

# **The Rich Young Ruler: How a Rich Man Enters the Kingdom of Heaven**



**MATTHEW 19:16-30**

**TEXT, EXPOSITION AND PRACTICAL HELPS**

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# THE MESSIAH'S TEACHINGS ON THE WAY TO JERUSALEM, [Matthew 19:1-20:34](#)

## A. The Rich Young Ruler: How a Rich Man Enters the Kingdom of Heaven, [Matthew 19:16-22](#)

[\(Matthew 19:16-22\)](#) **Introduction:** the Lord's approach to this young man has often seemed perplexing.

There are **three reasons** for the perplexity.

1. The young man called Christ "**Good Master**," but Christ denied that He was good. How can Christ, who claims to be God, deny that He is good?
2. The young man asked how he might receive eternal life. Christ said nothing about believing, but told the young man to keep certain laws.
3. The third perplexity is shocking. Christ told the young man that he had to sell all that he had and give it to the poor in order to receive eternal life. The question immediately arises, does Christ really demand that a person give all he is and has in order to be saved?

These three facts are puzzling. However, when we study the passage and understand what was happening, the puzzle fades. Christ led the young man through the steps that are needed to receive eternal life.

1. **Step 1: seek eternal life (v.16).**
2. **Step 2: know that God alone is good (v.17).**
3. **Step 3: keep the commandments (v.18-20).**
4. **Step 4: give all you are and have to Christ (v.21-22).**

### DEEPER STUDY # 1

[\(Matthew 19:16-22\)](#) **Young People:** this man is known as "**the rich young ruler**." He is so called because of the composite picture gleaned from all three gospels.

1. He was rich ([Matthew 19:22](#); [Mark 10:22](#); [Luke 18:23](#)).
2. He was young ([Matthew 19:20](#)).
3. He was a ruler ([Luke 18:18](#)).

He was a rare young man among the young people of his day. He was conscientious, responsible, and dependable—so much so that he had already been placed in a responsible position and made a ruler.

## **1. (Matthew 19:16) Eternal Life: the first step to enter God's kingdom is to seek eternal life.**

The rich young ruler demonstrated how we should seek eternal life. He did exactly what we must do when we wish anything: seek it. We are to seek eternal life just as the rich young ruler did, but in seeking there is a critical step to be taken: we must go to the right source.

**This is exactly what the rich young ruler did:**

- (1) he approached Christ, the Source of eternal life; and
- (2) he asked, that is, confessed his need.

**Note two things about the rich young ruler's seeking eternal life.**

1. He believed that eternal life existed, that there was a thing such as eternal life. He believed there was life in another world, and he was sincere and eager (perhaps desperate) to receive it. He **"came running and kneeled"** before Jesus (Mark 10:17).
2. He did a rare thing. He openly confessed his eager concern for eternal life. Few of the rich would ever confess an open concern as he did, and few of the young would ever consider it important enough at their stage of life. He lacked and had need, and he knew it and openly confessed it. He was seeking for inner peace and a sense of completeness, for a satisfaction which his wealth and position had not given him.

**Thought 1**. Note: a person does not secure eternal life; he receives it.  
And.....

- 1) A man does not receive eternal life until he seeks it.

**Acts 17:27 (NASB)**

**“<sup>27</sup> That they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.”**

**1 Chronicles 16:11 (NASB)**

**“<sup>11</sup> Seek the LORD and His strength; Seek His face continually.”**

**Psalms 34:18 (NASB)**

**“<sup>18</sup> The LORD is near to the brokenhearted And saves those who are crushed in spirit.”**

**Psalms 57:1 (NASB)**

**“<sup>1</sup> Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me, For my soul takes refuge in You; And in the shadow of Your wings I will take refuge Until destruction passes by.”**

**Psalms 105:4 (NASB)**

**“<sup>4</sup> Seek the LORD and His strength; Seek His face continually.”**

**Psalms 145:18 (NASB)**

“<sup>18</sup> The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth.”

**Isaiah 55:6 (NASB)**

“<sup>6</sup> Seek the LORD while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near.”

- 2) A man does not receive eternal life until he approaches Christ, the Source of life.

**Matthew 11:28 (NASB)**

“<sup>28</sup> Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.”

**Revelation 22:17 (NASB)**

“<sup>17</sup> The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.”

**Isaiah 1:18 (NASB)**

“<sup>18</sup> ‘Come now, and let us reason together,’ Says the LORD, Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool.”

**Isaiah 55:1 (NASB)**

“<sup>1</sup> Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. ‘Come’, buy wine and milk Without money and without cost.”

