



# Berean Christian Fellowship

DEVOTIONAL 62.0

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## Pride of the Early Morning Laborer

**“Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with what is my own? Or is your eye envious because I am generous?” (Matthew 20:15)**

Here, Jesus is sharing His parable about the Laborers in the Vineyard. Recall that the Master of the Vineyard hires some people early in the morning for a day’s wages. Later in the day, the Master hires more laborers for the same wages, even though they will only be in the field for a few hours compared to the others. This can be interpreted as a teaching about Believers who become Christians earlier in life than others—those that labor longer for the Faith. They may feel they have (or deserve) a better inheritance than a more recent convert, and they may contend at the end of the day that *“these last men have worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the scorching heat of the day”* (Matthew 20:12).

Similarly some Christians hold on to their “spiritual heritage” like it’s a pure-bred pedigree. Maybe they’ve been in the “Field” all their life, maybe their parents worked in the “Field” before them, or maybe all their children and grandchildren are Believers. Sometimes this creates a prideful sense of “ownership” and an attitude that the Church is “their house.” This attitude can make them look down on people who have come to Christ later in life, don’t come from Believing families, have unbelieving children, are married to non-believing spouses, or have just recently joined the Church. This condescension can cause us to scorn their testimony and not value their “labor,” while encouraging them to have a sense they are “less worthy” in God’s House and not due respect from their “nobler” Broth-

ers. This attitude is the flip-side of the coin to the young or immature Believer who spurns the labor of his “elders” as weakness or failure and thinks he can do a better job. How easily we all forget our complete reliance on Jesus for our Salvation! He alone through the Holy Spirit is what makes us grow, as Paul stresses when he says, *“I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, God’s building”* (1 Corinthians 3:6-9).

The rewards are apportioned to labor, not time in the field or “heritage,” so just because a Believer was saved at 12 years old or comes from a long line of Believing relatives, he does not have a better standing than the Believer who accepted Christ in their 70’s. The labor’s value is determined by God, not by man.

*“Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work. If any man’s work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire”* (1 Corinthians 3:12-15). And if God judges the labor, *“why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God”* (Romans 14:10), *“so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad”* (2 Corinthians 5:12b). May we look forward to that Day! Amen.

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