

# ***Managing for the Master—Till He Comes***

## ***God's Covenant with Us***

Lesson #2 for January 14, 2023

Scriptures: Matthew 6:25-33; 10:22; John 6:29; Deuteronomy 28:1-14; Proverbs 3:1-10; Malachi 3:7-11.

1. This week we will talk about God's covenant, or contract, with us.

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] Amazingly enough, God has made contracts (or covenants) with us. Most are bilateral, meaning that both parties (God and humans) have a part to perform. An example of a bilateral covenant is "If you will do this, then I will do that." Or "I will do this if you will do that."

A rarer type of covenant is unilateral. "I will do this whether you do anything or not." A few of God's covenants with humanity are unilateral. For example, " 'He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust' " (*Matt. 5:45, NKJV*). Following the Flood, God promised humanity and "every beast of the earth" that there would never be another flood to cover all the earth (*see Gen. 9:9–16*), regardless of our actions. He also promised: " 'While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease' " (*Gen. 8:22, NKJV*). The seasons will come and go, regardless of what we do.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Sabbath Afternoon, January 7.<sup>‡§</sup>

2. ***Why is it that things go better when we do God's will? Does He manipulate circumstances? Or, is it possible that doing what is right has its natural benefits? Is doing God's will always the right thing to do? Does doing God's will benefit us?***
3. We will not spend a lot of time this week talking about the unilateral contracts which God has promised. But, what about the bilateral contracts and our part?
4. The most important covenant that God has with us as human beings is the **salvation covenant. It is available to all**; but, the majority of people do not take advantage of it. Those who believe that everyone will eventually be saved and take advantage of this covenant are called *universalists*.
5. Jesus clearly stated that He died for everyone.

**Matthew 7:13-14:** <sup>13</sup> "Go in through the narrow gate, because the gate to hell is wide and the road that leads to it is easy, and there are many who travel it. <sup>14</sup>But the gate to life is narrow and the way that leads to it is hard, and there are few people who find it."—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation\** (2nd ed., Matthew 7:13-14). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].<sup>†‡</sup>

6. ***Why is God's way hard and the gate narrow? Does God intentionally make His way hard? (Matthew 11:30) Does Satan have anything to do with that?***

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] Yet do not therefore conclude that the upward path is the hard and the downward road the easy way. All along the road that leads to death there are pains and penalties, there are sorrows and disappointments, there are warnings not to go on. God's love has made it hard for the heedless and headstrong to destroy themselves. It is true that **Satan's path is made to appear attractive, but it is all a deception**; in the way of evil there are bitter remorse and cankering care.—Ellen G. White, *Mount of Blessing*\* 139.1.†

7. So, how do people receive the gift of salvation in Jesus?

**1 John 5:13:** I am writing this to you so that you may know that you have eternal life—you that believe in the Son of God.—*Good News Bible*.\*†

**Matthew 10:22:** “Everyone will hate you because of me. But whoever holds out to the end will be saved.”—*Good News Bible*.\*

**John 6:29:** Jesus answered, “What God wants you to do is to **believe in the one he sent**.”—*Good News Bible*.\*†

8. ***What does it mean to “believe in Christ”? Don't most Christians and even Muslims believe in Jesus? To believe in Christ means to trust Him with our lives and plans.***

9. When Paul wrote the short book of 2 Timothy, he was imprisoned in the Mamertine prison in Rome, awaiting his execution. He knew that he was about to have his head chopped off by a Roman executioner. But, notice what he said.

**2 Timothy 4:6-8:** <sup>6</sup>For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. <sup>7</sup>I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: <sup>8</sup>Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.—*The Holy Bible: King James Version*.\* (2009). (2 Timothy 4:6-8). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

10. Paul recognized that that crown of righteousness which was awaiting him was the righteousness which he received from Jesus. Each one of us has the opportunity to accept that crown if we trust in and believe in Jesus Christ.

