

WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE



Photo: David Neal, Former home of Mary Jones, Llanfihangel-y-pennant, Wales, who saved for six years during the 1790's, and walked 25 miles to own a bible in her own language, words she believed to be the life-changing living Word of God.

In the speed of what seems like the blink of an eye, we've reached the end of the 'Matters of the Heart' Sabbath School Lessons. Reaction to this series has been mixed. Some praise the studies for making stewardship matters practical. Others continue to feel mildly distressed with the focus on money. By far the majority appreciate new insights into scripture, never considered before.

Which brings me to the 'when all is said and done'. It's possible this bible study series may not make one iota of difference as to how I live. If so, a serious problem, a symptom of a deeper spiritual malaise. On the other hand, with an open heart and mind, promptings from the Holy Spirit will help me grow in faith.

Attached is the personal 'i-promise' sheet. At first glance it seems prescriptive & challenging, particularly with 7 promises to make. But really, it's a simple, holistic, invitation to help me grow as a disciple of Christ, to become more like Jesus. I may only be able to check just one box for now, or all 7, according to where I am on my spiritual journey. In time, I may again feel further promptings of the Holy Spirit to grow in another area. And do you know something? What's the point of Sabbath School, and in this context, 'Matters of the Heart', if it doesn't challenge me to life change?

I hope you'll take a look, a serious look, at the i-promise card, and pray about how the Lord is leading you to grow in faith. As you do, consider this thought from J. B. Philips:

"Anyone who has any experience at all of the living God knows that he is nothing at all like [] somebody who tut-tuts politely at our failings and lays a soothing hand on our anxious little heads. The God who lives in us, if we will allow him, is not necessarily always gentle: he can be wind and fire and a whole lot of other things. He can give us strength, but he can also show us our weaknesses! He will 'increase our faith', but frequently not in the way we want or expect..."

(Ring of Truth p. 31, J. B. Philips, Hodder and Stoughton)

So, for your Sabbath School and mine, I trust that something good happened over the last thirteen weeks, that's my prayer, at least. Reminds me of my favourite little rhyme:

If I have the Word without the Spirit, I dry up.
If I have the Spirit without the Word, I blow up.
If I have both the Word and the Spirit, I grow up

And when all is said and done, growing up is what matters!

The Results of Stewardship

John Matthews reminds us that in lesson 1 of this series he started with the topic of 'chaos'. As we end with lesson 13, he ends with the topic of 'contentment'. Sounds much like the Gospel story.



LESSON 13. THE RESULTS OF STEWARDSHIP

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

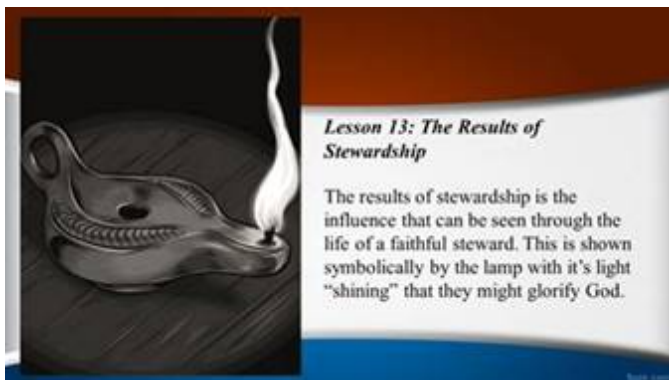
DOWNLOAD HD VIDEO

For previous lessons, see: <https://stewardship.adventist.org/online-videos?channel=1326917&video=247368489>

From South Pacific Division Stewardship Ministries, comes another lesson commentary



What difference could our personal commitment to practising stewardship principles make? Shevanthi Bastiam Pillai finds Ellen White describing it as an 'almost irresistible influence' with an amazing consequence.



Lesson Notes (attached)

"The silent witness of a true, unselfish, godly life carries an almost irresistible influence. By revealing in our own life, the character of Christ, we co-operate with Him in the work of saving souls. It is only by revealing in our life His character that we can co-operate with Him. The wider the sphere of our influence, the more good we may do. When those who profess to serve God follow Christ's example, practicing the principles of the law in their daily life; when every act bears witness that they love God supremely and their neighbour as themselves, then will the church have power to move the world." EGW: Our Father Cares. p 309.

- **5 Q's for Life Change (attached)**

The final bible study in this series attempts to bring together all that we have discovered about stewardship over the last 3 months. To put it another way, we're looking at the 'so what' of it all.

AND FINALLY,

It's time to say a word or two of thanks.

- Shevanthi Bastiam Pillai kindly provided the weekly 'digging deeper' lesson notes, a continuing supporting ministry for Irish Mission members and beyond.
- Geraldine Hankin, my personal assistant for the last 18 months, in addition to her role as Receptionist at the Trans-European Division Office. I am thankful and most grateful for her assistance in making the Stewardship Ministries Department work. In particular, in recent times, the commitment and added pressure of producing what was a monthly newsletter, into a weekly bulletin for the 'Matters of the Heart' series. *Geraldine's response: David, it's been a Blessing and a pleasure, thank you; God Bless you in Stewardship Ministry!*
- To all the Sabbath School teachers who prayerfully prepared to teach, to make the most of every bible study for all its worth.

The weekly 'Motives of the Heart' bulletin, now returns to the monthly 'First Things 1st', published on the 1st day of each month (next edition May 1st).

- Welcome to Sajitha Forde-Ralph who takes over fully as my interim personal assistant from April 1st. A major focus of her work is to build a strong digital platform for TED Stewardship Ministries.

Best wishes,

David

David Neal | Stewardship Director

Faithful stewardship – more than a merely optional Christian grace.