

# Rewards

**Office Lighthouse Discussion Materials**

## **Rewards**

### Chapter 1 - Character

Man, by his nature, be it 'created or evolved' has a motivation for reward as an integral part of his make-up.

Those who have difficulty accepting the notion of rewards tend to feel selfish if they concentrate on their own interests when carrying out good deeds. Most all have sought personal reward with dark motives and questionable techniques in the same category as "get all you can", "to the victor goes the spoils", or "the golden rule is – he who has the gold, rules".

"How we manage our inherent nature to seek rewards can be an on going struggle. It's here we communicate our real and true character and values to those we live and work with." (Rewards: God's Criteria)

#### **Discussion Questions:**

- 1) "It's easy to appear to be what we are not." (Oswald Chambers) A hypocrite is one whose character fits the above. What is your experience with such behavior with regard to rewards?
- 2) In a moment of frank honesty, a successful young businessman said, "My rule is if you can't help me with my business, I don't have time for you." How common do you find this hidden type of behavior to be in your business community? How does it make you feel?
- 3) The businessman must deal with the "grab, or get grabbed" mentality of the market place. Chasing dollars, securing market performance and defeating competitors is an accepted way of life in the business world. How do you handle the challenge of this environment to your character?
- 4) Look out for not only your interests but also the interest of others. In reality, which comes first, you are them? What about the "win/win" philosophy of doing business? Does it work?
- 5) "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and loose his own soul?" (Jesus, The Bible) How can we know where to draw the line as we seek reward but risk the loss of our own soul?
- 6) "There are three types of men you meet in the market place: Those who tell you they are out to get your chips, those who say you can trust them with your chips, and those who seem not to be paying attention to the chips. When the chips are on the table, all three will cut your hand off at the wrist when you reach for your chips." (Winning Through Intimidation, Robert J. Ringer)
- 7) How do you deal with these character types in business? Do you find this behavior in your dealings with people outside of business? How so?

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### **Chapter 2 - Earned**

A number of techniques are used in business and industry to determine a person's income and thus his reward.

Let's consider one: The amount of time worked by an employee. "Hourly wage earners constitute a large percentage of our population. Most people are paid this way when they begin their first jobs. Forty hours, time and a half, punch the clock, or when we come and go time spent on the job is considered a major factor on how persons are compensated for their work." (Reward: God's Criteria)

Let's examine this parable of the vineyard to determine if time expended is a truth we can count on in determining rewards.

A landowner went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard. He agreed to pay them a Denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard. About the third hour he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. He told them, "You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right." So they went. He went out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour and did the same thing. About the eleventh hour he went out and found still others standing around and he asked them, "Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?" "Because no one has hired us," they answered. He said to them, "You also go and work in my vineyard." When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, "Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on the first." The workers who were hired about the eleventh hour came and each received a Denarius. So, when those who came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a Denarius. When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. "These men who were hired last worked only one hour," they said, "and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day." But he answered one of them, "Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn't you agree to work for a Denarius? Take your pay and go. If I want to give the man who was hired last the same as I gave you, don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?" So the last will be the first, and the first will be the last. (Matthew, The Bible)

#### **Discussion Questions:**

- 1) This parable seems to teach that the only difference between the rich and the poor is providence. Is this true in your experience? How do you feel about that?
- 2) People often agree to work for a fixed amount. Once they get started they come back and retrade the deal. What do you think about this practice in business?
- 3) How do you feel about each individual being rewarded according to the length of time he spends in the vineyard?

- 4) What do you think about rewards being determined by faithfulness to opportunity rather than by time expended in the vineyard? Does this seem fair to you? Have you experienced this?
- 5) Is reward in the marketplace, from your perspective, based on the amount of wealth, influence and time you have to invest?
- 6) If reward is based on faithfulness to opportunity, then the amount of wealth, influence and time we have to invest may work to our disadvantage. We can easily misappropriate the resources and end up losing the race. What are your comments on this idea?

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### **Chapter 3 - Talent**

A second technique used in business to determine reward is: The ability, training or credentials of an employee.

“When each of us started working, we quickly realized that people with college degrees and other training made more money than those lacking a degree. The more talent a person has- the more his credentials, the more his perceived worth. The rule is that Remuneration is higher for the one with the greater ability, training or credentials.” (Reward)

Let us examine the parable of the talents to determine if ability, credentials and training are truths we can count on in determining rewards.

“A man going on a journey called his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent; each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. “Master” he said, “You entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.” His master replied, “Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!” The man with the two talents also came,” Master,” he said, “you entrusted me with two talents; see I have gained two more.” His master replied, “Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!” Then the man who had received the one talent came. “Master,” he said, “I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.” His master replied, “You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gathered where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents, for he will have abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew, the Bible)

#### **Discussion Questions**

- 1) It is a fact of life, in the market place; there is an unequal distribution of gifts and talents. Do you agree or disagree? How do we adjust our strategy on rewards to this, if true?
- 2) The world is often an unlevelled playing field. Some people are more gifted, have higher IQ’s, are better coordinated or more musically inclined. Some have parents,

friends, family that can give them an advantage. Think of some example of this reality. How do you feel about the lack of fairness?

