



## 2023 1Q Managing for the Master Till He Comes—Lesson 12 Rewards of Faithfulness

by Tim Jennings

### SABBATH

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What are the rewards of faithfulness?

Read first paragraph:

Though we can never earn salvation, the Bible uses the hope of reward as a motivation for faithful living as undeserving recipients of God's grace, for in the end whatever we receive is, always and only, from God's grace. (2023 1Q SDA Adult Bible Study Guide page 96).

Do you like the language that we are “undeserving recipients of God's grace”?

Isn't the definition given by many that God's grace is something we don't deserve?

In the Adult Study Guide on Deuteronomy in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarte of 2021 in lesson 7, on Monday November 8 it states:

Even the most cursory reading of the book of Deuteronomy shows how crucial obedience to the law was for the nation of Israel. In a real sense, it was the people's covenant obligation. God had done so much for them and would continue to do so much for them — things that they couldn't do for themselves and **that they did not deserve to begin with (which is what grace is, God giving us what we don't deserve)**. And what He asked in response was, well, obedience to His law. (2021 4Q SDA Adult Bible Study Guide lesson 7 Monday).

What do you think of this? How is this true and how is this not true?

It is true that none of us have earned God's grace. His grace is not a paycheck, a medal, or a reward for some achievement on our part. So in this sense God's grace is not something we can claim by our work or action.

But to limit our definition in this way restricts our understanding of grace, God, and our value to God. It is really an incomplete definition or understanding that emerges from holding the imposed law model rather than design law.

The reason it is taught that we don't deserve God's grace is because we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, that all our righteousness is filthy rags—which are true statements. But when these truths are applied to the question of deserving grace through the imposed law lens it focuses on our performance rather than on God's character our creation and purpose in God's



estimation and therefore ends up with the classic definition of deserving being based upon our performance, conduct, or action.

However, design law understands deeper truths. That Adam, Eve, and Jesus were the only humans who had a choice not to sin. The rest of us are born in sin and conceived in iniquity (Psalm 51:5). We all sin because we are all born with a terminal sin condition that we did not choose and will keep sinning unless we experience God's grace. Therefore, the statements about *all our righteousness being filthy rags and how we have all fallen short of God's glory* **are diagnostic statements** and statements designed to reveal the futility of legal or human-devised treatment plans to the sin problem.

So the design law way of understanding the idea of deserving grace does not focus on our goodness, our works, our efforts to save ourselves, but on God and what He values and who we are in God's order and we can ask a question like this:

Does a child born with a terminal illness deserve to be treated with kindness, compassion, and offered a remedy if one exists to restore them to wellness—even though they have done nothing to earn such treatment? Why would they deserve it? Does a child, simply by being a human child, deserve the love of its parents—not because the child earned anything but because of who the child is to the parents? Do we have value and worth to God, not because of our achievements or any work we have done, but because of who God created us to be, because of what God has designed for us and invested in us?

And thus, God's grace doesn't say anything about how good we are, but about how good God is and how much He loves and values us.

Read second paragraph:

As David wrote: "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them Your servant is warned, and in keeping them there is great reward" (Ps. 19:7-11, NKJV). (2023 1Q SDA Adult Bible Study Guide page 96).

What does this mean?

What law is perfect converting the soul and making us wise etc.?

Is this speaking of the Ten Commandments? Is it speaking of the Torah? Is it speaking of the reality of God's design laws, truths, principles, and methods?

How do we understand the perfect law? Let's examine a quote by one of the founders of the SDA Church, written 130 years ago and see if there are any insights that apply to us today in regard to this question of God's law and how we understand it:



