

# SOLVING STRUGGLES

## In Interpersonal Relationships

**“Learning to Live, Love and Listen to Each Other”**

**Ingredient #6: INTEGRITY – GOD IS FAIR – Matthew 20:1-16**

Our Heavenly Father, we thank You for the presence of Your Spirit and ask that You will guide us into truth and understanding. We pray that from this study You will lift some principles, some thoughts and some ideas that will edify us, that will exhort us, that will encourage us and will be an example and a challenge to us. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Here’s a good illustration to begin our study:

(Integrity by Ted W. Engstrom with Robert C. Larson)

It was a chilly Tuesday morning, 28 of January, 1986, when Christa McAuliff climbed aboard the Challenger space shuttle for her historic mission as the first citizen in space. She was a teacher. I only pray that we learned something about the consequences of getting an “F” in integrity. The weather was cold, but unbeknownst to the rest of the nation a group of engineers was fighting back the hot sweat of worried anticipation. Would the booster seals hold in this kind of weather? Was it safe to launch? Knowledgeable engineers and

designers said, “No.” Influential executives and planners said, “Yes.”

Power overruled reason. Integrity was the victim. After seventy seconds of flight, a faulty booster rocket ignited millions of gallons of rocket fuel into a blinding explosion. Debris rained on the Florida waters for a solid hour. At first we believed that Christa and the other six crew members perished instantly at the moment of explosion. Upon examination of the cabin remains, we have since learned they may have endured almost three-and-a-half minutes of terrifying freefall before smashing into the Atlantic Ocean at 200 miles per hour. I only wish these words about the urgent need for integrity could carry that same force of impact.

pp. 6-7

There are a lot of books on the subject. We’ve had a crisis of integrity in the Christian community, both financially and morally.

What is integrity? Let’s define it first. Integrity is a person characterized by making the right decisions under pressure.

Now biblical illustrations. There is Joseph in the Old Testament and a Joseph in the New Testament. They are both great illustrations of integrity.

Joseph in the Old Testament has a chance to have an affair with his boss’ wife and his integrity says, “I cannot sin and do this great sin, or this great thing against God.”

Joseph of the New Testament finds out that his wife is pregnant

and the pressure is divorce. When he hears from the angel of the Lord, he makes the right decision in that pressured circumstance.

Then there's Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 20. The enemy's coming from the South, the enemy's coming from the North, from the East and the West. And what does Jehoshaphat do? He proclaims a fast and he calls upon the Lord his God. What a fantastic man of integrity in a crisis, to call upon the Lord.

Then Jesus is another great illustration of integrity. The perfect example is in Matthew chapter 4. Every time Satan thrusts at Him a pressurized request, the Lord responds with statements from the word of God.

For instance, he says, "Turn these stones into bread, then You can eat." After 40 days in the wilderness without anything to eat, that's a great idea and He could do it. But what does He say? "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." He denies His own physical needs at the moment, not acting independent of the Father in these circumstances to provide for His own needs. He says no.

The second time he says, "Cast yourself off the pinnacle of the temple. After all, the angels will bear You up on their wings." Again, He parries him with another passage of scripture. As he shows Him all the kingdoms of the world, He says, "I'll give You all these if You'll fall down and worship me." The Lord Jesus says, "Go. Be gone. The Lord your God you shall worship and Him only shall you serve."

So we have the epitome of integrity in those pressurized circumstances where the individual does not yield to the pressure, does not deny his convictions because of personal needs or personal desires.

What we're going to do is look at a parable that helps us understand how even against the flood tide of human opinion, the owner of the vineyard is a man of integrity.

Before we get into chapter 20 we have to talk about chapter 19. This is the passage that precedes it. We have the encounter with the rich young ruler and when he left after the Lord said, "Go sell all that you have and then, come follow Me."

