WHEN BLESSINGS BECOME CURSES

When he was a young Australian entrepreneur, Julian Archer escorted mafia drug dealers around Italy, negotiated with terrorists in the Himalayas, and made millions of dollars. Now as a regional leader for the Adventist Church, Julian believes that when a person is financially blessed, they’re in the most spiritually dangerous stage of life. “The richer I became, the less I felt my need for God,” said Julian. “I wanted to put God first, but I had so many other pressing priorities—and I really loved money and all that it gave me,” he added.

Being a church member, he knew that Jesus asked the question “What profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?” (Matt. 16:26, NKJV). He also knew that Jesus said that we can’t love both God and money. He finally realized that being a church member didn’t necessarily prevent anyone from loving money.

By God’s grace, Julian accepted His invitation to follow Jesus wherever He led. “As a result, we sold the family business, increased our systematic and sacrificial giving to God’s priorities, and started to put God first.” “I still struggle to keep my eyes on Jesus every moment of every day,” says Julian, “but I have learned this powerful lesson: As my blessings go up, my knees must go down.”

Understanding the risk of being blessed, Julian listened to Jesus’ invitation and surrendered his life to Him. This week’s narrative will focus on a biblical character that was also blessed, heard Jesus’ call, but failed to follow Him. How can we learn from his mistake, and make right decisions while it is still time?
Write out Matthew 19:16–22 from the translation of your choice. If you’re pressed for time, write out Matthew 19:21, 22. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, outline, or mind-map it.
Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

**Circle** repeated words/phrases/ideas

**Underline** words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you

Draw **Arrows** to connect words/phrases to other associated or related words/phrases

What special insights do your marks seem overall to point to?

Memorize your favorite verse in Matthew 19:16–22. Write it out multiple times to help with memorization.

How can someone seriously develop more trust in Him?

What is Jesus asking me to surrender that may increase my love for Him and for those in need?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/stw12-3
After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks seem to point to overall?

What questions emerge after studying this passage? What parts are difficult?

What other principles and conclusions do you find?

How can we avoid the Laodicean trap of being religions without having a vivid connection with Christ?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/stw12-4
What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

- Amos 5:11, 12
- Ephesians 2:8–10
- Colossians 3:14
- Ezekiel 16:49, 50
- Proverbs 19:17
- Proverbs 11:24, 25
- Matthew 25:31–46
- Matthew 19:28, 29

What other narratives come to mind in connection with Matthew 19:16–22?

Review your memorized verse from Matthew 19:16–22
Meditate on Matthew 19:16–22 again and look for where Jesus is.

Is there any difference between surrendering all things to Jesus and giving them to Him?

How do you see Jesus differently or see Him again?

Prayer: How do you respond to seeing Jesus in this way?
Review the memory verse. How does it apply to your life this week?

After this week’s study, what are personal applications you are convicted of in your life?

What are practical applications you must make in your family?

Read more inSight from the Spirit of Prophecy at www.insidebible.org/stw12-7
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Share insights from this week’s memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.

Which part of my life is God inviting me to surrender to Him now?
Physical impulses, a relationship, a job, finances, properties, Sabbathkeeping, health habits, entertainment, what else?

In your opinion, which is more dangerous to spiritual life: prosperity or poverty? Why?

While we are blessed by God, how can we prevent the heart being filled with God’s blessings instead of God Himself? What spiritual disciplines may help us to put things in the right perspective?

What do you believe are the conditions for God’s children to be instructed by Him about when and how much of their properties should they sell and apply in the cause? How can we hear God’s voice?

What are your major takeaways from this quarter on stewardship?