give God. RM then defines what it means to be blessed versus being cursed. Being blessed means having supernatural power working for you; whereas, being cursed means having supernatural power working against you. Four times in the book of Deuteronomy, God says He will bless those who will obey Him, and that He will bless everything to which they put their hands (14:29; 15:10, 23:20; 28:8, 12).

In Chapter two, RM explains why God must be first. We learn that how you handle your finances really is a test in determining what or who is first in your life. There are over 2,000 verses in the Bible on the subject of money and possessions. How we spend/give our money reveals who we are. In this chapter we are also introduced to the principle of first established by God thousands of years ago in Exodus 13:2. We learn that the “first” belongs to God and is to be redeemed or sacrificed. Tithing is giving our first to God and trusting Him to redeem the rest. It requires faith and not waiting to see if more will follow. Jesus was God’s tithe. God didn’t wait to see if we would first change or repent or make ourselves worthy. Instead, God gave in faith in order to redeem us. Many say God is first in their lives, but tithing demonstrates what is truly first in the heart.

Discussion:
(Leaders: The questions that follow are designed to stir reflection and discussion. Please read through them prior to your meeting, so you can be prepared to prayerfully pace your group well. And remember, as leader, your goal is to promote increased biblical awareness, as well as individual self-awareness – a combination that with the help of the Holy Spirit, results in revelation and...transformation!)

- RM repeatedly describes the joy he and his wife feel in giving to God. Have you personally experienced Spirit-led giving? What is the most joy you have received from giving?
- Read Deuteronomy 28:1-14. What sort of things does God say He will bless in our lives if we obey Him and put Him first? What does a blessed life look like to you?
- In chapter two, we are introduced to the principle of first and how all the firsts belong to God to be sacrificed or redeemed. It requires faith to sacrifice our firsts and know that God will redeem the rest. What does it say about our priorities when we willingly pay everybody else first and then see if there is enough left over to give God His portion? Is there any faith required in that sort of giving? How can you overcome the fear that stands in the way of giving first in faith?)
• Read Exodus 23:19 and Proverbs 3:9, 10. What do we learn about to whom our tithe belongs and where we should take it? The Exodus passage uses the word “bring” not “give.” How does this affect your way of thinking concerning tithing?

• Much of the Body of Christ is living under a curse as a direct result of stealing from God. Would you rather try to make it through life with 100 percent of your income and all of it cursed or 90 percent of your income and all of it blessed? Explain why this is so significant and how it plays out in the lives of other and in your own life.

• Many believe tithing is under the law because many of the verses establishing that the firstborn (Exodus 13:2), the first fruits (Exodus 23:19), and the tithe (Malachi 3:8-9) belong to God are found in the Old Testament. Read Malachi 3:6. What does it mean to be unchanging? How is tithing a principle rather than a law? How is it tied to God’s character?

• If you are a Christian, you were freed from a life of sin. You have been redeemed and blessed with far more than you could ever deserve. Because He set you free, can you keep Him first in your life? How does this thought impact your willingness to give God what is due Him?

Wrap-Up/Close:
The principle of the first may or may not be new to you. Whether it is or not, we must understand that God cannot act outside of His character. He cannot change. If we say He is first in our hearts, then He must be first in our finances, our families, and our faith. There are many blessings that go along with tithing, but it is the principle of putting God first and trusting Him that initiates the blessings. You may be thinking, “But I can’t afford to tithe. I already shell out far more than I bring in.” You will never be able to afford to tithe until you tithe. Then God can remove the curse, which will enable you to tithe. As RM states in his book, without exception tithers say, “I’m blessed,” and non-tithers say, “I can’t afford to tithe. Which group of people do you want to belong? If God is truly first, we must demonstrate it through our faithfulness in returning the tithe to Him. We sacrifice the first that He might bless the rest.

Throughout the Week:
(Leaders: Share these optional exercises for further study and growth with your group.)

• Read Malachi 3:6-12. When fear about tithing creeps upon you, remind yourself that God promises to “rebuke the devourer for your sake.”