- 3) A man does not receive eternal life until he confesses his need.

**Matthew 10:32 (NASB)**

“<sup>32</sup> Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven.”

**Luke 12:8 (NASB)**

“<sup>8</sup> And I say to you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man will confess him also before the angels of God.”

**Romans 10:9 (NASB)**

“<sup>9</sup> That if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”

**1 John 2:23 (NASB)**

“<sup>23</sup> Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also.”

**1 John 4:15 (NASB)**

“<sup>15</sup> Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.”

## DEEPER STUDY # 2

([Matthew 19:16](#)) **Eternal Life**: note the different words that are used interchangeably throughout this passage.

1. *Eternal life*: "That I may obtain **eternal life**" ([Matthew 19:16](#)).
2. *Life*: "If you wish to **enter into life**" ([Matthew 19:17](#)).
3. *Heaven*: "You will have treasure in **heaven**" ([Matthew 19:21](#)).

The way Christ dealt with the subjects of eternal life, life, and heaven is meaningful.

In essence what He was saying is **threefold**.

1. He was making a distinction between life and existence. To receive eternal life is to enter life; to really live as one should live; to live just as God intended life to be lived; to live full of love, joy, and peace ([Galatians 5:22-23](#)). He was saying what Scripture proclaims time and again—that man without Christ does not have life. He is not living; he is only existing. He is in a state of death (always dying) and is separated from God, the Source of real life ([Ephes. 2:1](#); [1 John 5:12](#)).
2. He was teaching eternal existence. Man does not cease to be; he continues on and on. The only question is, does he continue on in a state of life, living eternally, or of death, being separated from God eternally? To receive eternal life means that a man "**enters life**," a continuation of life. To remain as he is means that a person continues on just existing, existing in a state of death, that is, being without God in this world and existing without eternal life.
3. He was teaching that heaven is another world—a real world in another dimension of being, an eternal dimension. It is wholly different from the physical and temporal dimension of this world. Note: there is to be "**treasure in heaven**" for following Christ, eternal treasure.

## 2. ([Matthew 19:17](#)) **Man, Misconceptions of: the second step to enter God's kingdom is to know that God alone is good.**

The rich young ruler failed at one critical point: he lived a self-righteous life. He did not know that the only good person was God and God alone. This is what Christ was saying to him. The rich young ruler had a wrong concept about the nature of man and saw Christ only as a man. To him man could be good.

1. He called Jesus "**Good Master.**" By Master he meant "**Good teacher, good Rabbi,**" acknowledging that Jesus was an honorable person to be highly regarded. But he saw Jesus *only* as a highly regarded teacher. He did not consider Jesus to be the Son of God. He perceived Jesus to be only a mere man, not God. He thought Jesus was a man who had achieved *unusual* moral goodness and by such had become a "**Good Master,**" one capable of teaching the truths of God and life.

2. He asked, "**What good thing shall I do?**" He had a religion of works not of faith. He thought he could secure eternal life by being good. If he could just keep some great rule and live a clean life, then God would accept him. He believed that his acts of morality and good works piled up a balance sheet and made him acceptable to God.

Christ had to correct these two errors. He attempted to do so by asking a pointed question, "Why callest thou me good? there is none good, but one, that is, God." He was saying to the young man, "God alone is good. No man is good, not in comparison to God, not even good enough to stand before God in righteousness. If I am but a mere man, a good teacher, then I am not good and do not have the words to eternal life. But if I am God, then you can address me as good and I do have the words to eternal life."

**Note two things.**

1. Christ told the young man how to enter life, that is, how to receive eternal life. Therefore, Christ was claiming to be God.

2. Christ was correcting the young man. He was speaking these words forcefully: "**Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is *only* One who is good (that is God).**" ([Matthew 19:17](#))

Christ would not have the young man thinking of Him only as a man, no matter how preeminent a teacher the young man thought Him to be. He was God, God's very own Son, and He was to be called the Son of God. Therefore, Christ tried to lead the young man to acknowledge Him as God. It was the only way the young man could ever receive eternal life.

**[John 3:16 \(NASB\)](#)**

**“<sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”**

**[John 14:6-7 \(NASB\)](#)**

**“<sup>6</sup> Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.**

**<sup>7</sup> "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.”**

**[Romans 10:9-10 \(NASB\)](#)**

**“<sup>9</sup> That if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; <sup>10</sup> for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.”**

**Romans 10:13 (NASB)**

<sup>13</sup> for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED."