The Jewish nation stood forth among the nations of the earth as a proud, haughty people, who claimed to have great knowledge and to manifest great piety. [Was the Jewish nation chosen by God and identified as His special people? For what purpose? Exclusive salvation? No! To be the avenue through whom Messiah would come and simultaneously be God's helpers in preparing the world for the first advent of Jesus. Thus, they were blessed with the inspired written Word of God and also the other various ceremonial teaching tools. And what happened when Jesus came? Did the nation, the Jewish officials and religious institution, their General Conference known as the Sanhedrin, accept Jesus? Does their history serve as an object lesson? Is there an organization on earth today that stand in a similar place—an organization that claims to be especially called by God to prepare the world for the second Advent, and claims similar blessings to those that the Jews claimed such as: Inspired writings, the Sabbath, a health message, a sanctuary message? And could this organization take the same route the Jews did 2000 years ago claiming to have great knowledge and manifesting great piety yet end up opposing Christ? Jesus said that when He returns there will be people who thought they were serving Him and He will tell them to be gone, that they were workers of iniquity. And when they ask Him when had they mistreated Him, He tells them "as you have done it to the least of these you have done it unto me." What did the SDA church leadership officially do to its members during COVID? They abandoned them, sided with the state to coerce the consciences of their employees, patients, students, and members.] The Jews looked down upon the Gentiles as upon those who were far beneath them, because of darkness and error. [Do SDAs do this? What do SDAs call counties in this country where there are Christian churches from other denominations but no SDA presence? "Dark counties."] Yet the pretentious fig tree bore not fruit, but leaves only. If they had had spiritual understanding, they would have seen and understood the mission of Christ. [What does spiritual understanding mean? It means understanding reality, God's design laws, the larger view, rather than a list of religious rules. What about today, could this be said of many church leaders today, that they don't have spiritual understanding and therefore they don't understand the mission of Christ. They think His mission was to pay a legal penalty to an offended God and then offer that blood payment in our behalf to propitiate the anger and wrath of that god. This is paganism, it is built upon the imposed law lie. Thus we are called to return to worship the Creator whose laws are design laws.] The light dimly seen at first would have increased in brightness, expanding unto the perfect day. If they had followed on to know the Lord, they would have known that his goings forth are prepared as the morning. Oh, what a light would have shone upon Judah and Jerusalem had they but welcomed the light that was sent them of heaven! What a transforming power would have been manifest in life and character! [Where would the heavenly light have had its impact? Upon the hearts, minds, lives, and characters of the people! People who embrace heaven's light become more like Jesus. Could this same lament be said about the church today?] They would have been just what Jesus longed to have them be,—a living, shining light in the darkness. They would have borne the noblest credentials that any one of the followers of Christ can bear. They would have been representatives of Christ, monuments of the power of the Spirit of God upon human hearts. The Spirit of God would have worked a **miracle upon the heart**, changing it from a heart of stone to a heart of flesh. They would have known what is meant by the **regeneration of the Spirit**, for the whole moral taste would have



been **changed**, and they would have loved the things they once hated, and hated the things they once delighted in. Signs of the Times November 13, 1893, par. 1 [Again where is the impact of Christ's sacrifice to occur? Not in record books or courtrooms but in hearts and minds of people. Satan has succeeded in shutting away the victory and power of Christ to many by getting them to conceive of Christ's mission through human law, through legal application of payments to God in heaven, rather than the reality of our healing Remedy.]

**The words of Christ to the Pharisees come home with power to every living soul to whom the light of the Sun of Righteousness has been revealed. [This applies to us today.]** To those who have caught a glimpse of celestial truth, to whom have come some rays of enlightenment, is the warning given. For your souls' sake do not turn away and be disobedient to the heavenly vision. **You may have seen something in regard to the righteousness of Christ**, but there is truth yet to be seen clearly, and that should be estimated by you as precious as rare jewels. [This is the righteousness by faith message, the message the SDA church leadership rejected in 1888. The message that through faith we become the righteousness of God (2Cor 5:21). This was replaced with the penal/legal lie that through faith we get legally accounted or declared righteous even though we are not. It was a rejection of the truth of God's design law and an embracing the imposed law lie. Notice what this author says next.] **You will see the law of God and interpret it to the people in an entirely different light from what you have done in the past, for the law of God will be seen by you as revealing a God of mercy and righteousness.** [The law of God must be taken out of the imposed law setting which always has God punishing for justice sake and put back into its true setting of the design protocols the Creator built reality to operate upon. Then we see God as our loving Creator, Savior, Redeemer, and Healer—our Great Physician who seeks to fix all the damage that sin has caused. Only when we see God's law as design law do we understand the reality of God's character of love, what the sin problem is, why it results in death, why Christ had to die, what Christ accomplished for us and the victory we can experience through faith today! And notice what happens when we place the law in its right setting] **The atonement, made by the stupendous sacrifice of Jesus Christ, will be seen by you in an altogether different light. You will see sin in its heinous character.** [When we understand God's law in its true light as design law **then we understand sin is not a legal problem, it is a lethal problem.** We understand sin is like a cancer—a malignant disease, a corrosive, virulent and destructive virus—and we understand the supreme sacrifice that Christ made was necessary in order to eliminate this death causing principle from humanity and restore His life-giving power in us.] **But this the Jews did not desire to see.** [Do we desire to see this?] Jesus said to them, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." "For everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved."... Signs of the Times November 13, 1893, par. 2