When the young man heard that statement he went away grieved because he had a lot of wealth and riches. Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I say to you, it's hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

When the disciples heard this—here comes the transition—they were astonished and said, "Then who can be saved?" And looking upon them, Jesus said to them, "With man, this is impossible but with God, all things are possible."

Here comes Peter's question that leads to the parable that we're going to look at.

Then Peter answered and said to Him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed You. What then will there be for us?"

”If the rich man can sell everything he has and comes and follows You, Lord, I just want to remind You, we did it . . . we gave everything up. You know we gave away our fishing nets and our fishing boats and there must really be something in this for us? After all, we’re the guys in the white hats. We did the right thing, so obviously You’re going to really reward us, right?”

Well, Jesus said to them, “Truly I say to you that you who have followed Me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on His glorious throne, you also will sit upon 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My sake, shall receive many times as much and he shall inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last. And the last will be first.”

That’s going to be said three times in the parable. That’s your key phrase. “Those who think they’re going to be first are going to be last. And those who are last are going to be first.”

Let’s outline the verses because that’s the last verse that comes before the parable. The key thought out of Peter’s statement is: “what then will there be for us because we have sacrificed everything to follow You?”

Here are three points to outline the passage:

1. The WORK—verses 1-7
2. The WAGES—verses 8-10

### 3. The WISDOM—verses 11-16

We can also homilitize the passage in several ways:

#### 1. The PERFORMANCE

#### 2. The PAY

#### 3. The POINT

OR

#### 1. The JOB

#### 2. The JURY

#### 3. The JUSTICE

OR

#### 1. The RIGORS

#### 2. The RENUMERATION

#### 3. The RESPONSE

OR

#### 1. The SERVICE

2. The SALARY

3. The STATEMENT

OR

1. The TOIL

2. The TREATMENT

3. The TRIAL

Basically there are three parts to the passage and the crisis of integrity is going to be manifest here when pressure is put on this guy who owns the vineyard.

The crisis of integrity comes when we forget that we are servants. Think about that for a minute. The crisis of integrity comes in our lives when we forget that we're servants.

Why does a mid-life crisis for a man sometimes lead to a divorce, change of job and everything else in reorientation in his life? Because he's forgotten what he's here for. He now thinks that he deserves to be served rather than to serve anymore. And that's a crisis of integrity. He's willing to throw away his marriage, he's willing to throw in his job because he's sick and tired of responsibility and serving everybody else.

You have a crisis of integrity the minute you get up in the morning and you forget that the only reason that you're here is to serve and to give. When you stop living by that principle you

become a taker. And when you become a taker, integrity is lost because you have forgotten why you're here.

Here are some illustrations:

Self-interest destroys integrity in a guy like Gehazi. Here's Elisha's servant and Naaman has come down from the North and experienced the healing for his leprosy. He begs Elisha to give him something. And Elisha says, "Far be it from me to take anything from you. God is the one that's healed you and I don't want any personal benefit from this."

Gehazi the servant is listening to all that. No sooner does Naaman's chariot head down the road and Gehazi's hot to trot, he . . . runs down there and he lies to him. He says, "Elisha sent me and he said that some prophets have come and they need some changes of clothes." Naaman gives him everything. There's a crisis of integrity. He's thinking only of himself.

We see the very same thing in Samson. Samson forgot that he was God's man and he began being more concerned about his physical desires than he was his spiritual mission. He lost it all in the lap of Dalila.

Those are some of the major reasons why we have a crisis of integrity. It's a wrong mental orientation, it's a change from being a servant to being selfish.

If there are some problems in a marriage it's because of selfishness. It's because of someone saying, "I've got these needs. You meet my needs. If you meet my needs, it's okay."

We commit ourselves to one another to meet each other's needs rather than you meet my needs. Our responsibility is to wake up every morning and say, "How can I meet your needs? How can I be to you what you need me to be?" Then out of that comes meaningful exchange in relationships.

