

THE FARMER AND THE STRANGER

Why and How much to work? The Value of work.

Introductory Note

- ✓ *In a rather overdone manner this story wants to high light the lopsided stress modern life gives to work. "We should work to live, not live to work!"*
- ✓ *Work has higher values than the economical and monetary ones.*
- ✓ *Modern life turns us into "workaholics" and "money obsessed".*
- ✓ *Only lucrative activities are considered "work"*

The Story

A farmer owned a large fertile field. In the middle of his field there was a rich and generous well. With such good land and so much water, our farmer could have easily reaped a plentiful harvest. Yet, he was tilling only a part of the soil around the well, enough to satisfy his simple material needs. He spent the rest of his time praying, singing, watching the birds flying and the flowers grow. In his simplicity, he was a very happy man, and other he was "enjoying life". .

One day, a stranger passed by that way. He was surprised at seeing the farmer's ways. He thought to himself: This farmer is a lazy man to the marrow of his bones! He spoke to him: "What are you doing here, singing and idling away your time, when you could cultivate your entire fertile field?"

The farmer replied: What am I doing here, you asked me? Well, "I am enjoying life. I love nature, I love looking at the skies, at the birds, and the flowers grow. I am very happy

The stranger said: "Can't you see that if you work harder and cultivate more land you will get larger crops and earn more money?"

"Yes, I know!" The farmer coolly answered. "But, then, what shall I do with that extra money"

"What?" The stranger said, "You could buy a pair of bullocks and bring more land under cultivation."

The farmer retorted: "And then what?" In puzzlement, the stranger replied: "Then what?"

You could buy a motor pump and draw plenty of water from the well so that you could cultivate still more land and get more profits."

"Yes, yes, I see your point," the farmer said "but then, what to do with the profits'?"

"Well," the stranger added, "then you could buy a tractor and be able to cultivate the entire field! Can't you see, like that you would get pots of money?"

Nodding his head, the farmer retorted: "Yes, yes, I see, I see it. It's a very good idea; but to tell the truth, what would I do with all those pots of money?"

The stranger with a triumphant air, added: "Well, once you become rich and you grow old, you will be able to enjoy life"

With a mischievous grimace in his face, the farmer retorted: "It's funny! What a waste of life that would be for me, my friend. Why should I slog all my life long to be able to enjoy a happiness in my old age which is already mine right now?"

POINTS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. What do you feel of the mentality of the farmer: was he right or wrong? Why?
2. Was the farmer a lazy fellow? Why? What was he?
3. What do you think of the mentality of the stranger?
4. Was he right or wrong? Why? What was he?
5. Why should we work? What's the main purpose of work? Discuss.
6. How much should we work?
7. Do we live to work or do we work to live? Discuss.
8. Does money automatically bring happiness in life? Discuss.
9. What does bring real happiness in life? Explain.
10. Should we wait till we grow-up or grow old to enjoy life? Why?
11. Then, how can we start enjoying life? Give hints
12. What is the mentality of modern man about work and money?
13. Should we work only for money sake? Why? Then?
14. If money and material gains are not the only and main reason to work, then why should we work? Give reasons
15. What about non lucrative activities? Are they work or not?
16. Should we pay a salary to our mothers for cooking for us? Why? Is that not work?
17. Should children demand a pay for helping in the house chores? Why? Then why should they help in their homes?
18. What are the reasons that should motivate us to work? Mention the main ones.
19. In the way you work, are you like the farmer or rather like the stranger? Share with us your views.
20. Can people, with the mentality of the stranger, really enjoy life? Why?
21. Why do you study, or play games, or take part in athletics; for profits or for joy?
22. Why did Jesus work as a Carpenter till he was 30 years old? Had he any need of to work?
23. May we call some type of works demeaning, or low?

24. What type of work pleases God most? Manual, intellectual, scientific, or otherwise?

25. Explain:

- The all important thing in our work is our motivation, not in the type of work we do
- Any type of work likens us to God.
- By working we become partners in God's creation.
- Before God, the Boss of a big corporation is as valuable as the least peon or sweeper.
- Before God, any work has no monetary value, but only a creative and redemptive one.