Read the third paragraph,

In various places the Bible talks about our rewards, what we are promised through Christ after the Second Coming and this terrible detour with sin is once and for all over and done. (2023 1Q SDA Adult Bible Study Guide page 96).



Are the rewards only experienced after the second coming? I wish they would have said the “full and complete” rewards or the “ultimate” rewards or something like this, because there are real rewards that we can experience here and now, unless they truly think of rewards only as something arbitrarily given?

If we think of having peace with God, the removal of guilt and shame, peace of heart, new motives, love, joy, patience, self-control, wisdom, discernment, conversation with God and sometimes specific interventions in our daily struggles—then aren’t there rewards now? Life is absolutely better in a love trust relationship with God here and now than living in the world without God.

But perhaps they don’t consider any of that a reward, maybe they think of rewards as artificially bestowed, perhaps they think of things like:

- The size of the mansion one gets in heaven
- The number of jewels in your crown
- How close your seat is to God’s seat at the heavenly supper table
- The number of worlds you get to govern

Well consider this historic quote from the book *Our High Calling* regarding rewards in heaven—do you agree or disagree and if you agree, are these rewards earned by us or bestowed by God?

The **reward, the glories of heaven, bestowed** upon the overcomers, will be **proportionate** to the degree in which they have represented the character of Christ to the world. “**He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly.**” 2 Corinthians 9:6. Thank God that it is our privilege to sow on earth the seed that will be harvested in eternity. **The crown of life will be bright or dim, will glitter with many stars, or be lighted by few gems, in accordance with our own course of action.** Day by day we may be laying up a good foundation against the time to come. By **self-denial, by the exercise of the missionary spirit, by crowding all the good works possible into our life, by seeking so to represent Christ in character that we shall win many souls** to the truth, we shall have respect unto the recompense of reward. Our High Calling 123.

What do you think of this statement? The author says “bestowed,” but then describes what appears to be fruits of one’s own work—what are the rewards and what does it mean?

What is it that heaven values most? People! And if we become like Christ, what will we value most? Others! And therefore, what will give us the greatest joy, reward, happiness, cause for celebration in heaven? Won’t it be the number of people we know and love who are there? Will our reward, what brings us the most joy be multiplied by the number of people whom we love and are loved by?

This is an outworking of the design law of love. But what does it mean to bestow such a reward? Certainly it would require God to heal our sin-ravaged bodies and give us immortal bodies so we can live in His presence. But is simply living eternally the reward—or is it the quality of our experiences



and relationships with others that makes eternal life rewarding? Would it be a reward to live eternally in the traditional description of hell, or with a god who is like Satan alleges?

So, perhaps God bestows our reward by making the links, the connections between people, the introductions, by bringing to the hearts and minds of the saved the knowledge of those who it was that gave the donation that resulted in them receiving a Bible, or a tract, or a magazine, or who it was that placed a magazine in a certain stand or table, or who was the one who wrote a book that witnessed Christ. Perhaps God introduces us to people who read a book, listened to a class, overheard a conversation on an airplane, read something we sent, or shared and had the seeds of truth planted in their heart and came to salvation through your witness. And when God makes these connections known, what happens in the hearts and minds of these saved people in heaven? Love and appreciation and rejoicing and reward, and that love is described in Scripture as a burning fire a flame and the more of those connections we have been involved in making here on this earth, the brighter we will shine and the greater will be our reward.

What do you think of this idea?

## SUNDAY

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The lesson is entitled Reward for Faithfulness

Does the law lens one holds impact our understanding of this phrase?

What is the reward for faithful law-keeping?

What is the reward for faithful friendship to God?

Can one be a law-keeper and not be a friend of God?

Can one be a genuine friend of God and not keep the law?

Does the parable of the landowner who hired people throughout the day give insight into this?

