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Applying the Lesson

You Need:
• Bibles

Fair or Unfair?

Read the following scenarios to the children one at a time. After each, ask: **Is it fair or unfair? How would you feel in that situation?**

You are left out of the midweek soccer team because you will not play in the Saturday league.

You have saved for a long time and finally bought a new MP3 player for yourself. Then someone buys an identical player and gives it to your brother or sister.

Someone else won a game your class is playing together. You know they cheated.

You come in first to win a race, but everyone who ran is given the same prize.

You and your brother (or sister) have been asked to cut the grass and

clean up the yard after school. You cut the grass, but your brother (or sister) plays with friends. Your father thanks you both for doing the work.

You and your sister (or brother) are supposed to go to bed at 8:00. Your sister (or brother) plays with friends instead of doing homework after school. You do your homework, then play. When bedtime comes, your sister (or brother) is allowed to stay up late to get her (or his) homework done.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **How does God want us to treat each other when things seem unfair? Let's read Matthew 5:43-48 together.** Allow time. **If we are to treat others as God would treat them, what should we do in all these situations?** (Treat people better than they deserve.)

Isn't it good to know that God loves us and treats us the same even when things that seem unfair happen? Let's remember our message. Say it with me.



GOD WANTS US TO TREAT OTHERS AS HE TREATS US.

Payday at the Vineyard

References

Matthew 20:1-16;
Christ's Object Lessons,
pp. 396-404

Memory Verse

"God does not show favoritism" (Acts 10:34).

The Message

God wants us to treat others as He treats us.

John was busy raking leaves in his yard. After an hour, his friend Liam came by and offered to help. John found another rake, and the two boys worked together.

Two hours later they were done with the job. John's father was very pleased. He gave each boy some money to say "thank you." John and Liam received the same pay, even though John had worked one hour more. John thought to himself, This is not fair. Then he remembered a story Jesus told about fairness.

In Jesus' time, men would gather in the marketplace at 6:00 in the morning. There they would wait for someone to come and hire them. One morning a vineyard owner came looking for workers. At 6:00 he hired some men. He agreed to pay them the usual pay for 12 hours of work.

At 9:00 he came back to the marketplace. He saw men still standing around. "Go work in my vineyard, and I'll pay you what is right," he told them. At noon and at 3:00 he hired more men. Again at 5:00

in the afternoon—just one hour before quitting time—he did the same thing.

At 6:00 in the evening the landowner told his foreman to pay the workers. He should begin with those who were hired last and end with those who were hired first.

First the foreman paid those who had worked only an hour. He gave them a full day's pay. Then he paid those who worked for three hours. He gave them a full day's pay too.

Those who were hired first began to smile. They were sure they would receive more. After all, they had worked longer and harder than the others. It would only be fair, wouldn't it? But when they received their pay, their smiles turned to frowns. They got the same pay as everyone else!

"Wait!" they complained. "Those men worked only an hour. You made them equal to us. We did most of the work, and in the heat of the day, too."

"I'm not being unfair to you," said the landowner. "You agreed to work for the usual pay for a day's work. That's what I'm paying you. I can do what I want to with my money. Don't be jealous because I am generous."

And then Jesus said it again. "The last will be first, and the first will be last."

Do you think it's fair? You may not. And that's the point Jesus was making. God does not treat us the way we deserve. God treats us much, much better than that. It is His grace that saves all of us, those who accept Him at the last minute and those who accept Him early. God doesn't have to save any of us. He does it because He loves us.

Do you treat others in God's family the same way God has treated you? When someone is mean to you, do you treat them with love and kindness? Try to treat others as God treats us.