• Pray and ask God this week to reveal to you where in your life He is not first and what changes need to be made in your heart in order to give Him His proper place.
The Principle of Multiplication – Week 2: Chapters 3 & 4

Icebreaker:
Share an example of some tests you have taken over the years—in school, in athletics, at work. What motivated you to get ready for the test? Or share an example from your life where you have given something away that you felt like was a sacrifice. Were you made to give it? What was going on in your heart? How did the other person receive it? What happened later?

Message Overview:
This is the second in a four-week series covering the book, The Blessed Life.

In chapter three, the author is trying to get us to see that tithing is to come from a grateful heart and not from duty or fear. God desires to bless us and we can expect to be blessed as we tithe. Tithing is not just an Old Testament law. Jesus took the law and raised the righteousness of grace to exceed the righteousness of the Law. When we give according to grace we will give more than the tithe, but we start with tithing. In truth, all belongs to God and true tithing comes from the heart, not a rule. Tithing is an opportunity for blessing and abundance when we trust God with our finances.

In chapter four, we look at the principles of multiplication. Using the feeding of the 5,000 as an example, Morris shows that there are two keys to multiplication: Something must be blessed before it can multiply and only what is given away can multiply. He reminds us that tithing is not really giving because the tithe belongs to God. Offerings are what we give over the tithe. Starting with the tithe removes the curse and opens the windows of Heaven to bless the balance of our finances. Like the feeding of the five thousand men (more like 20,000 people) we can see God make our finances go further than we could ever think possible.

Discussion:
(Leaders: The questions that follow are designed to stir reflection and discussion. Please read through them prior to your meeting, so you can be prepared to prayerfully pace your group well. And remember, as leader, your goal is to promote increased biblical awareness, as well as individual self-awareness – a combination that with the help of the Holy Spirit, results in revelation and...transformation!)

• Have you heard or said yourself that tithing is Old Testament and part of the Law? How has Chapter three in the book shown you differently?

• Read aloud Genesis 2:15-17. What are some differences in an owner and a steward? Give some examples in your own life where you are an owner or a steward. How are you handling your money as to being an owner or a steward?

• Read Matthew 6:21 out loud. What do the things you “treasure” say about your heart? Where do material things fit in your life? What changes do you need to make?

• Look at the bottom of page 54 and the top of page 55. What does it mean for the righteousness of grace to exceed the righteousness of the Law. (Define righteousness)

• When the author talks about two keys to multiplication what is necessary for our finances to be multiplied? What is necessary for our finances to be blessed? What is one step you can take to “test” God to bless your finances?
• What is one step you can take this week to prepare to hear from God, so that you can give when He prompts you? Would you be willing to ask Him to show you a place to give this week?

Wrap-Up/Close:
Take time in the group to pray for boldness. Pray for faith. Pray that God would expose some fears that we have when it comes to our finances. Pray that we may “test” God with our tithe – our God who is always true to His word.

Throughout the Week:
(Leaders: Share these optional exercises for further study and growth with your group.)

Memorize Leviticus 27: 30 "And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD’s. It is holy to the LORD."
Icebreaker:
In chapter six, Robert Morris (RM) speaks about the “selfish heart” and how men hate to share food. What is the one item (edible or not) that you do not like to share?

Message Overview:
This is the third in a four-week series covering the book, The Blessed Life.

In chapter five we are introduced to the spirit of mammon. This spirit says, “I don’t need God to fix my problems; I need riches.” Mammon is a liar. It will promise you the world and leave you with nothing. We learn from Jesus in Matthew 6:24, that mammon can take the place of God. We cannot put our faith in both God and money. When we break the spirit of mammon we can experience blessings. However, we must be careful not to let the spirit of poverty and the spirit of pride prevent us from experiencing gratitude. The key to breaking the spirits of mammon, poverty, and pride is to remember—remember that we were slaves to sin, God saved us by grace, and though we have worked hard, it is God’s blessing that allows our work to prosper.