11. ***So, how does one accept the “crown of life” or the “gift of salvation”? What is wrong with “cheap grace”? Isn't grace always cheap? Why would anyone want to refuse such a gift?***

12. The book of Deuteronomy is actually a collection of three sermons given by Moses to the children of Israel while they were camped in the land of Moab across the Jordan River from Jericho. During much of those sermons, he talked about what they had learned from their 40 years of wandering. Deuteronomy is often called the “Book of Remembrance.” But, Moses ended with some very straightforward comments.

**Deuteronomy 28:1-14:** <sup>1</sup> “If you obey the LORD your God and faithfully keep all his commands that I am giving you today, he will make you greater than any other nation on earth. <sup>2</sup>Obey the LORD your God and all these blessings will be yours:

<sup>3</sup> “The LORD will bless your towns and your fields.

<sup>4</sup> “The LORD will bless you with many children, with abundant crops, and with many cattle and sheep.

<sup>5</sup> “The LORD will bless your corn crops and the food you prepare from them.

<sup>6</sup> “The LORD will bless everything you do.

<sup>7</sup> “The LORD will defeat your enemies when they attack you. They will attack from one direction, but they will run from you in all directions.

<sup>8</sup> “The LORD your God will bless your work and fill your barns with corn. He will bless you in the land that he is giving you.

<sup>9</sup> **“If you obey the LORD your God and do everything he commands**, he will make you his own people, as he has promised. <sup>10</sup>Then all the peoples on earth will see that the LORD has chosen you to be his own people, and they will be afraid of you. <sup>11</sup>The LORD will give you many children, many cattle, and abundant crops in the land that he promised your ancestors to give you. <sup>12</sup>He will send rain in season from his rich storehouse in the sky and bless all your work, so that you will lend to many nations, but you will not have to borrow from any. <sup>13</sup>The LORD your God will make you the leader among the nations and not a follower; you will always prosper and never fail if you obey faithfully all his commands that I am giving you today. <sup>14</sup>But you must never disobey them in any way, or worship and serve other gods.”—*Good News Bible*.\*†

13. ***Should Seventh-day Adventists be receiving special blessings from the Lord since we at least claim that we are keeping His commandments? Or, were these promises listed in Deuteronomy 28 only for the Israelites?***
14. Moses assured the children of Israel that it was not too difficult for them to comply with these conditions. Then, in Deuteronomy 28:15-68, (These verses are painful to read!) Moses went on to discuss all the things that would happen if they disobeyed God and refused to follow His guidance! They range from not getting good crops to, finally, eating their own children in a time of famine. They would be conquered by a nation coming from far away. Women giving birth to children would eat those children and even the afterbirth.
15. Could we ever reach the place where we would consider eating a dead relative?
16. The book of Proverbs is a book about wisdom and foolishness. In Proverbs 3:1-10, Solomon told his son that he would need to faithfully follow the instructions he was being given. Furthermore, he needed to trust God with all his heart and never to rely on what he thought. He was told to obey God and refuse to do what was wrong.
17. **So, what does God expect of us? One of the first things that God asks us to do is to set aside 1/10 of our increase for the work of the church.**
18. God is our Creator and our Sustainer. Is it too much for Him to ask that we give that portion to Him? Furthermore, He promises to richly bless us if we do so. He suggests that the 9/10 will end up purchasing for us more than the 10/10 or 100% would have without paying the tithes.

19. What does it mean to say that *we are to give to the Lord the first fruits*?

[EGW:] **Not only does the Lord claim the tithe as his own, but He tells us *how* it should be reserved for him. He says, “Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the *first-fruits* of thine increase.” This does not teach that we are to spend our means on ourselves, and bring to the Lord the remnant, even though it should be otherwise an honest tithe. Let God’s portion be first set apart. The directions given by the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul, in regard to gifts, present a principle that applies also to tithing.** “On the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him.” Parents and children are here included.—Ellen G. White, *The Review and Herald*,\* November 10, 1896, par. 6.<sup>†§</sup> *The Review and Herald*,\* February 4, 1902, par. 7.<sup>€††</sup> *Adventist Home*\* 389.1.<sup>€††</sup>

20. **We are not to spend our money on all the things we think we need and then give God the remnant; we are to give God the first portion.**

21. ***Is it possible that some of us today are losing God’s blessing because we are not setting aside the tithe as the first fruits? Does this mean that we should return our tithes before we use any of our income for other purposes? Would that be true even during times of financial stress? Even during the seven last plagues?***

22. It is very clear in the history of the Israelites that when they followed God’s directions and paid a faithful tithe, they did very well. But, when they turned away from God, disobeyed His commands, and stopped paying a faithful tithe, then they fell on hard times. (See Judges 2-3.)