- 3) In the parable, it appears that reward is not based on talent but on faithfulness to opportunity. Is this fair? How can we accept this standard that seems to limit the amount of our rewards?
- 4) It has been said that comparison is now the favorite indoor sport in America. If people are unique and as different as fingerprints and snowflakes (Reward), then what is the point of comparing ourselves with others to determine how well we are doing? What are our other options?
- 5) One options suggested by the parable is that we can allow someone else to invest our talents for us (the banker). Where are you with sitting on the sidelines and staying away from the risk of involvement? Is this a good plan for you and why or why not?
- 6) Another option is we can refuse to do anything with the talent we have. Three excuses often heard: "I don't have the time." (A convenient way of saying "I won't."); "I don't want to" (meaning, "I really don't care") or "I am not able" (worldly false modesty) (Reward). What's your comment on the reasons for not using one's talent? Do you have other reasons?

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## Chapter 4 - Stewardship

If rewards are based on faithfulness to opportunity, the important question that must be answered is: What are the criteria to be used in determining how faithful are we?

The first criteria for rewards might be stewardship. We are allocated certain “resources” as individuals in this life. The quality and quantity differ for each person and include such things as time, money, possessions, health, opportunities, circumstances, relationships and the area in which one lives. We might refer to this as our “portfolio”, recognizing that we are each asset managers. If there is a judgment day, then we will be judged not on the basis of what we have been given, but rather on the basis of what we have done with what we have been given. (Reward God’s Criteria)

### Discussion questions:

- 1) Of the eight resources listed above as assets in our “portfolio” which do you see as most important? Which is the least important?
- 2) Time is not a renewable resource. We only get a certain number of days and then it’s all over. How should this statement affect your stewardship of it? In reality how are you using time?
- 3) Money is a renewable resource that you can always replace with more money from various sources. How would you contrast the stewardship of time and money based on this idea of renewable and non-renewable resources?
- 4) In the movie “*Changing Lanes*” a character, when confronted with his unethical business practice, answers; “at the end of the day I do more good than bad. That’s my standard. What other standard is there?” Is doing more good than bad with our assets the standard to live by? What other standard is there?
- 5) In judging one’s stewardships, Bill Clinton and John F. Kennedy are interesting contrasts. Both became President of the United States. Clinton, raised by his mother, came from a modest Arkansas home. Kennedy came from a wealthy East Coast establishment family with a powerful father. Who accomplished the most? Who was the best steward of his assets? Who was the most faithful to his opportunity?
- 6) What “resources” are you managing well? Which one’s not so well? What is your standard?

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## Chapter 5 - Circumstances

Second criteria for rewards might be circumstances. Just as each one of us is given different resources, so also the circumstances of our lives differ. Some people suffer great pain, others great poverty. Still others are persecuted for their beliefs of faith, spending years incarcerated. Some appear to live relatively trauma-free charmed lives with more than a fair share of the rewards.

On judgment day, if faithfulness to opportunity is the criteria, then it is not the “hand” that we are dealt that will be the determining factor but rather how we “played the hand”. (Reward-God’s Criteria)

### Discussion Questions:

- 1) Life seems to offer an unequal distribution of gifts and opportunities to each of us. Is this fair? How do we deal with a life that can change at a moment’s notice depending on the circumstances?
- 2) “The longer I live, the more convinced I become that life is 10% what happens to us and 90% how we respond to it”. (Charles Swindoll) Where do you find the strength to respond to adversity or opportunity?
- 3) Have you allowed life’s adversities to discourage and immobilize you? How so?
- 4) Nelson Mandela was incarcerated for his beliefs. He went on to be the leader of his nation. Circumstances favored his ascent to political power. How do you view him?
- 5) Jesus Christ was persecuted and crucified for His beliefs and radical statements about His deity. How do you view Him?
- 6) What circumstances are you facing or have faced that challenge your resolve to be faithful to the opportunity or adversity your circumstances afford?



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## Chapter 6 - The Nature of Rewards

How we invest our time on this planet will have a lot to do with what types of rewards we are seeking to achieve. We can invest in temporary rewards or things that will make a permanent difference. What we choose to give our lives to may well determine the nature of our rewards.

In the London tube, England's underground rail system, one travel agent's advertisement declared: "your work is meaningless. And you'll die having achieved comparatively little. You need a holiday." Those words do indeed describe the feelings of many who "are sick and tired of their work".

### Discussion Questions:

- 1) I owe, I owe, so off to work I go." Does this describe your motivations for work? Besides money, why do you work?
- 2) One man accumulates great wealth with his work, but in the end it will be left to someone else to spend. Is this a good reason to seek or not to seek the rewards of wealth? What can one's wealth do to the heirs who inherit it?
- 3) The Bible suggests that you can invest in only two things that have permanent rewards: the truth and men's souls. Nothing else will last for eternity. What is your response to this statement? Can you think of anything else that is permanent/eternal?
- 4) "A motivation given for work was not to accumulate wealth but to have something to share with others. We make a living by what we earn; we make a life by what we give." (Albert Lee) How do you feel about this statement? Is the giving away of your rewards difficult for you?
- 5) Does doing things "the right way" have anything to do with your rewards? How can we know what the right way is?
- 6) "A myth I have found in life is that there is a direct relationship between hard work and reward. I know hard workers that are not rich and lazy people that are wealthy, and so do you." (Kevin Ring) Do you agree or disagree? Why?