Philippians 2 is probably the greatest passage of scripture to turn to along that line:

### Philippians 2:4-8

Do not merely look out for your own personal interests but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant and He was made in the likeness of men; and being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Christ is the epitome of a self-sacrificial servant, "even to death on a cross." Then drop down to verse 17 of Philippians 2 and Paul says,

### Philippians 2:17

If I'm poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and the service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all.

And then:

## Philippians 2:20, 21

I have no one else of kindred spirit who would genuinely be concerned for your welfare, for they all seek after their own interest, not those of Christ.

That's Timothy.

## Mark 10:45

For even the Son of man did not come to be served but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many.

When it came right down to it, Mark 10:45 holds the keys to integrity. Jesus Christ said, "I came not to be ministered unto but to minister, or to serve and to give My life a ransom for many."

If you've got a right orientation for good interpersonal relationships and you want to be characterized as a person of integrity, you've got to ask yourself the question, "How can I serve and what can I give?"

Never a thought that Peter expresses of "What am I getting for my great sacrifice?" That's basically what he was saying, wasn't it? He says, "Boy, we really did give a lot, Lord. And what are we going to get in return for what we gave?"

We're here with one purpose in mind, with nothing to get in return but what we can give and how can we serve.

Listen to what 1 Corinthians 13 says about this. If you really are motivated by love, if I give all my possessions to feed the poor and I deliver my body to be burned but I don't have love, it profits me nothing. I get zip on my scorecard. The manifestation of integrity, if you have learned one thing, that is to sacrifice your personal interests for the benefit of others. You've learned what it is to serve and give. So when you're put in a pressured situation you're only thinking about serving and giving, not the possibility of what you're personally going to get from this relationship or from this encounter but rather what you are able to give.

**v. 1 For the kingdom of heaven is like a man, a master of a house, who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.**

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a man, a master of a house, who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.”

The first are going to be last and the last are going to be first. Keep those thoughts in the back of your mind now as He tells this little parable.

“the kingdom of heaven”

We learned in our last study that “the kingdom of heaven” is that which characterizes the period from the time the King is rejected when He dies on Calvary until He comes back again to set up His kingdom which is in the future.

“kingdom of heaven” refers to the period of time when the King is absent. Now what’s the picture? Here is a landowner. Evidently he has a huge vineyard that is ripe for harvest and it’s time to pick the fruit. He goes down to the employment office early in the morning. He probably thinks in terms of work from 6 to 6. We’re going to start at 6 am with the first group and it looks like we’re going to end about 6 pm so it’s going to be a 12-hour day working in the harvest fields.

He goes to hire people to start working for him at 6 am in the morning. He’s going to hire some laborers. Now many of these parables center around the vineyard. This just happens to be another one. This is the local employment office and he’s looking for men to come and work in his vineyard.

**v. 2 And having agreed with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard.**

“And having agreed with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard.”

There’s something distinctive about this first group that’s not true of any of the other groups. He is working with them on a contractual arrangement. With the Lord if you want a contractual arrangement and you’re going to get something out of your sacrifices, that’s one thing.

The first group illustrates that. He said to them, “You want to work for me today?” They said, “We want to work for you today.” “Is a fair wage a denarius?” “Yes.” That’s an average day’s wage.

“So, for a denarius you come and work in my vineyard for a day.”

Now in this situation, they have negotiated with him for a contract. That’s exactly the same thing that’s happening in big time athletics. We no longer have commitment to athletics, to winning and to fairness. We now go for contracts. We see that in professional baseball. It’s all money and contracts.

That’s what these guys want in this first group. They want to have a contract. They’re the only ones with one. They’re concerned about what they’re going to get. So the 6 am group goes to work.

**v. 3 And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing unemployed in the market place.**

“And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing unemployed in the market place.”

What he does is about 9 o’clock. It’s time for a coffee break. He decides we’re not making enough progress and I could really use some more laborers. So at 9 am he goes back to the employment office and there are a bunch of guys still standing around.

