

## What Are You Worth?

by David Ludwig, Jr.

**Objective:** That by the power of the Spirit, participants will see and grow in the reality and value of faith as a uniquely human gift and asset for handling the stress of life.

**Setting:**

A case worker (male or female) is seated at a desk, upon which are several larger reference-type books, some paper representing forms of various types, and a pen. An unemployed client (male or female), dressed rather nicely, comes in.

Case Worker: Good afternoon, and welcome to Modern Employment Services. How may we help you today?

Client: Well, I lost my job a month ago, and I haven't had much luck finding steady employment on my own.

Case Worker: You've come to the right place. Here at Modern Employment we work hard to find you employment because we understand that "you are worth what you earn." And in your case, that would currently be...?

Client: I beg your pardon?

Case Worker: What are your current earnings?

Client: Oh... nothing.

Case Worker: *(filling in form while talking)* Currently, you are "earnings category zero: nothing."

Client: *(hesitantly, trying it on)* Well, I suppose so.

Case Worker: And you have been a "nothing" for about one month. Is that correct?

Client: If you put it that way, yes.

Case Worker: We see a lot of this sort of thing here at Modern Employment, and we've found it's best to look the truth straight in the eye.

Client: I see.

Case Worker: And at what point in the past month did the full weight of your recent worthlessness hit you?

Client: I beg your pardon?

Case Worker: The depression about your devaluation from category... well, from the look of you, I'd say it must have been at least a seven or eight, down to nothing. When did it hit?

Client: I've been worried sick from the beginning about how I'm going to make ends meet, but I wouldn't say I've been depressed. I don't usually think of myself as a nothing.

Case Worker: *(filling in form)* "Repressing Depression, Category D." Not too unusual, considering the severity of the change in worth, really.

Client: *(talking while Case Worker continues filling in forms)* I mean, I thought I had enough saved up to last through the job search, but if I don't find work soon, I don't know what I'll do. It seems as though there aren't as many jobs around as there used to be... unless you know how to program computers, that is. Or have they developed computers that program themselves now? Where's the kind of work that a person used to be able to take pride in? I don't know anything about this technological stuff.

Case Worker: Good! Good! We'll change you to "Category C: Beginning to Realize True Worthlessness." It's a start.

Client: Look, I'm not worthless. I just need a job. I've got bills to pay and food to buy. I need shelter, transportation. I'm a good worker. I'll do almost anything.

Case Worker: Believe me, no one understands that better than we do. As I said before, we see a lot of this sort of thing here at Modern Employment. And as for not being worthless, let's see about that. What do you do?

Client: I'm a painter, or at least I was, for a company that makes kitchen appliances—mostly stoves and refrigerators. I worked for that company for ten years and then they install robots to do my job—all automated. No warning, no retraining, just one morning, "Sorry, we don't need you anymore. Thanks for the last ten years of your life." Replaced us all with a bunch of robots and a hot-shot kid to "debug the system" or something like that.

Case Worker: I'm not surprised. Did I mention that we see a lot of that sort of thing here? Not much of a future in assembly line painting, I'm afraid. Machines can do it faster for less.

Client: So I've heard.

Case Worker: (*looking in a book*) Yes, here it is... "Assembly Painter." According to the latest issue of Occupational Review, you have a usefulness rating of .14.

Client: .14? Is that bad?

Case Worker: I'm afraid it doesn't get much worse. But don't worry; even if you are a .14, you seem bright enough and you're still fairly young. I'm sure you can work your way up to at least "Earning Category" three or four. You'll probably never be a seven or eight again but, with some hard work, you won't be a zero forever.

Client: Look, this whole number business gives me the creeps. Numbers are for machines. I may have been replaced by a machine, but I'm more than a number.

Case Worker: Of course, you would like to raise your rating. You feel that you deserve a higher number. Use that feeling. It will help you to climb back up the ladder of worth.

Client: No, I mean it. I don't need to climb any ladder.

Case Worker: I'm afraid that sort of attitude will harm your chances for success.

Client: I'm telling you, I'm not a zero! I'm a redeemed child of God! I've been bought by the blood of the Lamb! I'm priceless!

Case Worker: (*looking through book*) Hmm... Let me see... "Charioteer"... "Chauffeur"... "Chemist"... "Child Actor"... No, I'm sorry; no "Child of God." How unusual! What does it pay?

Client: Why, it doesn't pay anything. Not in money, if that's what you mean.

Case Worker: It's a prestige kind of thing, then? Fame? Adoration? You derive your worth from the praises of others? Hope to get some gifts from adoring fans to tide you over the rough times?

Client: No, not at all. In fact, it's often quite the opposite. Sometimes, you have to endure pain and the jeers of others.

Case Worker: Well, exactly what does a "Child of God" do then?

Client: Being a redeemed child of God is not what you do. It's who you are; better yet, it's whose you are. I'm a child of God, and I don't do anything to earn that position, but it defines my life and influences everything I do.

Case Worker: Sort of like being the child of the Queen of England, then. Now, there's something we can sink our teeth into. (*looks in book*) "Prince/Princess"... Here we are. Uh, huh. Just as I thought. Earnings Category is way off the charts! Now, I know it's not quite the same, but maybe we can be creative here. Are there any kind of "perks" that go with this child of God thing? You know, free housing, crown jewels, speaking engagements at fancy dinners?

Client: I didn't become a Christian to earn money at it!

Case Worker: A Christian!? Why didn't you say so at the beginning? That's something we can translate into some great ratings! If you look good in front of a TV camera, you may be worth almost as much as a prince or princess after all. The studios are all fully automated, of course, but they still need people to stand in front of the cameras and stir up the masses. If you're already a sincere Christian, you'll have a head start. Even if you're not photogenic, your run-of-the-mill professional church workers don't do too bad. Of course, you have to watch out for celibacy, vows of poverty,

and that sort of thing. We'll clear up all the fine print before you show up for your first day. Wouldn't want any surprises. Still, overall, you'll have good job security. Just a minute and I'll see what sort of training we can enroll you in. Time's a-wasting.

- Client: Look, you've got this all wrong. I don't want to be a professional church worker just because I'm a Christian who needs employment. I've been called to serve God wherever I am, whatever I'm doing, even if I'm unemployed.
- Case Worker: Really?
- Client: That's right. And serving God means serving other people. It means using the unique personality and gifts that God has given me to help others. It's probably the only job a machine will never be able to take away from me. Only I can serve God and others in my own special way.
- Case Worker: You've got a point there.
- Client: I guess you could say I'm never unemployed in Christ's service. He gave up His life to bring me back to life, and now I give my life to Him. Of course, I still need a paying job, and I need it soon, but at least I know what I'm worth.
- Case Worker: One of us does, at any rate. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll type up a memo about this Child of God business and send it up to the home office. I doubt they'll include it in the listings, though.
- Client: Why is that?
- Case Worker: It doesn't fit in with the corporate motto: "You are what you earn." If they accepted this occupation, we'd be in for a radical recreation of the whole company, from the ground up. It'll never happen.
- Client: I wouldn't be too surprised if it did.
- Case Worker: Oh yeah? Why is that?
- Client: New creations are God's specialty.
- Reader 1: "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!" (1 John 3:1 NIV)
- Reader 2: "For it is by grace you have been saved through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9 NIV)
- Reader 3: "Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." (Ephesians 5:1-2 NIV)

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