**1 Timothy 2:5 (NASB)**

<sup>5</sup> For there is one God, *and* one mediator also between God and men, *the* man Christ Jesus."

**Thought 1.** The great misconception of man is that man is *good*—that the basic core and the raw nature of man is *good*—that man.....

1. can be good enough to secure God's approval.
2. can do enough *good works* to make himself acceptable to God.

**There are at least two basic faults with the position of self-righteousness.**

1) Self-righteousness lowers God, makes God less than perfect. It says that God will accept less than perfection. It almost makes man as high as God. In fact, theoretically and mathematically, if we can become better, gain more goodness, then we can work ourselves up to perfection. It says we can become as high as God, become as gods unto ourselves. Of course, such a theory and position are foolish. It fails to face up to the reality of the world, to the presence of evil and death and to the need to be transformed into a new creature capable of living eternally and perfectly.

2) Self-righteousness pollutes the area surrounding God with evil and imperfection. No matter how much good we do, we cannot make ourselves perfect. Bad and evil always lie in our background and roots. If God accepts us as bad and evil and wrong, then we would stand on the ground before Him imperfect, contaminating that ground and the atmosphere surrounding Him. Heaven would be contaminated and imperfect. Heaven would no longer be heaven, no longer perfect and free of sin.

There has to be a change, a complete and thorough change of our being—a transformation, a new birth—before we can enter God's presence. Realistically, no man nor anything else can transform man so that his body becomes perfect and his acts become only good. No man has or ever will have the power to perfect his body and behavior to live perfectly, permanently and eternally. In our present bodies we come short of God's glory and we die ([Romans 3:23](#); [Romans 5:12](#); [Romans 6:23](#)).

**Romans 3:23 (NASB)**

<sup>23</sup> For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

**Romans 5:12 (NASB)**

“<sup>12</sup> Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.”

**Romans 6:23 (NASB)**

“<sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

If we are going to be transformed, then God Himself will have to do it, and He will have to do it out of pure and perfect love. He will simply have to love us so much that he will transform us. And the glorious news is that He does love us that much.

He loves us so much.....

- a. that He gave His only Son to pay the penalty for our sins, which is death (**1 Peter 2:24**). This means, of course, that if the penalty has been paid, then we do not have to die.

**1 Peter 2:24 (NASB)**

“<sup>24</sup> And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.”

- b. that He gave His only Son to show us His great love and to lead us to believe in His love (**John 5:24**). This means, of course, that if we believe, then God will accept us and transform us.

**John 5:24 (NASB)**

“<sup>24</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”

**Thought 2.** God alone is perfectly good. He is the Fountain, the Pattern, the Ideal of all goodness. All goodness is to be measured by Him.

The problem with the rich young ruler was that he had not thought deeply enough. His thinking was shallow. How could he ever measure up enough to become acceptable to God? Is God so low? If so, if God is less than perfect, then how could He be God?

**Thought 3.** Self-righteousness (a person who thinks that he can be good enough and do enough good to make God accept him) commits a terrible fault. It makes God's love less than perfect. How?

The person who walks in self-righteousness waters down God's love; he makes God's love less than perfect and disallows God the right to express His love perfectly.



A perfect love must express itself perfectly: it must, from its height of perfection, reach down to the lowest depth of imperfection and give itself for that imperfection. A perfect love reaches from the highest height to the lowest depth. And the lowest depth of imperfection is man, a being who (of all things) rebels against God Himself and lives a self-willed life instead of a God-centered life. (Just picture the terrible scene: a being, a man rebelling against the God of the universe, the Creator and Lord of all things.)

This is exactly what God did for man. He reached down from the highest height and gave His only Son, the highest and most perfect Being, for man who had reached the lowest depth in rebelling against God ([John 3:16](#); [2 Cor. 5:21](#); [1 Peter 2:24](#)).

[John 3:16 \(NASB\)](#)

“<sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”

[2 Corinthians 5:21 \(NASB\)](#)

“<sup>21</sup> He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

[1 Peter 2:24 \(NASB\)](#)

“<sup>24</sup> And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.”

**Thought 4.** The rich young ruler failed in **two areas**.

- 1) He failed to face the reality of man's nature and the way of an imperfect world ([Romans 3:10-20](#)).
- 2) He failed to understand that Christ was more than a great and good man ([Matthew 19:17](#)).