Consider what the last paragraph is trying to say:

Being rewarded for faithfulness, however, is not the same as salvation by works. Who among us, or among any of the characters in the Bible, had works good enough to give them any merit before God? None, of course. That's the whole point of the cross. If we could have saved ourselves by works, Jesus never would have gone to the cross. Instead, it must be by grace. "And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work" (Rom. 11:6, NKJV). Rewards, instead, are the mere outworking of what God has done for us and in us. (2023 1Q SDA Adult Bible Study Guide page 97).



What does this mean? Do you get the sense they are working very hard to try and make the point that *rewards* and *salvation* are not the same? Why are they working so hard at this? Because they operate in the wrong law model. In design law model we recognize we have a terminal sin condition that we could never heal or procure the remedy for. That Jesus, unassisted by us, overcame and procured the remedy to our sin condition, and He offers that cure to us absolutely free. But we must choose to trust Him and accept His treatment plan and actively participate. Our participation, our work, is required to benefit, i.e. partake of what He procured, but our work, participation never produces the remedy. Just consider taking penicillin for an infection—you must comply and take it for the penicillin to work, but no work of participating in the treatment plan ever credits you with procuring the penicillin.

So in the parable of the landowner the imposed law legalists believe the reward is the coin they receive at the end of a hard days work. And it isn't fair to them that all receive the same bestowed reward or payment when some worked harder than others.

But design law understands that the coin represents salvation and it is offered to all who will enter God's field, God's employ, a trust relationship with God, it is the same healing and recovery from sin with eternal life given to all. But the reward is the relationship with the landowner, those who worked all day had more time in working for God, in learning of God, in apply God's methods to their lives in how they advanced the kingdom of God working for a harvest of souls for God. And they will have the joy of having reached more souls, i.e. harvested more grain, and thus will have more love relationships in heaven and will have a greater reward, than those who experienced salvation like the thief on the cross, but didn't have time to reach many souls for God's kingdom.

## MONDAY

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The lesson is on Everlasting Life—what is the key to everlasting life?

The lesson states in the second paragraph

“Our part is simply to believe Him, rest upon the merits of Jesus, and by faith obey His Word.”

What does this mean? What are the merits of Jesus? Does the law lens we hold impact our understanding of this?

Is this the same as what Jesus said,

Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. (John 17:3 NIV84)?

What does it mean to know God? Is it the same as knowing about God?

How do we come to know God and Jesus Christ?



Do we experience God and Jesus with the same trust, love, confidence? Do we see them with the same attributes of character?

Do we believe God is for us or do we believe God needs convincing?

Do we believe that God is for us because we are claiming the merits of Jesus as we approach the Father?

What does it mean to rest upon the merits of Jesus? Does that mean we claim them as our legal payment for our sins?

What would the Father do to us if we don't have a legal payment of Jesus' blood applied to our account in heaven?

Does Jesus *merit* being our Savior? Absolutely, because of what He achieved—but how does His achievement, His merit help us? What does resting upon Jesus' perfection do for us?

What law lens are we looking at this through?

Consider this historic quote—we will hear terms like justified, courts, unmerited favor, faith, works, substitute, merit—all of this. Do you hear something legal or do you hear something healing and restorative? Does our law lens make a difference?

**Grace is unmerited favor, and the believer is justified without any merit of his own, without any claim to offer to God.** He is justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, **who stands in the courts of heaven as the sinner's substitute and surety.** But while **he is justified because of the merit of Christ,** he is not free to work unrighteousness. **Faith works by love and purifies the soul.** Faith buds and blossoms and bears a harvest of precious fruit. **Where faith is, good works appear.** The sick are visited, the poor are cared for, the fatherless and the widows are not neglected, the naked are clothed, the destitute are fed. Christ went about doing good, and when men are united with Him, **they love the children of God,** and meekness and truth guide their footsteps. The expression of the countenance reveals their experience, and men take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus and learned of Him. **Christ and the believer become one, and His beauty of character is revealed in those who are vitally connected with the Source of power and love. Christ is the great depository of justifying righteousness and sanctifying grace.** 1Selected Messages 398.

What does this mean? What are the merits of Christ? How do they benefit us?





In the last paragraph the lesson states,

And, perhaps more than anything else, Christ's death on the cross at His first coming is our greatest assurance of His second coming, for without the Second Coming, what good was His first one? (2023 1Q SDA Adult Bible Study Guide page 98).