**v. 4 And so he says to them, “You too be going into the vineyard, and whatever is fair, I will give you.’ And so they went.”**

“And so he says to them, ‘You too be going into the vineyard, and whatever is fair,’—now get this—“I will give you.’ And so they went.”

Now what's the difference between group 2 and group 1? The difference is "whatever is fair, I will give you."

You have to realize that this landowner belongs in Correct Positive Thinking/Feeling/Acting. He obviously has a good reputation, is a man of integrity, a good steward, a good landowner, has an excellent vineyard, and a tremendous record and reputation with the people in the city. When they go to work at 9 o'clock he says, "We'll settle on whatever is fair, I'll give you." That is integrity. He will make a fair and a right decision at the end of the day. That's what integrity is all about.

**v. 5 And again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did the same thing.**

"And again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did the same thing."

Do you have the picture?

Group 1 – 6:00 am.

Group 2 – 9:00 am.

He goes up at lunch time and there's still a bunch of people there and he does the same thing with them by saying, "Whatever is fair, I'll pay you. Go to work."

Then he goes at the 3:00 coffee break and there's still some more guys that haven't worked and he says, "Whatever's fair, I'll pay

to you.”

So now we've got FOUR GROUPS of laborers in the field. You've got the 6 a.m.'s, the 9 a.m.'s, the 12 noon's and the 3 p.m.'s are out there working. Now he isn't done yet.

**v. 6 And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing; and he is saying to them: 'Why have you been standing here unemployed all day long?'**

“And about the eleventh hour,”—5:00 in the afternoon--“he went out and found others standing; and he is saying to them: ‘Why have you been standing here unemployed all day long?’”—5:00 in the afternoon.

**v. 7 They are saying to him: “Because no one hired us.” He is saying to them, “You also be going into the vineyard.”**

“They are saying to him: ‘Because no one hired us.’ He is saying to them, ‘You also be going into the vineyard.’”

And it doesn't say but he says, “And whatever is fair, I'll give you.”

In summary we've got 5 different groups who are working in the vineyard harvesting the grapes. You've got the 6 a.m., the 9 a.m., the 12 noon, the 3 p.m. and the 5 p.m. group. Now we've got those 5 groups out there.

Let's move now from the WORK to the WAGES because here

comes the demonstration of not yielding to the pressure that being a man of integrity who is fair in what he does. You cannot help but see everything about this land owner as being in the upper left-hand corner on your chart. There are a lot of words that characterize him when you watch these wages.

## II. THE WAGES—verses 8-10

**v. 8 Now, even having come, the owner of the vineyard is saying to his foreman, “Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last group to the first.”**

“Now, even having come, the owner of the vineyard is saying to his foreman, ‘Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last group to the first.’”

In other words, there’s a reason for this because the first will be last and the last will be first. We know that if he had paid the first group first, we wouldn’t have learned a thing. But what we’re going to get ready for here is the gigantic build up.

Let’s say that you’re the 3:00 group in the afternoon or you’re the 12:00 noon group or you’re the 9:00 a.m. group. This last group that just got hired is going to get their salary first. That is what he has told the foreman to do when they were paid their wages.

He says, “Call the laborers and then pay them their wages but I want you to start with that last group and pay them first.”

Isn't that the way the Lord does things?

Isaiah 55:8, 9

“My thoughts are not your thoughts, Neither are your ways my ways,” saith the Lord. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.”

He does it that way to let us know that He's around. We're going to pay these groups in reverse order. Those who have worked one hour get paid first, those who worked 3 hours are going to get paid second. Those who have worked 6 hours, those who have worked 9 hours and finally the last group to get their salary is going to be those who have worked 12 hours.

That's going to be “the first will be last and the last shall be first.” This is what they're going to get for their work. This is so fantastic. The Lord's got a great sense of humor.

**v. 9 And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each one received a denarius.**

“And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each one received a denarius.”

