



WHAT IS GOD REALLY LIKE?

If there's a 1960's Christian folk song I really struggled to sing, it was the one with the chorus, "And they'll know we are Christians by our love." I just didn't like it. For a start, the tune, set in a minor key, sounded too much like a dreamy folk song, almost causing me to fall asleep by the end! Not knowing much about love at that time anyway, the combined words and music, felt completely lovey-dovey and gushy. Where was the 'Dare to be a Daniel', standing up for the right, learnt in Sabbath School? For if there was ever an adventure in missing the point, I felt this song scored top marks. Something was very definitely going on here. Then, one day during my 1970's Religious Education (RE) class at high school, I discovered the reason why.

Jane was her name. She loved this song and thought it was about time Christians sang it more often, put aside their differences and unite. I didn't get this idea and said as much. I knew Jane was a Roman Catholic, and she knew I was an Adventist, causing much suspicion between the two of us. She thought I belonged to a weird sect, and I knew that she belonged to..., well, I just knew! My poor Anglican RE teacher often ended up as the peacemaker between the two of us, trying to find common ground, but without success.

Fast forward to 1988, my second year in ministry; I'd be preaching sermons each Sabbath emphasising love. Sure enough, in my faith development, I'd experienced a wonderful 'grace awakening'. Preaching about the loving character of God, through Christ, was something I very much treasured. By Tuesday morning, (and almost every Tuesday morning), in response to my sermon, I'd receive letters from some well-meaning members: "Pastor, you do realise that all this preaching on love, is leading members astray, don't you, and make no mistake, the Lord will hold you responsible"?

Which leads me to the core issue at the heart of this week's lesson: what does Paul mean in 1 Corinthians 4:1-2, when he says we are "Stewards of the mysteries of God"? Or as Eugene Peterson shares in the Message, "Guides into God's most sublime secrets...". Of course, as Paul reminds us in verse 2, for the steward to be faithful is essential. If that's so, it means we have to ask the most basic question of all; what is God really like?

Hope it leads to a fascinating study, good conversation, but most of all, life change.

- **'Motives of the Heart' 3-minute video** with John Matthews who compares a steward to a diamond. All video introductions for this series of lessons can be found at:



LESSON 6. THE MARK OF A STEWARD BY JOHN MATHEWS

Stewardship Ministries videos of the Sabbath School Adult Lesson Study Guide for the 1st Quarter of 2018 by John Mathews, author of the lessons. Use these ...

[WATCH VIDEO](#)

- **South Pacific Division stewardship lesson introductions:** this week we share a second video introduction, with Pastor Greg Pratt, who wonders what the job description and key performance indicators of a steward look like.

Isaac Kiwarkis from Parramatta Adventist Church introduces Greg Pratt.



WATCH VIDEO

- 5 Q's for Life Change
This week's study: What is the truth about God? What are those mysteries? A study focussing on 1 Corinthians 4:1-2.
- Lesson Notes (attached): Created for those who want to dig deeper into the Word. Authored by Shevanthi Bastiam Pillai. Class teacher or group leader; don't miss these studies for providing both breadth and depth.

Here's a gem from this week's study – Obedience really is a 'motive of the heart':

"To a Christian, true obedience means 'doing God's will joyfully and continually in every aspect of life'. It is not merely obeying 10 laws. Jesus made it clear on the Sermon on the Mount that the 10 commandments must be kept

from the heart – then only will our righteousness exceed that of the Pharisees who counted themselves perfect in external law-keeping (Matthew 5:20). This attitude of seeking to do God's will continually, comes easily to those

who recognise that they are dead to the world and its principles (through the Cross of Christ – Galatians 6:14) and therefore have nothing to do with its ways."

A prayer for you as you lead and teach.

With best wishes,

David

Stewardship Director

Faithful stewardship – more than a merely optional Christian grace.