

WHICH COMES FIRST?

LESSON 127 → Ephesians 6:5-9; 1 Timothy 6:1-2

Silas had made a commitment and now he faced a decision.

Silas was so excited! This was his very first job. He was starting an after-school paper route. It would mean he'd have to do all his homework after dinner, and there wouldn't be any time left to spend with the guys after school was out. But it was worth it! Now he would have money to save up for the blue mountain bike he had seen in the window of the bicycle shop.

He attacked his route with determination. He met the delivery truck every day and had his papers delivered in record time. It wasn't long before he'd established quite a reputation as a reliable paper carrier. The neighbors praised him for his promptness and courtesy, and he was proud of doing such a good job.

Silas didn't realize, however, that it would take such a long time to save up enough money for the bicycle, especially when he dipped into his savings now and then for other things. After a few months the newness of his job wore off and it just

wasn't as much fun. Summer was almost here, and everyone else seemed to have lots of time to do other things besides work. As he rode past the park every day he would see his friends out playing. I sure do wish I could be playing





WE MUST ALWAYS BE FAIR WITH EACH OTHER.

Whatever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.
— Colossians 3:23

instead of doing this paper route, Silas thought to himself.

A few weeks later, as Silas rode by the park he heard someone call, “Hey, Silas!” He stopped and turned to see who called. It was his friend, Carson.

“Why don’t you come join us? We need a good pitcher. You can finish that later.” Silas hesitated. He knew he had a responsibility and that his route should come first, but the baseball game would be fun. It had been ages since he’d had time for a good game of ball.

“Come on Silas, we need you.”

“I’ll be right there,” he called back. He thought to himself that a few minutes wouldn’t hurt anything. After propping his bike up beside a tree, he ran toward the group of boys.

An hour later Silas noticed that the sun was setting, and he was late. He quickly got on his bike and rode off to finish his route.

When he finally got home his mother was at the door to meet him. “Silas, can you explain why I got phone calls from some of your customers asking where their papers were?”

Silas looked down at the floor, “I was late, but I did deliver them.”

“Why were you late?” his mom asked.

“Well, I stopped to play baseball with the guys and forgot about the time.”

“Let me ask you something. How do you feel when the supplier brings your newspapers late?”

“I get frustrated.”

“And what do you expect when you go to collect from your customers?”

“Well, I expect them to pay me.”

“Are you happy when they don’t?”

“No, I guess not.”

“Silas, you may think it’s really not such a big deal that you were late delivering your papers just this once. But if we fail to do our job the very best we can, we are not pleasing God. Sit down, I want to show you something.” His mom got the family Bible off the bookshelf and opened to Ephesians 6:5. “Read here, Silas.”

“Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ.” Silas looked at his mom. “You mean that I’m a servant?”

“In a way you are. In fact you have quite a few masters to serve. When you took this job, you made a commitment to your route manager as well as to all your customers to deliver their papers faithfully.”

“But, I’m getting tired of doing my route. I don’t get to have any fun.”

“Your route hasn’t changed, Silas. Only your attitude has changed. If we do our job as unto the Lord, as the Bible says, He’ll bless us for it.”

Silas looked down at his shoes and thought about his mom’s words for a minute. Then he said, “You mean, pretend like I’m doing it for Jesus?”





“Yes,” his mother answered, “and thank Him for it. After all, you were anxious to get a job so you could earn money, and the Lord provided this. Now it’s your responsibility to do your best.”






The next day after his papers arrived, Silas breathed a prayer. “Dear Lord, please help me to do this for You. Thank You for trusting me with the job even though I didn’t do my best yesterday. Please be with me today. Amen.”




The rest of the day was great. The route seemed easier and even the dogs seemed friendlier. And it was just a month later, at a dinner given by the newspaper for the carriers and their parents, that Silas was honored with the Outstanding Carrier of the Month award!






**DOING OUR
BEST**

Anybody who is employed knows there is a “boss” to please. A Christian should have no problem wanting to do this. The week’s key verse tells us how we can do our best for others even when we think it will be too hard. Without peeking at the verse, look at the pictures below and add or subtract the letters as shown (you may need some scratch paper). Write the resulting words on the lines below.

 - H W +  +  - A P + EVER Y +  - BLL

 - NUT D +  - TP  - KE  +  - GRL + Y
 , ,

 - BKET Q - W  - RMOS  - BALON + RD
 ,

 - H  - K  - S +  - OTH M +  - H
 .