



The Good & Beautiful God
Matthew 20:1-15
January 31, 2010

Week #3: God is Generous

CONNECTION.....30 Minutes

1. Take a few minutes and give people a chance to catch up and connect with one another.

2. **Review the Assigned Soul Training Exercises From Last Week:**

Were you able to spend 5 minutes every day or most days in silence? Or were you able to create a list of 50 or more blessings? If so, talk about the experience.

What, if anything, did you learn about God or yourself through these exercises?

What was the most meaningful verse or phrase of Psalm 23 for you? Explain.

3. Be still and spend a few moments in silence and then invite the Spirit of God to join and lead your group.

EXPLORATION.....30 Minutes

Read through Matthew 20:1-15 and then discuss the questions listed below and/or create some of your own.

Matthew 20:1-15 (NLT)

“For the Kingdom of Heaven is like the landowner who went out early one morning to hire workers for his vineyard. ² He agreed to pay the normal daily wage and sent them out to work. ³ “At nine o’clock in the morning he was passing through the marketplace and saw some people standing around doing nothing. ⁴ So he hired them, telling them he would pay them whatever was right at the end of the day. ⁵ So they went to work in the vineyard. At noon and again at three o’clock he did the same thing. ⁶ “At five o’clock that afternoon he was in town again and saw some more people standing around. He asked them, ‘Why haven’t you been working today?’

⁷ “They replied, ‘Because no one hired us.’

“The landowner told them, ‘Then go out and join the others in my vineyard.’

⁸ “That evening he told the foreman to call the workers in and pay them, beginning with the last workers first. ⁹ When those hired at five o’clock were paid, each received a full day’s wage. ¹⁰ When those hired first came to get their pay, they assumed they would receive more. But they, too, were paid a day’s wage. ¹¹ When they received their pay, they protested to the owner, ¹² ‘Those people worked only one hour, and yet you’ve paid them just as much as you paid us who worked all day in the scorching heat.’ ¹³ “He answered one of them, ‘Friend, I haven’t been unfair! Didn’t you agree to work all day for the usual wage? ¹⁴ Take your money and go. I wanted to pay this last worker the same as you. ¹⁵ Is it against the law for me to do what I want with my money? Should you be jealous because I am kind to others?’

1. If this was the only story you knew about God, what would you conclude?
2. We are assured that God’s love is not earned, and that what God wants from us is simply for us to know his love, which will naturally lead us to love in return. If it is true that God’s love is not earned, what would you do differently tomorrow? Why?
3. What is the first thing that comes into your mind when you think about God? In what ways does this thought shape your daily life?

SOUL TRAINING30 Minutes

1. Again, find 5 minutes each day to sit in silence.

During this time, your thoughts may run rampant. If so, you can do the following 2 things to help still your mind:

1. Have a notepad nearby to jot down things that may come to your mind. This will help to quiet your mind.
 2. Ease into the 5 minutes by reading the bible for a minute or two.
- This is an exercise designed to help you slow down and become present, more able to focus on God in your midst.

2. Psalm 23 is a beautiful expression of the Kingdom of God, in which God is with us, and blessing us, even in trying circumstances. The God of Psalm 23 is generous. Because of God's gracious provision, protection, and care, we lack nothing. God invites us to rest, to be refreshed, and to be restored. God leads and guides us even in our most painful situations. And because God is with us, we can live without fear.

So, every day this week recite Psalm 23 before you fall asleep each night, and again when you awake. Before your feet hit the ground, try to have slowly meditated on each word. Recite it so often this week that it becomes second nature to you, as natural as breathing.

3. Share any items of Community News

*The content of this Study Guide is taken from **The Good & Beautiful God** – James Bryan Smith