23. At the end of Old Testament history, we are told:

**Malachi 3:7-11:** <sup>7</sup> “You, like your ancestors before you, have turned away from my laws and have not kept them. Turn back to me, and I will turn to you. But you ask, ‘What must we do to turn back to you?’ <sup>8</sup>I ask you, is it right for a person to cheat God? Of course not, yet **you are cheating me**. ‘How?’ you ask. **In the matter of tithes and offerings.** <sup>9</sup>A curse is on all of you because the whole nation is cheating me. <sup>10</sup>Bring the full amount of your tithes to the Temple, so that there will be plenty of food there. Put me to the test and you will see that I will open the windows of heaven and pour out on you in abundance all kinds of good things. <sup>11</sup>I will not let insects destroy your crops, and your grapevines will be loaded with grapes.”—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup>

24. ***Do you think this passage with its promises applied only to the Israelites? Or, does it also apply to Seventh-day Adventist Christians today?***

25. Could God really pour out so large a blessing on us that we would not have enough room to receive it? What would that mean?

[EGW:] He who gave His only begotten Son to die for you, has made a covenant with you. **He gives you His blessings, and in return He requires you to bring Him your tithes and offerings.** No one will ever dare to say that there was no way in which He could understand in regard

to this matter. God's plan regarding tithes and offerings is definitely stated in the third chapter of Malachi. God calls upon His human agents to be true to the contract He has made with them.—Ellen G. White, *The Review and Herald*,\* December 3, 1901, par. 2.<sup>†</sup> *Counsels on Stewardship*\* 75.1.<sup>††</sup>

26. Near the final days of the nation of Judah during the times of Hezekiah, one of the last good kings, he initiated a true revival and encouraged people to pay a faithful tithe and worship God correctly. And this is what happened:

**2 Chronicles 31:5:** As soon as the order was given, the people of Israel brought gifts of their finest corn, wine, olive oil, honey, and other farm produce, and they also brought the tithes of everything they had.—*Good News Bible*.\*

27. Jesus made some astounding statements to the common people in Galilee.

**Matthew 6:25-33:** <sup>25</sup> “This is why **I tell you not to be worried** about the food and drink you need in order to stay alive, or about clothes for your body. After all, isn't life worth more than food? And isn't the body worth more than clothes? <sup>26</sup>Look at the birds: they do not sow seeds, gather a harvest and put it in barns; yet your Father in heaven takes care of them! Aren't you worth much more than birds? <sup>27</sup>Can any of you live a bit longer by worrying about it?

<sup>28</sup> “And why worry about clothes? Look how the wild flowers grow: they do not work or make clothes for themselves. <sup>29</sup>But I tell you that not even King Solomon with all his wealth had clothes as beautiful as one of these flowers. <sup>30</sup>It is God who clothes the wild grass—grass that is here today and gone tomorrow, burnt up in the oven. Won't he be all the more sure to clothe you? How little faith you have!

<sup>31</sup> “So do not start worrying: ‘Where will my food come from? or my drink? or my clothes?’ <sup>32</sup>(These are the things the pagans are always concerned about.) Your Father in heaven knows that you need all these things. <sup>33</sup>Instead, **be concerned above everything else with the Kingdom of God** and with what he requires of you, and he will provide you with all these other things.”—*Good News Bible*.\*<sup>†</sup> [How do we do that?]<sup>‡</sup>

28. Even in the Old Testament, Isaiah 26:3 tells us the same thing.

**Isaiah 26:3:** You, LORD, give perfect peace to those who keep their purpose firm and put their trust in you.—*Good News Bible*.\*

