

Life Group Questions on *The First shall be Last and the Last shall be First* – 26th April 2026

I have included lots of questions – feel free to pick and choose which ones you discuss - Richard

1. Do you think of Jesus' values as being upside-down or quite reasonable and attractive?
2. What competitive sports and games do you enjoy? Are you good at them?
3. How competitive are you and do you hate to lose?

Earthly success does not equate to Heavenly Status - Matthew 19v16-26 + v30

1. "What good thing must I do to get eternal life?" reveal about his understanding of salvation?
2. The man thinks eternal life can be earned by doing good deeds and keeping God's commandments. How does Jesus try to get the man to understand this is not the case?
3. Why did Jesus focus specifically on commandments related to human relationships (the second table of the law)?
4. In what ways are the "first" (privileged, self-confident) and the "last" (rejected, humble) defined in this passage?
5. How does this teaching challenge our cultural understanding of success and achievement?
6. How do other scriptures, such as James 4:10 and Philippians 2:3-4, reinforce the message of Matthew 19:30?
7. In what ways do these verses challenge you to re-evaluate your personal definition of being successful?
8. How can you apply the principle of "the first will be last" in your daily life to cultivate a servant's heart?

Heavenly rewards are not like Earthly wages - Matthew 19v27 – 20v16

1. What do the landowner, the vineyard, the workers, and the denarius represent in the kingdom of God?
2. Who are the "first" and "last" workers in the context of the church and community today?
3. If you were a worker hired at the beginning of the day, how would you have felt about the pay distribution?
4. When have you seen a grumbling, complaining spirit hurt the health and life of a congregation?
5. How does the landowner's decision challenge our traditional views of fairness and justice?
6. The parable is often interpreted to mean that God gives his best gifts to everyone regardless of when they start following him. How does this encourage or challenge you?
7. How can we shift our mindset from merit-based thinking to a mindset of gratitude for grace?
8. What can we do to remind ourselves of God's grace and provision in our lives?

Strive and stay focussed on your race – Luke 13v22-30

1. What does the "narrow door" represent, and how does it compare to Matthew 7:13-14?
2. Who are the people, implied by verse 26-27, who think they are saved but are left outside?
3. What does the closing of the master's door represent, and why is there a sense of urgency to act now?
4. Why would Jesus' teaching about people coming from all directions to take their places in the kingdom (v. 29) be shocking to his original audience?
5. What is the significance of the "last being first" in this context?
6. How can salvation be a free gift of grace yet require us to "strive" or "agonize" to enter?
7. How can we be distracted from running our own race?
8. How can you cultivate a sense of urgency regarding your personal salvation?
9. How can you, as a Christian, have a deep, abiding assurance of your salvation?