What happened instantaneously as soon as all of the other laborers saw the one hour workers get a denarius? Man, the 3 hours' are saying, “Three denarius.” The 6 hours' are saying, “Six.” The 9 hours' are saying, “Nine.” And then the 12 hours' are saying, “Twelve denarius! Man, we're rich. We won't have to

Copyright © 2022 by Bible Teaching Resources by Don Anderson Ministries. The author's teacher notes incorporate quoted, paraphrased and summarized material from a variety of sources, all of which have been appropriately credited to the best of our ability. Quotations particularly reside within the realm of fair use. It is the nature of teacher notes to contain references that may prove difficult to accurately attribute. Any use of material without proper citation is unintentional. Teacher notes have been compiled by Ronnie Marroquin.

work for 2 weeks!”

Their assumption, their enthusiasm, their excitement is just incredible because of what this first group received.

**v. 10 And when those hired first came, they thought that they would receive more; and they also received each one a denarius.**

“And when those hired first came, they thought that they would receive more; and they also received each one a denarius.”

He doesn't mention groups 2, 3 or 4. It's no big deal. It's the first group and the last group that are the heart of the parable so he doesn't bother to say that he paid a denarius to all of them that worked. He focuses on just the first and the last because they are the only two that are important in the story.

It's like the Olympic games.

“The thrill of victory and the agony of defeat.”

Let's change that to “The horrible agony of assumption.”

There's going to be a lot of people who are going to face heaven with the horrible agony of assumption.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus says “Many will say unto Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, haven't we done many wonderful works?’ And I will say, ‘Depart from Me. I never knew you.’”

That is the agony of assumption. That is assuming that we have it all together and we're right with God and we're doing it all right. And God is obligated to reward us. There are going to be people who will have to face that horrible, horrible agony of assumption.

What does that say about Peter's question? Peter assumes that since they have left all to follow the Lord, they're going to receive more because of their sacrificial commitment to Him.

If we're working on the basis of a contract and we're in ministry for what we're going to get out of it, that is a totally wrong motivation for service. There's absolutely no place in ministry for what we're going to get out of what we give. This is not a right attitude for a servant of the Lord.

It's the same wrong attitude in salvation. If you think that because of you're good works and the things you've done and the churches you've gone to and the money you've given and those things are going to get you into heaven, you better watch it. God is not obligated to give us anything. He will not recognize any of our works.

### Ephesians 2:8-9

For by grace we have been saved through faith and that not of ourselves. It's a gift of God not of works lest any man should boast.

We can take this parable as a strong warning to the disciples about a wrong attitude in service. Integrity flows right out of

this. They all received a denarius.

We've had the WORK. We've had the WAGES. Now here comes the WISDOM.

The Lord always applies it in the last verses. What is the lesson? What is the point? How is justice meted out in this situation? What is the response here? What is the Lord trying to teach?

### III. The WISDOM— verses 11-16

#### **v. 11 And when they received it, they were grumbling against the landowner.**

“And when they received it, they were grumbling against the landowner.”

As they have a denarius in their hand, they have a murmur in their mouth. They are really upset with this landowner. What is the basis of their complaint?

#### **v. 12 saying, “These who were last worked one hour, and you made them equal to us who bore the burden and the scorching heat of the day”**

“saying, “These who were last worked one hour, and you made them equal to us who bore the burden and the scorching heat of the day.””

In other words, they worked one hour, we worked twelve hours. Where is the justice?

There is your key. It's the last group and the first group that are the issue here. The other two are just to help tell the story, but the content of the complaint has to do with the one hour workers.

**v. 13 But he answered and said to one of them, “Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius?”**

“But he answered and said to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius?’”

You can see these grape pickers. They've evidently got a union representative from the Consolidated Grape Pickers Union and he's come and he said, “What is the deal about a denarius for 12 hours and a denarius for one hour? That's not fair.”

“Did you not agree with me for a denarius?” That's what the owner says here.