29. Even in the times of the Old Testament, God promised:

**2 Chronicles 7:14:** “**If they pray to me and repent and turn away from the evil they have been doing**, then I will hear them in heaven, forgive their sins, and make their land prosperous again.”—*Good News Bible*.\*<sup>†</sup>

[EGW:] **Whenever God's people, in any period of the world, have cheerfully and willingly carried out His plan in systematic benevolence [giving God a faithful tithe] and in gifts and offerings, they have realized the standing promise that prosperity should attend all their**

**labors just in proportion as they obeyed His requirements.** When they acknowledged the claims of God and complied with His requirements, honoring Him with their substance, their barns were filled with plenty. **But when they robbed God in tithes and in offerings they were made to realize that they were not only robbing Him but themselves, for He limited His blessings to them just in proportion as they limited their offerings to Him.**—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*,\* vol. 3, 395.4.†‡

30. ***Is there some understanding or agreement in the great controversy that says that God cannot bless us unless we pay our tithes? Or, is God just saying that if we have not done our side of the contract, He “cannot” do His? Is there a reason to have a contract if you do not intend to abide by it?***

31. Some might get the impression that paying a faithful tithe is a part of working our way to heaven. ***Is tithing a part of a “work’s religion”?***

32. We could never earn salvation. Look at Paul’s comments about Abraham.

**Romans 4:1-4:** <sup>1</sup>What shall we say, then, of Abraham, the father of our race? What was his experience? <sup>2</sup>If he was put right with God by the things he did, he would have something to boast about—but not in God’s sight. <sup>3</sup>The scripture says, “Abraham believed God, and because of his faith God accepted him as righteous.” <sup>4</sup>Those who work are paid wages, but they are not regarded as a gift; they are something that has been earned.—*Good News Bible*.\*

33. Some have said that if every Adventist would return a faithful tithe, our church would have more than enough money to do all that it needs to do in spreading the gospel message.

34. Years ago, it was revealed that only about 25% of Adventists actually were returning a faithful tithe. Do you think that is still true today? Or, is it possibly even worse? Do we accept God’s promises? Do we trust His contracts? Contracts involve both sides.

35. Let us never forget that God’s plan of salvation was arranged even before the creation of our world. God knew what was coming!

36. What is included in God’s covenant?

[BSG:] **The covenant contains the law, whether written on stone or in our hearts** (*Deut. 9:11, Heb. 8:10*). Such a divine-human alliance involves on our part diligent obedience, rendered in love, to the law and to the covenant (*1 John 5:3*). Some clauses of this covenant are more extensive, such as the commandment to worship God alone and to love Him above all things (*Deut. 6:5; Matt. 22:36, 37*). But there are also specific commands within the covenant, namely, (1) to turn away from idolatry (*Deut. 31:20*), (2) to keep the Sabbath (*Isa. 56:6*), and (3) to observe certain food laws (*Leviticus 11, Isa. 65:1–5, Isa. 66:15–18*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* 26.†‡§

37. ***Do we earn some “merit” in God’s sight by keeping His commandments? Or, is keeping God’s commandments just the right thing to do?***

38. ***If God knew in advance that the children of Israel would turn away from Him in so many ways and so often, why did He choose to work with them? Were they the best people He could find? Or, were they chosen because they would demonstrate all the good and all the bad practices that God needed to teach us about?***

39. Some of God's instructions are very specific. Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 give very specific instructions about what should be eaten and what should not be eaten.

40. After generations of Israelites had failed to comply with God's commands, Isaiah wrote:

**Isaiah 65:1-5:** <sup>1</sup>The LORD said, "I was ready to answer my people's prayers, but they did not pray. I was ready for them to find me, but they did not even try. The nation did not pray to me, even though I was always ready to answer, 'Here I am; I will help you.' <sup>2</sup>I have always been ready to welcome my people, who stubbornly do what is wrong and go their own way. <sup>3</sup>They shamelessly keep on making me angry. They offer pagan sacrifices in sacred gardens and burn incense on pagan altars. <sup>4</sup>At night they go to caves and tombs to consult the spirits of the dead. They eat pork and drink broth made from meat offered in pagan sacrifices. <sup>5</sup>And then they say to others, 'Keep away from us; we are too holy for you to touch!' **I cannot stand people like that—my anger against them is like a fire that never goes out.**"—*Good News Bible*.\*†