In chapter six, we learn that in order to give and break the spirit of mammon, we must experience a “heart transplant.” Giving isn’t just a financial issue. You can give forgiveness, mercy, understanding, and patience. Whatever you give is going to be given back to you. Yet, giving to receive should not be our motivation. Giving should be our reward. Giving starts in the heart. God wants to purify our hearts and transform us into cheerful givers. We must rid ourselves of the selfish heart and the grieving heart. When we realize that all we have has been given to us by God and that all belongs to Him, we can give without grieving or thinking, “Mine!” Our attitudes about possessions have a powerful ability to expose the true nature of our hearts. We must renew our minds in order to renew our hearts and break free from the fear that keeps us from being generous givers and receiving God’s abundant blessings.

Chapter seven gives us three keys to living a blessed life: 1) Get out of debt; 2) Never manipulate others; and 3) Give. God stands ready and willing to provide all the help we need to accomplish these three tasks. God wants to work miracles in our lives, and many times He starts by working miracles in our hearts regarding financial obedience.

Discussion:
(Leaders: The questions that follow are designed to stir reflection and discussion. Please read through them prior to your meeting, so you can be prepared to prayerfully pace your group well. And remember, as leader, your goal is to promote increased biblical awareness, as well as individual self-awareness – a combination that with the help of the Holy Spirit, results in revelation and…transformation!)

- In chapter five, RM tells the story about a waitress who came to know Christ along with her husband because RM and his wife were able to give generously. Have you ever considered the possibility that your giving can have eternal consequences? What sort of investments in the future are you making with your money?

• We learned about the spirit of pride, which wants people to think that we paid more, and the spirit of poverty, which wants people to think that we paid less. Have you witnessed these two spirits at work in your life or in the life of someone you know? How do these two spirits take the focus off from God?

• Have you ever found yourself saying, “Either God needs to perform a miracle or I need to win the Lottery”? How is this not putting all of your trust in God? Can money truly fix all our problems? Have you ever seen someone who won the lottery live a blessed life?

• Read Luke 6:35. Do you have trouble giving and expecting nothing in return? How can trusting God to care for your needs and remembering that everything you have is a gift from Him help you overcome fear in giving and help you to become a more generous giver?

• How serious are you about obeying God in your finances? What keeps you from obeying when things are already tough financially and your car needs repairs or you have a leak in your roof? Does tithing ever make sense?

• If you are going to live the lifestyle of a giver, you are going to have to make lifestyle changes that allow you to give. Do you need to make some adjustments? If so, what do you need to change in order to be a grateful, generous giver who remembers God’s gracious gifts?

Wrap-Up/Close:
Mammon tells us that money is the answer to every problem. Money is not the solution—God is. In order to break free from the power of this spirit, we must trust God and remember. When we remember all we have received—even if the only reward is our salvation—it makes it easier to give generously. We give every day; whether we give to God or to the world, there will be consequences. It’s simple physics. For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Yet, when we give to God the reaction will be far greater than the action. God desires to work through us, and He can work in incredible ways when we give to our local church. However, we need come to the place where we give simply because we have an unselfish, heart of gratitude toward God. Then we will be well on the road to the blessed life.

Throughout the Week:
(Leaders: Share these optional exercises for further study and growth with your group.)

• This week, read the prayer in the book that starts on the bottom of page 94, and continues on page 95.

• Ask God to reveal to you what fears are keeping you from trusting Him with your finances. Ask yourself which of the three items listed on page 117 you need to work on.
Icebreaker:
Share with the group what is the most extravagant, unusual, mind-blowing wonderful gift you have received. How did you feel? What did you do?

Message Overview:
This is the fourth in a four-week series covering the book, *The Blessed Life*.

Chapter 8 is about the spiritual gift of giving mentioned in Romans 12. The Robert Morris (RM) describes ten characteristics of a giver, a person principally guided by the Holy Spirit in what and when they give (pages 143-148). Thirty percent of Jesus’ parables were about money. Many times people with this gift are shown partiality instead of just being treated as a regular person. Often they are treated better, but more often they are treated worse because of jealousy or greed.