The answer to that is yes. What is the land owner saying? “In justice and in fairness a bargain is a bargain. Since you held me to it before you went to work I'm going to hold you to it after you cease your work. If you want it to be a denarius, then I'm going to hold you to it. That's exactly what I said I would do.”

**v. 14 Take what is yours and be going on your way, but I am desiring to give to this last man as I also gave to you.**

“Take what is yours and be going on your way, but I am desiring to give to this last man as I also gave to you.”

“I am not going to be intimidated or driven from my liberality. What I want to do with what I have is my business and a cup of cold water given in His name is not going to go unnoticed.”

That is real integrity.

**v. 15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I am desiring with what is my own? Or is your eye envious because I am generous?”**

“Is it not lawful for me to do what I am desiring with what is my own? Or is your eye envious because I am generous?”

We have two big questions here.

Go over to the chart and see where to put this land owner. What are some of the words that describe him? We have him in the upper left in the Correct Positive Thinking/Feeling/Acting. Independence, a good one. Good sense. He’s a steward. He’s an example. Competent. He has significance, doesn’t he? Joy. Happiness. Peace. He demonstrates compassion for those who come for just an hour, or for those that worked 3 or 6 or 9. He demonstrates love.

There are a lot of those words that are clustered in that upper left-hand corner. Integrity is a key ingredient in good interpersonal relationships and integrity is the product of learning to face every day as a servant and a giver and not what

Copyright © 2022 by Bible Teaching Resources by Don Anderson Ministries. The author's teacher notes incorporate quoted, paraphrased and summarized material from a variety of sources, all of which have been appropriately credited to the best of our ability. Quotations particularly reside within the realm of fair use. It is the nature of teacher notes to contain references that may prove difficult to accurately attribute. Any use of material without proper citation is unintentional. Teacher notes have been compiled by Ronnie Marroquin.

am I going to get for myself.

**v. 15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I am desiring with what is my own? Or is your eye envious because I am generous?**

“Is it not lawful for me to do what I am desiring with what is my own? Or is your eye envious because I am generous?”

Maybe you find yourself feeling inside a little bit of envy because of what somebody else has. Or maybe you don't have the same level of living. Or you're not loaded with the same talents and you find yourself not living in contentment with the Father's curriculum that's designed for your spiritual development. You're frustrated and miserable because everything isn't going according to your liking.

May God deal with it if that's the case. Trust Him and realize that in His marvelous grace, He's provided abundantly for us.

**v. 16 Thus the last shall be first and the first last.**

“Thus the last shall be first and the first last.”

Now there are some who translate this last phrase and add another phrase to it. Some of the manuscripts read this way: “Many are called to be servants, few are choice servants.”

There are ordinary servants and then there are choice servants. That really makes this come alive doesn't it? It makes us realize that servanthood is indeed a mark of integrity and that's the

distinction in this parable.

If you're always concerned about what you're going to get and it degenerates to a contract instead of an unconditional commitment, that you're sacrificially giving of yourself, then these things are going to be true.

The first are going to be last and the last are going to be first.

### 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15

For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all. Therefore, all died. And he died for all that they who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died and rose again on their behalf.

### Ephesians 6:6-8

Not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ doing the will of God from the heart. With good will render service as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.

What the disciples have been taught here is that they've got to get rid of selfish pride and ambition in their service for the Lord or they're going to lose their integrity in the process.

The big question is, what is it that He wants us to do? Another big principle that comes out of this is that you can trust the Lord that He's going to reward. He's going to do "exceeding abundant

above all we ask or think” (Ephesians 3:20).

## Genesis 18:25

“Shall not the Judge of all the earth do that which is right.”

The right attitude in serving the Lord is a revealer of our integrity. Are you motivated by your love for Christ and your desire to be a pleasure to Him? And your willingness to serve the Lord where ever He puts you? If so, you are a person of integrity. Service is not going to be service if you’re concerned about what you’re going to get for what you do.

