

THE COMPASSIONATE EMPLOYER

As described in Matthew 20:1-16, a prosperous and successful vineyard owner goes out to hire the workers he needs for the day. Unlike other owners, he goes himself. He knows how many he needs and hires the exact number. He hopes the others will find work.

But, he can't stop thinking about the ones he left behind. Throughout the day, he returns to where workers still wait to be hired. He doesn't return just once but four additional times to see if others are still waiting for work. Each time he hires more.

Then, with only an hour of the workday left, he goes one last time. He finds a handful still waiting. His compassionate heart is moved. He hires them all. They have not given up...they did not want to go home empty handed. He wants to help and gives them work to do. He will let them contribute and receive pay for their labor. They will be able to return home, heads held high, respect and dignity intact.

When it comes time to be paid, only the first have an agreement to be paid a day's wages. The others trust him to do what is right. He surprises everyone. Starting with the last hired he pays everyone the same, a full day's wages.

**“AND, LET PEOPLE LEARN
TO DEVOTE THEMSELVES
TO GOOD WORKS IN ORDER
TO MEET URGENT NEEDS,
SO THAT WE MAY NOT BE
UNPRODUCTIVE.”**

(TITUS 3:14)

To some it seems unfair to those who have worked longer; but they are only looking at things with the world's eyes. The Father brings the kingdom's view of justice to the forefront and his justice is cloaked in mercy.

The Father knows the importance of work in his plan. He is eager for all to find dignity in being useful to one another—to experience together the gratifying, satisfying experience of working together, solving problems and being fruitful. And, to share together in the fruit of their labor.

Aligning Our Careers with God's Mission

In our own work, our Father calls us to align our careers with his mission to restore all things. In addition, he desires we draw others into the good labor of his vineyard. To give them the dignity of applying skills and growing in abilities.

Working in the Father's vineyard is also a metaphor for our own role as

Christian laborers. The work of agriculture takes what nature has to offer and makes something of it.

Our occupations are similar. Like Adam, we are put in God's garden of creation. We are called to work the soil entrusted to our care, to get our hands dirty. We take the raw materials God provides and draw potential out of them. The biblical perspective of this is to be a steward of creation. As Christians, we are stewards of all that is entrusted to us. For this reason, our occupations really matter. They are key to our stewardship for society and God's creation.

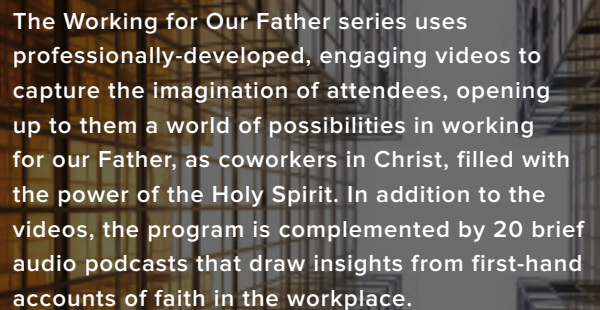
Stewards of Creation

Many of our livelihoods are linked to meeting the needs of society—food, drink, clothing, shelter, and healthcare. Without a good economy societies don't run well. It's important that industry, commerce, and government work well together for the good of all.

Working for our Father is a call to be stewards of his creation; to make ourselves useful to both God and one another, each doing our part. Our Father is the compassionate employer calling us to join him in his good work—to live a life of dignity; to work with faith, integrity, and excellence. And, like him, to do it for the good of all, not for personal benefit. Life in Christ is a life of self-giving, not self-serving. As we serve him and others, he wants us to draw others into the work of restoring all things, to experience firsthand the dignity of work and being a productive worker.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, these are the choices we're called daily to make. Daily choices are the chisels that sculpt our character. Daily choices determine how well over time we will reflect the image and character of Christ; especially, choices to live a life of faith, integrity, and excellence.

Excerpted from "Accepting the Father's Gift of Work" video from the Working for Our Father Series.



The Working for Our Father series uses professionally-developed, engaging videos to capture the imagination of attendees, opening up to them a world of possibilities in working for our Father, as coworkers in Christ, filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. In addition to the videos, the program is complemented by 20 brief audio podcasts that draw insights from first-hand accounts of faith in the workplace.

If you are interested in previewing the series and learning more go to www.cicintl.org/wfof



When I feel overwhelmed with a situation, my Christians in Commerce sisters validate my struggles, pray for me, offer a scripture or Christian devotional reading of encouragement, and the grace they cover me in equips me to offer that same grace to myself and others. The catalyst for me to be Christ in my workplace is my love for Jesus, that he may increase and I may decrease, and that when I see my Father face-to-face, I can hear him say, "Well done, my good and faithful servant!"

Genoveva Badillo

COWORKERS IN CHRIST

Compartmentalization is a big thing in the workplace today. People have their private faith life and a public work life. We're conditioned to think there should be a wall between them. But that just isn't the way I should live my life. I'm actually called to live that faith in my public life and invite Jesus into those situations that frustrate me. My Challenge Group makes a big difference. This group has been enormous for me in terms of accountability and brotherhood. I can come to my group and share with these guys who have no judgement. I know they will support me and love me, just as the Father loves us.

Charlie Singleton



**"I BELIEVE THAT SOCIETAL TRANSFORMATION IS HIGH ON GOD'S AGENDA...
AND THAT THE CHIEF FORCE TO BRING IT ABOUT WILL BE
CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS MINISTERING IN THE MARKETPLACE."**

BY PETER WAGNER, WAGNER LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE