



## WEEK 2 : "CONSUME FAIRLY"

Sunday, August 9, 2009

### BULLEEN BAPTIST CHURCH

Cnr Marcus and Thompsons Roads,  
LOWER TEMPLESTOWE VIC 3017

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### Introducing the 50:50 Studies

We will be following the 50:50 themes in the five Sundays in August. This 5 week teaching and study program helps churches and individuals seek God's view on the poor and sets out practical ways that Christians can respond and make a difference. Each Sunday's teaching session is supplemented by linked Small Group Studies during the week.

These Studies have been prepared by the Australian staff of Baptist World Aid to celebrate 50 years of working on behalf of Australian Baptists with the world's poor, helping them to life themselves out of extreme poverty.

Check out Baptist World Aid Australia's website at [www.shareanopportunity.org](http://www.shareanopportunity.org) and click on the 50:50 graphic on the home page of our website to go straight to the 50:50 website to explore the information, links and resources there as well.

## 1. GOD'S GIFT

### A. An ABUNDANT World ...

God makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate  
- bringing forth food from the earth; **Psalm 104:14**

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. **Gen1:31**

### B. ... For All Of Us To ENJOY.

God ... bringing forth food from the earth; wine that gladdens the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread that sustains his heart. **Psalm 104:14-15**

It is good and proper for a man to eat and drink, and to find satisfaction in his hard work ... moreover, when God gives a man wealth and possessions, and enables him to enjoy them ... this is a gift of God. **Ecc5:18-19**

God created a world filled with resources for our good ... and our pleasure! Harvesting and using those resources to sustain life is the gift of God to us all.

## 2. OUR RESPONSE

### A. SATISFACTION and JOY (see Ecc5:18-19, above) and

God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. **1Tim6:15b**

### B. CONTENTMENT in all circumstances

... I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength. **Php4:11-13**

### C. THANKSGIVING to God the Provider

the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land - a land with streams and pools of water, with springs flowing in the valleys and hills; a land with wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey; a land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing; a land where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper out of the hills. When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God **Deut8:7-10**

### 3. THE GREAT DANGER

People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. **1Tim6:9**

In this fallen world, God's good and perfect gifts can become distorted and abused. Instead of the responses, outlined above, we can easily find some more ugly alternatives:

#### A. GREED

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. **1Tim6:9-10**

Whoever loves money never has money enough;  
whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. **Ecc5:10**

#### B. ARROGANCE and PRIDE

... Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.

Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God ... for when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery ... you may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." .... **from Deut8:11-17**

#### C. VANITY

For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. **1Tim6:7**

As goods increase, so do those who consume them. And what benefit are they to the owner except to feast his eyes on them? **Ecc5:11**

#### D. SELFISHNESS and INDIFFERENCE

The Lord Almighty ... looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress. Woe to you who add house to house and join field to field till no space is left. **Is5:7-8**

Now listen, you rich, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you ... You have hoarded wealth in the last days. Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who harvested your fields are crying out against you. Their cries have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. ... **from Jam5:1-5**

### AN EXERCISE TODAY

Stop and read through the completed section, above. There are two questions to ask:

**QUESTION 1** : "To what extent do I embrace these "ugly alternatives?"

("How accurately do they describe me?")

**QUESTION 2** : "What can I do to change more into the person that God would have me be?"

This will be a personal journey with the Lord that will extend beyond today! - two suggestions:

**SUGGESTION 1 : Consume LESS.** "Beyond my 'Essential Spending' (money spent on the BASICS to function in our society), what actions can I take to divert some of my 'Discretionary Spending' (money spent on things I enjoy but that are not ESSENTIAL to my wellbeing) to generous giving to the poor that will help lift them, their families and communities out of poverty)

**SUGGESTION 2 : Consume FAIRLY.** Many goods that we consume come from developing countries, and our consumption helps lift those countries from poverty - investment, work, new skills, infrastructure etc. But many people are caught in unjust pricing and labour conditions that do not provide a "livable" wage for even the most basic necessities.

"I will take advantage of the resources available to educate myself about such practices and will endeavour to buy goods that have returned a fair wage (in fair conditions) to those who have worked to produce them."