

Study Guide

Parable of the Vineyard

Want to know more?

Sometimes things happen in life where God seems unfair. Often, we feel this way when we have an idea of how God should treat us, but he does something else.

When this happens it's easy to feel angry and hurt by God.

Jesus told a parable in [Matthew 20:1-16](#) to show us that, in fact, God is unbelievably generous. But we can't understand God's generosity as long as we expect things from him that he never promised.

This story shows us three things people sometimes get wrong when they think about God. Three things that will make us unhappy with him if we keep believing them.

Don't Hold God to Promises He Never Made

Sometimes we want God to do what we want instead of what he said he'd do. The workers hired early in the day thought the landowner (that's God in this parable) should act a certain way (v10). When he didn't, they accused him of being unfair (v13). But they got everything the owner promised them (v14). God always keeps his promises. But when he doesn't do what we think he should, we blame and criticize him instead of being grateful for all that he has done.

Don't Assume God Owes You for All Your Hard Work

God doesn't owe us anything. We actually all deserve to be punished for the things we do against him. But instead, he still wants us to be friends with and promises to bless us. Everything God gives us is because he's super generous, not because we deserve it. Sometimes we forget this and start to think God gives us things because we

are being good. This way of thinking makes it like God is our boss and owes us for what we do for him. When God doesn't give us what we think he owes us, we turn against him.

Don't Complain About How God Blesses Others

Because he is generous God loves to bless people way more than what they deserve (v9). Sometimes we think people should get only what they deserve. So like the workers hired early in the day (v15), we selfishly get jealous and complain when we see how others are blessed – especially compared to ourselves.

Here are some questions for you to think over.

1. How do you feel when God doesn't do what you expect?
2. How do you react when God blesses others (what look like) more than he has blessed you?
3. Have you ever felt that God is unfair?
4. What are some things you shouldn't expect of God?
5. What does it mean if God doesn't do something you ask?
6. Read Numbers 23:19. What does this teach us about God's promises?
7. What are some things God has promised you?

God is never unfair to us. We are actually unfair to God when we judge him for not just doing what we want. God has generously given each of us far more than we deserve. Whatever happens, we have every reason to celebrate how good God is to us.