

- This Gospel parable gets under our skin; and in fact it is meant to, in order to figure out if we are more concerned with what we will get from God than with our actual relationship to Him.
 - To answer that we must first examine: Why do we worship God? Are His gifts fair? What type of relationship are we called to?
 - First, worship is the value we assign to a person.
 - In a sense when we applaud someone's talent or ability, we are worshipping them.
 - When we show gratitude or acknowledge another's presence, we are putting a value on their worth, or worshipping them.
 - So when we worship God, it is a recognition of His truth, goodness, power and beauty.
 - Adam and Eve demonstrate that if we do not worship God then we will worship something else, typically our self.
 - The reason people don't worship God is they forget that they are creatures and thus dependent on God, so God is of no value or worth.
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- So why should we worship God?
 - Well it is not because He needs us or will be unhappy or imperfect without us.
 - Rather, we worship God because we want to be perfect, happy, and we need Him.
 - Think of it from the perspective of a daughter who drew and colored a picture for her mother.
 - The mother's heart is overwhelmed by her young daughter's loving gesture and would prefer this messy picture over a priceless piece of art.
 - The colored picture, however, did not make the mother richer nor did she need it on her refrigerator. Yet she loves them. Why?
 - The daughter is worshipping his mother, placing a value upon his relationship and love for her.
 - The mother's joyful reception of the colored picture is perfecting her daughter who is exercising virtue rather than vice, such as generosity, gratitude, and love.
 - Just as a mother doesn't need a poorly colored picture so God doesn't need worship, but we do.
 - What we get out of serving, loving and worshipping God is the perfection of our soul and lasting happiness.
 - If that is what we gain then is the landowner in the parable really shorting us anything?
 - Again, like a child's picture, our worship cannot repay nor equal how good God is.
 - Think of it this way: we remove the price tag from gifts, not because we are embarrassed by what we spent, but rather we refuse to establish a proportion between our gift and our love for the other.
 - Whether our gift cost \$20 or \$2,000, is that really the price of our love?
 - Giving gifts does not make the one we love better, the generous act of giving makes us better.

- How about the fairness of God's gifts poured out upon humanity?
- Growing up, parents are typically strictest with the oldest child, ignored the middle child, or at least we felt that way, and spoiled the youngest child.
- Was that fair?
- As we matured into adulthood, it did not matter, because our love for our parents was not dependent on what they gave or withheld.
- The same holds true with our relationship to God.
- A mature Christian is just content with being loved by God because love conveys value.
- Venerable Archbishop Fulton Sheen wrote, *"The more important the person who loves you, the more precious is your value. You are infinitely precious because you are loved by God."*

- Lastly, we are not called to be God's laborer, his mercenary, nor a utilitarian friend.
- We are called to a sacrificial relationship with God or a total outpouring of our self.
- Practicing anything less in friendship, marriage, or priesthood makes for a shallow relationship.
- Is it a true friendship when we befriend a person to increase our popularity or because they have neat stuff?
- Is it a genuine marriage if we married solely for looks or money?
- Is it a real vocation if a man enters priesthood because he hates marriage or likes honor?
- Of course not, friendship, marriage, priesthood and our spiritual life are relationships that require us to make a total gift of our self.
- Jesus said, *"No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."*
- If we give our life for another it is obviously not about what we are going to get out of it, but rather what we can contribute to it.
- The truth is, we don't have to focus on compensation just the value we place upon our relationship with God, for we have all been paid up front by the Blood of Christ.
- This parable challenges us to figure out what is the condition of our love: are we truly in love with God or simply with His gifts?
- For the spiritual writer and Trappist monk, Thomas Merton, wrote, *"Love seeks one thing only: the good of the one loved. It leaves all the other secondary effects to take care of themselves. Love, therefore, is its own reward."*