What do you think of this question? If there is no second coming was there no good in Christ's first coming?

If Jesus did not come the first time, meaning there was no promise in Genesis 3:15 for a Messiah to save us from sin, so there was no enmity between the children of God and Satan, meaning we would all be helplessly enslaved into sin, we would all be fear controlled, abusers, exploiters, liars, cheats. In other words, the only way we can live lives that love others, lives that are true, loyal, kind, responsible, free of guilt, shame, and vileness is because Jesus came—and is that not good? So while we rejoice in the promise of the second coming, isn't it true that all the good we have in the world is because of His first coming?

## **TUESDAY**

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Read first paragraph,

The biblical description of the New Jerusalem is what Abraham saw by faith. "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10). The New Jerusalem is God's masterpiece, built for those who love Him and keep His commandments. The New Jerusalem will be the home of God's faithful children in heaven during the millennium and, afterward, on the new earth for eternity. There is good news for those of us who don't like packing or moving. God takes care of everything. John says he saw the city. "Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev. 21:2, NKJV). (2023 1Q SDA Adult Bible Study Guide page 99).

What do you think of this? Does it open your mind to new ideas? What does it mean that the New Jerusalem is the Bride of Christ?

How does the New Jerusalem become adorned as a Bride for Christ?

What kind of adornment would this be?

If you haven't read our magazine [The Wedding of Christ to His Bride: Preparing the Church for the Second Coming](#) I encourage you to read it. We explore this very symbolic description of the church—did you realize the church is described as the Bride of Christ? And the New Jerusalem is described as the Bride of Christ?



And the Bride has to be cleansed and made pure—because a healthy marriage cannot be achieved with a cheat, it requires healthy partners. Thus, in order for the church to be married to Christ the members must be cleansed or purified.

Can you think of another place in Scripture where this cleansing is taught?

The cleansing of the sanctuary—and when did the cleansing of the sanctuary take place? On the Day of Atonement—the day of at-one-ment. And what happens at a wedding—two become one. The day of atonement ceremony is a symbolic description of the cleansing of the bride which is the joining of the people to eternal union or at-one-ment with God.

- The Most Holy Place is the shape of a cube and the NJ is in the shape of a cube
- The MH place is covered in gold and the NJ is paved with gold (which is symbolic of sinless righteousness)
- The MH place is lighted by the shekinah presence of God and the NJ is lighted by the physical presence of God
- The MH place has the angels on the lid of the ark; the NJ has the angels in bodily form
- The MH place has the law in the box; the NJ has the law written in the hearts of all the saved

In the last paragraph the lesson states, “Also, flowing from the throne of God is the pure river of life, and on either side of the river is the tree of life.”

What do you think this is? Is this H2O? Does this text have any bearing?

We are talking about the river of life—what do you think of the following description from Daniel, is this river the river of life and if so what does it mean?

As I looked, “thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. **A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him.** Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.” (Daniel 7:9-10 NIV84)

Is this river of fire, flowing out from the throne of God the river of life? Have you thought of the river of life as being a river of fire? Is that a river of lava or something else?

Notice millions are standing in this river of fire and it doesn't harm, it gives life, so what is this river?

Well what do you think of this historic quote—does it support or confuse the idea that the river of life is the river of fire coming from the throne of God, also does this support our healing design law view or a legal penal view? How do you hear this?

Thank God that He who spilled His blood for us, lives to plead it, lives to make intercession for every soul who receives Him. **[How do you hear this? Do you default to legal Christianity with**



Jesus interceding with His Father to pay or sin debt? Or to you ask, interceding with who? Who needs the blood of Jesus, which represents the life of Jesus? Does the Father need to be convinced of how good Jesus is? Does the Father need to won to trust in Jesus? Does the Father have lies that He needs to be cleansed of? Who has distrust in God? Who has lies that need removal? Who needs to eat the flesh and drink the blood of Jesus be cleansed of all their sins? So who is Jesus interceding with to convince? It is you and me and it is our hearts and minds that need cleansing by the blood of Jesus. Notice what comes next] “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to **cleanse us** from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9. **The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin.** [The blood, which represents the sinless life of Jesus, does not cleanse a record book, it cleanses our hearts and minds. We become partakers of the divine nature as Peter says. Or Paul, it is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me. We partake the life of Christ and the old is gone and the new has come.] It speaks better things than the blood of Abel, for Christ ever **lives to make intercession for us.** [Intercession with whom?] We need to keep **ever before us the efficacy of the blood of Jesus.** [Who needs to be reminded? Who needs the blood?] That **life-cleansing, life-sustaining blood, appropriated by living faith, is our hope.** We need to grow in appreciation of its inestimable value, for it speaks for us only as we by faith claim its virtue, keeping the conscience clean and at peace with God. Our High Calling 47.4