Elisabeth Elliott wrote a book called *Discipline: The Glad Surrender*. In it she tells the story of a man who wants to serve his wife a little bit:

### (Discipline: The Glad Surrender by Elisabeth Elliot)

A couple I know had been married only a week or two when the wife went out shopping. The husband wondered what he might do for her while she was gone that would please and surprise her and show her how much he loved her. A brilliant plan came to mind. He got down on hands and knees and he scrubbed the kitchen floor. It was a demeaning task, in his opinion, and he felt exceedingly humble while he was performing it. How amazed Ann would be! He waited in eager anticipation of her return, thinking how blessed it is to give.

She drove into the driveway, breezed into the kitchen, set the grocery bags on the counter and glanced at the floor. “Oh, the floor’s clean. Thank you honey” was all she said and went

about putting everything away.

The man told me that he went into a three-day funk. He was hurt; he was insulted; he was not properly appreciated, and the blessing of giving drained out in an instant because he had not received the kind of thanks that he had expected.

He now believes that it would be wise for every Christian to post as his motto the lesson Jesus taught: We are servants and deserve no credit. We have only done our duty.

(source unknown)

Why can't we learn that? To take the towel in the upper room and wash some dirty feet and not expect to have to do it before an audience so the rest of the world can appreciate it? The sacrifices we're making.

One poet put it this way:

Where shall I work, dear Lord?  
And my love flowed warm and free.  
Then the Lord pointed out a tiny place and said,  
Tend that for me.

I cried, Oh, no, not over there!  
Why no one would ever see,  
No matter how well my work was done,  
Not that little place for me.

When the Lord spoke, he was not harsh.  
He answered me tenderly.  
Tell me, precious child of mine,  
Are you working for them or for me?"

Nazareth was a little place and so was Galilee.  
(source unknown)

The contract here immediately brings in the leaven of self-righteousness. It brings in what we deserve for the sacrifices we're making. Four of those five groups did not know what their wages were going to be but they did know the master and they trusted him and his integrity.

What is the Lord telling us in the parable? The challenge for each of us is to let God write the contract and pay the wages because He's just and generous. He'll always do beyond our fondest dreams and expectations. He loads us with the wonderful little things that we need at critical times.

When we really begin to trust God, He just does those special things along the way. He's just saying, "You know, I'm noticing you and I can sense you're a little weary. I want to just encourage you a little bit."

That's the way God does it. Let Him write the contract. Let Him take care of all these things because He does it. He is generous.

That's Correct Positive Thinking/Feeling/Acting. It leads to integrity which is the greatest magnitude in the study.

Perhaps the Lord is talking to you. Maybe you feel like a Christian that's been working for 12 hours and you've born the heat of the day and you really deserve a lot more from the Lord than you're getting. Just remember, fidelity to opportunity given

to you by the Lord. He recognizes that and He's going to take care of that. All the service ranks the same to God. God in His marvelous grace is going to take care of you. It's the spirit of work that is done and whether you are desirous of pleasing Him.

Here are a few lessons from our study together.

Lesson #1: The true spirit of a servant is his love for Christ.

Lesson #2: It is not what will I get, but what can I give that is a mark of integrity.

Lesson #3: God is sovereign and He will reward as He sees fit.

Lesson #4: Faithfulness to the opportunity that God has given is the most important thing.

Lesson #5: Contentment with the Father's curriculum is critical. Am I satisfied? "Godliness with contentment is great gain."

Lesson #6: The agony of assumption is clearly taught in this passage.

Lesson #7: The Lord is both generous and just in this passage.

Lesson #8: Leaving matters in His hands is the safest place to leave them.

### Revelation 22:12

Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to

render to every man according to what he has done.

Maybe you feel like you're one of the eleventh hour individuals. You don't have a lot of time. You've wasted a lot of it and you're feeling like God doesn't have a place for you.

