



Small group discussion questions November 2014

Chapter & verse – Lawrence Moore (p27)

Read Matthew 20:1-16, followed by Lawrence Moore’s article.

1. Look again at paragraph one of “Chapter & verse”, describing our society’s attitudes to generosity. Can you suggest examples of what Lawrence is talking about?
2. In verses 8-10 of the Bible passage, Lawrence says, God/the landowner “is breaking the rules governing transactions between employers and employees” (paragraph three of “Chapter & verse”). In what ways is he breaking the rules, and why do you think would he does so?
3. In paragraph four of “Chapter & verse”, Lawrence suggests that wage labour on the free market has an “inbuilt brutality”. Can you think of examples of this? Do you agree with the description?
4. Read verses 11-12 of the Bible passage. Lawrence suggests that the landowner models God’s generosity, but also says of the labourers: “No wonder they’re incensed” (paragraph six). Does Jesus’ parable take the side of the landowner, or the workers, or neither? What does Jesus’ attitude to their argument seem to be?
5. Paragraph seven of “Chapter & verse” says: “He gives each labourer what they need, not what they deserve.” Do you think that our society should be more like that? Or is it a spiritual rather than an economic principle?
6. Verse 15 of the Bible passage says: “Are you envious because I am generous?” What do you think makes people envious of God’s generosity? Do you see that failing in yourself? Is there anything that can be done about it?
7. In paragraph eight, Lawrence says that the world, including the Church, fails to live up to the standards of God’s generosity, with “ruthless disregard for the plight of our neighbour”. Do you agree with this? Can you give examples to illustrate the way you see it?
8. The last paragraph of “Chapter & verse” describes a radically different kind of world, while the last verse of the Bible passage says: “The last will be first, and the first will be last.” What practical steps can we take to make our world better reflect the generosity of God?



Reform

NEWS COMMENT INSPIRATION DEBATE

Chapter 6 verse

Lawrence Moore Chapter & verse
“Isn’t it disturbing how Jesus sees money at the heart of what breaks community?”



“Give your pay and go. I want to give the one who has fixed the same as I give you.”
 Matthew 23:16

Generosity is good in every realm. In the workplace, it means being generous to your colleagues. At home, it means being generous to your family. In the church, it means being generous to your community. In the marketplace, it means being generous to your customers. In the marketplace, it means being generous to your employees. In the marketplace, it means being generous to your community.

“God delights in a generosity that will not leave people needy.”



Lawrence Moore is Director of the Progressive Center in Columbia, Missouri.

For further reflection: “As you go, proclaim the good news, ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.” Matthew 10:7-8

Prayer: Giving God, your generosity surges out to us without pause and without counting the cost. You do not deal with us as we deserve but as we need. We depend upon you for all we have. Give us, in addition to all this, we pray, hearts big with your own generosity. Help us to grow into your giving nature. Amen.