41. And a few verses later, we read:

**Isaiah 66:15-19:** <sup>15</sup> The LORD will come with fire. He will ride on the wings of a storm to punish those he is angry with. <sup>16</sup>By fire and sword he will punish all the people of the world whom he finds guilty—and many will be put to death. <sup>17</sup> The LORD says, "The end is near for those who purify themselves for pagan worship, who go in procession to sacred gardens, and who eat pork and mice and other disgusting foods. <sup>18</sup>I know their thoughts and their deeds. I am coming to gather the people of all the nations. When they come together, they will see what my power can do <sup>19</sup>and will know that I am the one who punishes them."—*Good News Bible*.\*

42. **Does this sound like God is actively punishing those who do not do what He asks?**

When we refuse to follow God's advice in paying tithes, are we violating a contract? Do we thus separate ourselves from the Lord?

[BSG:] God's faithfulness to His covenant is unshakable (*Deut. 4:31*), but we haven't always answered Him with faithfulness in return (*Jer. 11:10*). The One who provides riches also offers grace for obedience, making certain both our calling and election for Christ's kingdom (*2 Pet. 1:10, 11; Rev. 2:10*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* 26.†§

43. Let us try to be very clear about some of the terms that God used in the Bible in reference to us and our relationship to Him.

[BSG:] The word "covenant" (in Hebrew: *berith*) appears approximately 285 times in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, the Greek word for "covenant" is *diatheke*. This word was used in connection with the covenant

between God and His people. (See T. K. Cheyne and J. Sutherland Black, *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, pp. 928, 929.) In modern terms, the word corresponds to a **contract** but also is used for **an alliance, pact, or testament**.

A covenant is not necessarily a law, despite being legally binding on the parties within the terms of the contract. Consequently, a law may sometimes be deemed a contract, given that it is a covenant based on the law. However, law and covenant are conceptually different.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** 26-27.<sup>†§</sup> [The law of gravity is called a *law* because in science that is the way things work!]<sup>‡</sup>

44. If salvation is by grace and is a free gift from God, does that mean that we do not really need to meet the obligations of our covenant with God? That, of course, would be crazy.

45. **While we are saved by faith, it is also true that faith works!**

46. So, how do we develop this kind of excellent relationship with God that will lead to salvation?

**Jeremiah 31:31-34:** <sup>31</sup> The LORD says, “The time is coming when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. <sup>32</sup>It will not be like the old covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and led them out of Egypt. Although I was like a husband to them, they did not keep that covenant. <sup>33</sup>**The new covenant that I will make with the people of Israel will be this: I will put my law within them and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.** <sup>34</sup>**None of them will have to teach his fellow-citizen to know the LORD, because all will know me, from the least to the greatest. I will forgive their sins and I will no longer remember their wrongs. I, the LORD, have spoken.”**—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup>

47. Another concept that we need to understand is the **concept of law**.

[BSG:] **Laws are unilateral decisions from the lawgiver and are not dependent on the other party’s acceptance.** These laws are promulgated by the lawgiver and must be obeyed. We don’t participate in the process of making God’s laws that are part of the divine covenant. It wouldn’t make sense to have a law in a contract that was not meant to be kept. As such, both the old and the new covenants have law and obedience elements (*Heb. 8:8–13*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** 27.<sup>†§</sup>

48. Some of God’s dealings with us are straight promises: God promises to do certain things even if we do nothing.

[BSG:] Similar to a decree, a **promise is unilateral**. God alone may make a promise. Trust in the promise depends on the credibility and ability of the one who promises. God promised and will deliver because He doesn’t lie and never fails. God’s promise of salvation by grace through faith to those who accept His covenant is an assurance for the redeemed (*Heb. 6:13–20, 1 John 2:25*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** 27.<sup>†§</sup>

49. The type of agreement that we have been talking about most of today is a covenant.

[BSG:] **A covenant needs at least two people (bilateral agreement) to be binding.** A covenant is different from a decree or promise in that there is no alliance or covenant without the contractual parties. In this regard, human beings decide whether they want to be part of God's covenant or not. God invites us to enter His covenant, by faith in Christ, so that we may have eternal life (*John 3:16*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* 27.†§

50. Each individual has his responsibilities. That should be clear to Seventh-day Adventists. Remember the last verse in the famous three angels' messages.