As long as there's time, it's never too late. There is just an hour here for these. And they are the ones who became first. The ones who worked long and labored hard were listed as the last and you could be at the front of the line on payday if you're willing to begin to live by the laws of integrity. And that is to learn what it really is to serve and to give. And to have the mentality that wakes up every morning saying, "Lord, how can I serve and how can I give?"

Pearl Anderson wrote this beautiful piece:

Lord, how I long to serve you upon some great mission field  
And have the world see how much I love thee  
By this my sacrifice.  
"Nay," came his voice so gentle, yet so firm.  
"Walk within thy house with a perfect heart  
And do not for other things yearn."

Then Lord, make within these walls,  
A perfect sacrifice of thy grace.  
A place where all who enter  
May see thy face  
And rest and be renewed.

May those who dwell here Lord,

Find always warm welcome,  
Peace and happy words.  
That when they go,  
Their own hearth to build,  
They will have a perfect pattern,  
And Your perfect will fulfilled.

Father, we thank You for the Word of God. Thank You that You've taught us some things about integrity. Father, we realize it's lost under the pressure of selfishness and it's maintained and grows more bright as we learn to serve and to give. So teach us these basic principles and help us to have these ingredients in our interpersonal relationships undergirding each of our lives so that we're a joy to the people we're around, because we've always got our hand extended to serve and to give. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

# SOLVING STRUGGLES

## In Interpersonal Relationships

### “Learning to Live, Love and Listen to Each Other”

#### **Ingredient #6: INTEGRITY – GOD IS FAIR – Matthew 20:1-16**

#### NOTES

##### **I. The Work – Matthew 20:1-7**

v. 1 “For the kingdom of heaven is like a man, a master of a house, who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.

v. 2 And having agreed with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard.

v. 3 And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing unemployed in the market place.

v. 4 And to them he said, ‘You too be going into the vineyard, and whatever is fair, I will give you.’ And so they went.

v. 5 And again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did the same thing.

v. 6 And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing; and he is saying to them: ‘Why have you been standing here unemployed all day long?’

v. 7 They are saying to him: ‘Because no one hired us.’ He is saying to them, ‘You also be going into the vineyard.’

##### **II. The Wages – Matthew 20:8-10**

v. 8 Now, evening having come, the owner of the vineyard is saying to his foreman, ‘Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last group to the first.’

v. 9 And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each one received a denarius.

v. 10 And when those hired first came, they thought that they would receive more; and they also received each one a denarius.

**III. The Wisdom – Matthew 20:11-16**

v. 11 And when they received it, they were grumbling against the landowner,

v. 12 saying, ‘These who were last worked one hour, and you made them equal to us who bore the burden and the scorching heat of the day.’

v. 13 But he answered and said to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius?’

v. 14 Take what is yours and be going on your way, but I am desiring to give to this last man as I also gave to you.

v. 15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I am desiring with what is my own? Or is your eye envious because I am generous?

v. 16 Thus the last shall be first and the first last.’

**LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:**

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

Lesson #1: The true spirit of a servant is his love for Christ.

Lesson #2: It is not what will I get, but what can I give that is a mark of integrity.

Lesson #3: God is sovereign and He will reward as He sees fit.

Lesson #4: Faithfulness to the opportunity that God has given is the most important thing.

Lesson #5: Contentment with the Father’s curriculum is critical. Am I satisfied? “Godliness with contentment is great gain.”

Lesson #6: The agony of assumption is clearly taught in this passage.

Lesson #7: The Lord is both generous and just in this passage.

Lesson #8: Leaving matters in His hands is the safest place to leave them.

Copyright © 2022 by Bible Teaching Resources by Don Anderson Ministries. The author's teacher notes incorporate quoted, paraphrased and summarized material from a variety of sources, all of which have been appropriately credited to the best of our ability. Quotations particularly reside within the realm of fair use. It is the nature of teacher notes to contain references that may prove difficult to accurately attribute. Any use of material without proper citation is unintentional. Teacher notes have been compiled by Ronnie Marroquin.