In chapter 9, the author assures us that God loves to reward His children when the diligently seek His presence, His will, and His ways. He wants to entrust more to those who are faithful and wise servants. He tests our hearts, our stewardship and our trustworthiness by how we handle our money on a regular basis. At times when we are struggling financially we blame God when it is more about how we steward the resources we’ve been entrusted. He wants us to have an abundance in order to be able to give to further His Kingdom. RM cautions strongly that our giving cannot be in order to get rewards, but rather has to be motivated by love and joy.

Chapter 10 is based on 2 Corinthians 9:6-8 where the Corinthians are collecting a sacrificial offering. God is looking for cheerful givers who listen to His Spirit. God has to do a work in our hearts for us to change from a selfish, grudging giver to a grateful, generous, cheerful giver. RM distinguishes between needs and wants indicating that needs are what God promises to provide. We can easily find ourselves in greed, another test from God. What will we do with extras? He talks about seed money that we can sow to the Kingdom and reap more by the three principles of sowing: We reap what we sow; we reap after we sow; and we reap more than we sowed. We must pass the test of trusting God to take care of us, pass the test of using extras wisely, and walk in obedience of His promptings of where and how to sow.

Chapter 11 admonishes us to give extravagantly from the heart and challenges us to not cover up selfishness by downplaying another’s gifts. God will give us responsibility in an area of our weakness so we can confront them and overcome them. He wants us to learn what true riches are—people, helping others, winning souls, growing disciples. RM says that God will not give us leadership responsibilities if we are not handling our money well (Luke 16: 11-12). God’s ladder of giving consists of three levels: first tithes, then offerings, then extravagant offerings. Extravagant offerings can be based on the amount of money from which we are giving, like the widow’s mite in Luke 21:2. Generosity is rewarded when our motives are pure and not driven just to get more. Often there are steps to go through before giving extravagantly: we hear God; we are excited; we feel crazy and fearful; we go into logical thinking; we doubt; then we find the faith to obey.

Chapter 12 shows us that if we have a supernatural work in our hearts and faithfully follow and apply God’s truths, they will produce guaranteed financial results. If we become a conduit for the funds God wants to channel to others, our families will be taken care of. We know God has our heart when we give to give rather than giving to receive. We give because we love Him. We
worship the Blessor not the blessings. Giving when the Lord leads, keeping the focus on Him rather than things, being generous, and allowing Him to do a work in our hearts are the keys to a blessed life.

Discussion:
(Leaders: The questions that follow are designed to stir reflection and discussion. Please read through them prior to your meeting, so you can be prepared to prayerfully pace your group well. And remember, as leader, your goal is to promote increased biblical awareness, as well as individual self-awareness – a combination that with the help of the Holy Spirit, results in revelation and...transformation!)

- Why do you think it is that we often hear much about various spiritual gifts, but very little about the gift of giving?
- Have you ever found yourself being negative about someone who has money? Would you be willing to share a bit about that?
- How much do motives matter when it comes to giving? Can we have pure motives when it comes to giving? In what ways do we need God’s help in shaping our motives?
- Read aloud 2 Corinthians 9: 6-8. Is it your habit to consult God about your spending or do you blame Him when you don’t have enough? What does God need to do in your heart for you to see money the way He does? What steps do you need to take to make changes?
- Has your heart been tested about believing God will meet your needs? Explain. Have you had extra that you consulted God about where to give or plant it? How did that work out?
- Where are you on God’s ladder of giving (tithe, give, give extravagantly)? Share how you have seen God work in one of these when you listened to Him. Will you take the next step?
- How do you know you are focusing on the Blessor rather than the blessing? If not, what can you do to change that? Are you or do you know someone who is a conduit for God’s provision and they can testify to His faithfulness? What is holding you back from believing God’s principles about finances?

Wrap-Up/Close:
The challenge of this study is to know and learn God’s principles for finances and allow Him to work in our hearts so that we can apply them. This will enable Him to provide both for our families and to further His Kingdom. We have many misconceptions about the Biblical view of finances and having them set right will free God to bless us and others. It will take courage and His power for many of us to be able to step out and believe His promises. Ask God to work these principles into your heart. As He reminds you of this study, step out and in faith and co-operate as He prompts you.

Throughout the Week:
(Leaders: Share these optional exercises for further study and growth with your group.)