

# **The Works and Days of Hesiod**

## **Lines 336-363 – Feasting with Gods and Men – Friends and Neighbors, Giving and Getting**

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"Let him hear the advice of Hesiod. . . . The advice of Hesiod is good." —Aristotle

"Lampon . . . greatly honors the sayings of Hesiod, the one he declares and recommends to his sons."  
—Pindar

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## **Feasting with Gods and Men – Friends and Neighbors, Giving and Getting**

### **Lines 336-363**

#### **Reading 8**

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This reading comes from the Cave's  
*The Best of Hesiod's Theogony & Works and Days*  
(where it appears as chapter eight of the *Works and Days*).

**A**S YOU ARE able, Perses, make sacrifice to the immortal gods in a pure manner and in a state that is physically clean. Burn for them glistening thighbones. At other times, mollify them with libations and burnt offerings. Sacrifice to them when you go to sleep and when the holy light of the sun returns so that they may be kind toward you in heart and spirit. That way you will be able to acquire the allotted land and goods of others rather than others making a deal for yours.

Invite the ones you love to the feast, but leave the one you hate alone. Whatever else you do, invite the man who lives nearby you. For if anything happens to your things and your house, your neighbors come right away, ungirt, while those related by marriage delay, girding themselves. A bad neighbor is a calamity—just as much as a good neighbor is a great advantage. The man with a noble neighbor has a share of honor and good value. If your neighbor is good, your ox will be safe.<sup>1</sup>

Take a fair measure from your neighbor, and pay him back fairly [350] with the same measure, or more if your stores allow it. That way, if you are in need later on, you will find that he can be relied on. Do not profit through evil means. Such profit amounts to ruin.

Be friendly to those who are friendly to you and available to those who are available to you. Give to the one who gives, but do not give to the one who

does not give. Why? Because a man gives to a giver, but he does not give to a non-giver. Giving is good; stealing is bad, a giver of death. For the man who gives willingly, even if he gives a great thing, he rejoices in his gift and takes pleasure in his spirit. But the man who seizes things in obedience to shamelessness, [360] even if it is a small thing, he hardens his dear heart until it is cold and stiff.

So ends Reading 8, “Feasting with Gods and Men – Friends and Neighbors, Giving and Getting.” **See you in Reading 9, “Maintenance and Consumption – Stores, Satisfaction, Women, and Children.”**

NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The line literally reads, “If your neighbor were not bad, then your ox would not be lost.”

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