This is represented as **the pardoning blood**, inseparably connected with the resurrection and life of our Redeemer, **illustrated by the ever-flowing stream that proceeds from the throne of God, the water of the river of life.**<sup>21</sup> Our High Calling 47.5

What is this river of life? What does Leviticus say is in the blood? The life is in the blood. So the blood of Christ represents His life, and what does the river of life represent? The life of Christ which flows out freely to each and every one of us!

Then what about the river of fire? How is God’s life-giving power manifested? It looks like fire, but it is the energy, glory, life of God—you could call it His blood—for the life is in the blood and it is the life of God that flows out from Him giving life to every living thing.

## WEDNESDAY

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The title for the day is The Settling of Accounts—what does this title make you think?

It speaks of the parable of the talents and the minas and how the owner came back and asked how these were invested and held the individuals accountable.

Those that invested well were given more, and those that buried their talent had it taken from them.

What do you think this means? How does this apply to the end of time?

What law lens do you understand this through?



We are most familiar with the parable of the talents told in Matthew, but the lessons our attention to the parable of the Minas told in Luke 19, and points out it is just not natural abilities that we have a responsibility to God to invest and develop, but also other resources placed in our hands.

Let's read that parable from The Remedy:

"A prince went to a distant land to have himself anointed king and then to return home. So he called ten of those who volunteered to serve him and gave them each a gold coin. He told them, 'Put this money to good use until I get back.'

"His people hated him and they sent a delegation to him, saying, 'We don't want you to be our king.'

"He was made king anyway, and returned home. He sent for the ten servants, to whom he had entrusted money, in order to find out how well they had invested it.

"The first one reported, 'Sir, with your gold coin I earned ten more.'

" 'You have done well and are a good servant!' the king replied. 'Because you have been trustworthy in this small matter, I am placing you in charge of ten cities.'

"The second one said, 'Sir, with your gold coin I earned five more.'

"The king answered, 'Well done, I am placing you in charge of five cities.'

"Then another servant came and said, 'Sir, here is your gold coin: I have kept it safe for you, hidden in a cloth. I believe you are a hard man, and I fear you too much to risk losing what you gave me. I believe you take what is not yours and reap when you have not sown.'

"The king replied, 'It is by your own words and beliefs — not by my true character — that you will be diagnosed, for your words reveal the wickedness of your heart. If you believed that I am a hard man, taking what is not mine and reaping where I did not sow, then why didn't you at least put my money in the bank to earn interest?'

"Then he said to his attendants, 'Take the gold coin away from this negligent servant and give it to the one who earned ten.'

"But the servant protested, 'Sir, they already have ten. It's not fair!'

"The king replied, 'I tell you the truth of God's kingdom: Everyone who uses what they have will receive more, but if you don't use it, you will lose it. But as for those enemies of mine and my kingdom of love — those who value selfishness and don't want me for their king — bring them to me; and in my presence they will die.' "

- What are the lessons from this parable?
- Any design laws involved?
- Why will people lose what they don't invest?
- What was the problem with the unfaithful servant?
- Why do the unfaithful die in the end?
- Isn't God's presence the River of Life, which is the River of Fire—so why don't they receive life in this river?



## THURSDAY

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The lesson points our attention to 1 Timothy 6:6-12:

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. (1 Timothy 6:6-12 NIV84).

The lesson then states:

From the biblical perspective, prosperity is having what you need when you need it. It is not the accumulation of possessions. Prosperity is also claiming the promise of God in Philippians 4:19: “My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” Finally, prosperity is to be thankful for what you have in the Lord and trust in Him in all things. (2023 1Q SDA Adult Bible Study Guide page 101).

Is this how you have thought of prosperity? I found this quite comforting, what are your thoughts about this?