

“I AM SO VERY BLESSED?”

“It’s offering time during the worship service. I gently pull my tithe envelope from the inside of my shiny new suit pocket, to place in the offering plate. My heart is full of hope because in returning my tithe, I know I am pleasing God. My faith is strong, very strong, and because the Lord and I made a deal, I can only be but blessed. As I read Malachi 3:10 again, I remind myself of the many promised blessings. Just as I am reflecting, I am stirred as the congregation begin to sing cheerily ‘The Lord is blessing me’. I am comforted as I remember my life achievements. When compared to where I have come from, I think about where I am now. You know Lord, how I have risen! You remember my desperate life as a child, gruelling at times just to survive! But look now at my family, my career, my house, my good health, last summer’s overseas holiday in the sun, not forgetting my very good car. Even when the economy’s not looking good, I continue to be looked after by you! Amen and Amen! As the offering gifts are taken to the front of the sanctuary for prayer, my eyes look down and notice some fluffy bits on my suit. I quickly brush them off my shoulder before we pray.....”

This week’s Sabbath School Lesson, in part, warns against the danger of a false gospel, the one that’s all about me! Like an express train hurtling towards us, many Adventists find the ‘prosperity gospel’ heresy, very attractive indeed. Currently sweeping global Christianity, John Matthews, Sabbath School lesson author comments: *“This false theology, like any good counterfeit, contains some truth carefully woven together with deceit.”* At the heart of the matter, is the difference between true and false worship. This week’s study shows that putting God first, is the very opposite to the world of, ‘all about me’.

Here’s our cupboard full of resources:



- The ‘Motives of the Heart’ 3-minute video considers further the dangers of the ‘Prosperity Gospel’. John Matthews Explains why *“The Bible is not a contract.”*

All video introductions for this series of lessons can be found on the [GC Stewardship video channel](#).

- [5 Q’s for Life Change](#): Easy to use, they encourage study groups to open and discover scripture, and then apply. This week’s passage for study: *2 Corinthians 8:1-7*. A story of how early Christians, facing extreme personal poverty, ‘begged’ to support the wider church.

To get the most out of this inductive Bible study:

1. Read the key text together (taken from the adult Sabbath School Lesson study).
 2. Use question 1, as the icebreaker, and introduction to the discussion.
 3. Use questions 2, 3, and 4, to dig as deep into scripture as your group wishes to go.
 4. Question 5 is for reflection/application.
 5. Surround the study with prayer.
- [Lesson Notes](#): Created for those who want to dig deeper into the Word. Authored by Shevanthi Bastiam Pillai (Irish Mission), and published weekly, they continue to be an anchor Sabbath School resource for many Irish Mission members. Class teacher or group leader? Don’t miss these studies for providing both breadth and depth.

More resources for this series of lessons can be found at:

- [Adventist Stewardship Ministries](#)
- [TED Stewardship Ministries](#)
- For numerous Sabbath School Lesson links such as CQ and Pine Knoll study notes and audio discussion, [click here](#).

AND FINALLY... for this week, we'd really like to hear from you. Sure, it's early days into the quarter, but what do you think of this series of lessons? A real contrast from Galatians and Romans? Are study group members finding new perspectives on scripture, digging into scripture and discovering new insights, or is it the same old routine?

When opening the Bible personally, or in a group setting, I find this prayer helpful:

***Dear Lord
Here is my study time,
Here is my Bible,
Open my mind,
Open my heart,
And speak.
Amen***

Expect something supernatural to happen!

With best wishes,

David

David Neal | Stewardship Director

Faithful stewardship – more than a merely optional Christian grace.