**Revelation 14:12:** This calls for endurance on the part of God's people, those who obey God's commandments and are faithful to Jesus.—*Good News Bible*.\*

51. Are we being faithful to Jesus and keeping God's commandments as we should?

52. **Covenants also need to be achievable.**

[BSG:] **Achievable means that the covenant's terms can be fulfilled by both parties.** It doesn't make sense to have a contract with rules that one of the parties is unable to observe. As such, honoring the terms of the covenant simply is doing what God requires by His grace because grace brings forth good works (*Eph. 2:8–10*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* 28.†§

53. **A third important aspect of a covenant is conditionality.**

[BSG:] **Conditionality means that the contract is valid only if there is practical adherence.** Anyone who believes and is faithful will be saved (*Rev. 2:10*) and will be blessed (*Mal. 3:10–12*) because this is part of the contract. There are complementary and basic blessings. **Sin may hamper the receiving of some complementary blessings in this world, but it does not change the basic blessings of salvation if we remain in the faith, according to the contract.**—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* 28.†§

54. And, finally, contracts have cancellation conditions.

[BSG:] **Cancellation conditions** refer to the fact that all contracts provide for cancellation in certain special situations. Such also is the case with God's covenant. The covenant parties who remain in sin may create the cancellation conditions by transgressing specific clauses.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* 28.†§

55. None of us can deny the fact that God bestows on us multiple types of blessings. One of those blessings is material benefits. And God has a work that needs to be carried on through the auspices of the church. He asks us to return, as first fruits, a tithe of our income to support the work of the church on this earth.

56. **Is it true that our relationship to the church as exemplified by our faithful tithing is an indication of our spiritual condition with God?**

57. Returning to the experience of Hezekiah, we notice what the result was when the children of Israel did what God had asked them to do.

**2 Chronicles 31:5-10:** <sup>5</sup>As soon as the order was given, the people of Israel brought gifts of their finest corn, wine, olive oil, honey, and other farm produce, and they also brought the tithes of everything they had. <sup>6</sup>All the people who lived in the cities of Judah brought tithes of their cattle and sheep, and they also brought large quantities of gifts, which they dedicated to the LORD their God... <sup>9</sup>The king spoke to the priests and the Levites about these gifts, <sup>10</sup>and Azariah the High Priest, a descendant of Zadok, said to him, "Since the people started bringing their gifts to the Temple, there has been enough to eat and a large surplus besides. We have all this because the LORD has blessed his people."—*Good News Bible*.\*

58. ***Is it reasonable to suggest that being faithful with our material possessions is a way of honoring God?***

59. Paying a faithful tithe as the first fruits of our increase is what God asks of us. There should be no excuse for invalidating that agreement with God. And there should be no excuse for withholding from Him any condition of our contract.

60. Consider these words from Ellen White.

[EGW:] **Let those who have become careless and indifferent, and are withholding their tithes and offerings, remember that they are blocking the way, so that the truth cannot go forth to the regions beyond.** I am bidden to call upon the people of God to redeem their honor by rendering to God a faithful tithe.—Manuscript 44, 1905.—Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Stewardship*\* 96.3.†‡

61. What is implied by the words *careless and indifferent*? And what about the words *blocking the way*? Could these words apply to us in our faithfulness?

[EGW:] **Every man should freely and willingly and gladly bring tithes and offerings into the storehouse of the Lord, because in so doing there is a blessing.**—Manuscript 159, 1899.—Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Stewardship*\* 66.4-67.0.†‡

62. Is it your experience when it comes time to pay your tithes and offerings that you are obviously blessed?

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