



## Small Group Curriculum

# IS GOD'S BLESSING DANGEROUS?

## 1. Caution - danger ahead

### *Deuteronomy 8:1-18*

- Israel was about to inherit the promised land of abundance. **V:1.**
- Israel had learnt many lessons during 40 years of wandering. **V:3.**
- God instructed Israel not to forget Him. **V:11.**
- Wealth and abundance can cause people to forget the Lord. **V:12-14.**
- God warned Israel against thinking their own effort created their blessings. **V:17-18.**

## 2. A hard lesson for Paul

*2 Corinthians 1:8-9 We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. 9 Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But **this** happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.*

- We suffered great hardship and pressure. **V:8.**
- The pressure was beyond our ability to endure. **V:8.**
- So that – we despaired of life. **V:8.**
- We felt it was the 'sentence of death' **V:9.** *A judicial sentence decreed by God.*

- This happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God who raises the dead! **V:9.**

*God was stripping Paul of his 'self-sufficiency'*

### 3. Paul learnt an important lesson

*Philippians 3:3-10. ....4 though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more:..... 7 But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, ..... I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, (About AD 62/63)*

Paul said...

- I had confidence in my heritage, education, skills & self- righteousness. **V:4-6.**
- All my personal achievements are absolute rubbish without any value. **V:7-8.**
- I now have no confidence in myself. **V:7-9.**
- My only hope and value for now and my future is the person of Jesus Christ. **V:8-10.**

### 4. Jesus also warned us

*John 15:1-7 "I am the true vine..... No branch can bear fruit by itself;.... Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me..... apart from me you can do nothing....*

Jesus gave us a story about a viticulturalist and his vines...

- No branch can bear fruit by itself. **V:4.**
- Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain (live) in me. **V:4.**
- Apart from me you can do nothing. **V:5.**

### 5. How shall I then live?

*Galatians 2:2: I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. (KJV)*

*Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (NIV).*

What is the difference between these two translations?

*I live by the faith **OF** the Son of God (KJV, YLT, KJVS, etc) I live by faith **IN** the Son of God (NIV, etc)*

There is a strong argument for the original textual accuracy of the KJV translation: 'the faith of Christ'

- It is 'His faithfulness' as distinct from 'our faith'
- The difference: one has the "faith" as the possession of the
- Son of God, the other has "faith" as the possession of us.

### **A powerful truth and experience**

All that I AM, all that I HAVE and all that I DO is completely dependent upon the Grace of God and the Resurrection Life of Jesus Christ that is at work IN me and THROUGH me that produces GODLY FRUITFULNESS in my life!

### **Summary...**

**The danger:** If our focus is simply upon God's blessing – we can become blinded and begin to rely on our own ability and good works – a dangerous outcome!

**The answer:** To learn that our effort is useless and to live in total surrender and dependence upon God's grace and The Power of the Indwelling Christ!

So - we can say with Paul... I live, yet not I - Christ lives in me...The life I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me!

## **Group Discussion**

1. Discuss the teaching notes on Is God's Blessing Dangerous?  

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2. What are some of the warning signs in our lives to reveal that we are attributing God's blessing to our own skills and abilities? *Duet 8.*  

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3. Why did Paul refer to his own strengths, skills and accomplishments as rubbish in his letter to the Philippians and how do these apply to us? *Phil. 3.*  

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4. What are some of the practical ways by which we can maintain a lifestyle of dependency up God?  

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## **Group Prayer / Needs**

1. Are there any prayer requests from group members that can be prayed for before closing? Are there any needs that the group can help each other with? (*Discuss*)