### **3. (Matthew 19:18-20) Law— Commandments— Brotherhood: the third step to enter God's kingdom is to keep the commandments.**

Once Christ had led the young man to trust Him as God, then Christ had to lead him to love his neighbor. This, too, was a critical weakness in the man. Because of his low concept of God and his inaccurate concept of man's nature, he would claim that he had loved his neighbor; that he had kept the commandments dealing with his neighbor. But Christ would prove that he had not loved his neighbor, not as he should. He had kept the commandments only in a superficial sense. He had not kept them within, not in his spirit. He had not loved his neighbor from the heart. If he had, he would have helped his neighbor more, much more (cp. [Matthew 19:21-22](#)).

[Matthew 19:21-22 \(NASB\)](#)

“<sup>21</sup> Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be complete, go *and* sell your

**possessions and give to *the* poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."**

**<sup>22</sup> But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property."**

Christ told the young man very simply, "**Keep the commandments.**" The young man asked, "**Which?**" By asking, the man revealed an inadequate concept of God's law. He thought some were more important than others. He wanted to know which ones would give him life.

Christ struck at the man's real problem. The man was failing to love his neighbor as himself, so Christ quoted five of the ten commandments, five that have to do with his duty toward his neighbor ([Exodus 20:12-16](#)).

**Exodus 20:12-16 (NASB)**

**<sup>12</sup> Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you.**

**<sup>13</sup> You shall not murder.**

**<sup>14</sup> You shall not commit adultery.**

**<sup>15</sup> You shall not steal.**

**<sup>16</sup> You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."**

- 1. Murder:** concerns our neighbor's life.
- 2. Adultery:** concerns our neighbor's chastity and purity.  
To commit adultery does two things.
  - a.** Adultery takes the body of our neighbor to ourselves and gives our body to another.
  - b.** Adultery takes the body of our neighbor's spouse away from our neighbor and takes our own body away from our spouse.
- 3. Stealing:** concerns our neighbor's property.
- 4. False witness:** concerns our neighbor's name, reputation, and understanding of the truth.
- 5. Honoring parents:** concerns our duty to the closest neighbors we have, our own family.

**Note:** Christ summed up all five commandments by saying, "**You shall love your neighbor as yourself**" ([Leviticus 19:18](#)). This is what James called the "**royal law**" ([James 2:8](#)). The person who loves his neighbor will have excellent relations with all and will experience love, joy, and peace—the abundance of life. He will experience exactly what Christ says: he will "**enter into life.**"

The man made the phenomenal claim that he had kept all five of the commandments that Christ quoted. Of course, as is true with all men, he had not kept them—not perfectly, not in God's eyes, not in the spirit in which God intended them to be kept. He was not generous enough with others, not giving and helping like he should. Christ was ready to show him this.

**In essence, Christ had said to the rich young ruler: keep the commandments.**

1. Keep the commandments dealing with your neighbor: the ones especially needed by the rulers and the rich of the world—the commandments which are so often misunderstood and neglected by rulers and the rich.

2. However, the rich young ruler misunderstood God's law: he had a tragic sense of self-righteousness.

- a. He thought that some commandments were more important than others.
- b. He thought that man could keep the commandments and build up a balance sheet against God, securing God's acceptance.

**1 John 5:1-2 (NASB)**

“<sup>1</sup>Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the *child* born of Him.

<sup>2</sup>By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.”

**Thought 1. Note two extremely important facts.**

1) The first thing Jesus told the young man was the very commandment of God.

**1 John 3:23 (NASB)**

“<sup>23</sup>This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.”

2) Christ summed up the law in two commandments. The first has to do with our love for God which sums up the first five commandments, and the second is the one He used to sum up the second group of commandments which He quoted to this young man.

**Matthew 22:39 (NASB)**

“<sup>39</sup>The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'”

**Thought 2.** Note that the very commandments quoted by Christ are the commandments needed by the rich, the powerful, the famous, and the wise. They are the commandments so often ignored, neglected, and denied by the achiever. In fact, the achiever sometimes uses and steps upon his neighbor to secure what he seeks.

#### **4. ([Matthew 19:21-22](#)) Self-Denial: the fourth step to enter God's kingdom is to give all you are and have to Christ.**

Christ knew exactly what the young man needed. His rejection of Christ showed this. He was hoarding wealth instead of distributing it. God had given to him that he might have to give to others ([Ephes. 4:28](#)), but he was failing to love and help his neighbor anywhere close to what he should.

What the young man needed was just what Christ said: "*If you wish to be complete* [that is, really keep the commandments and receive heaven] then demonstrate to all publicly and without question that you love your neighbor: *go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.*" ([Matthew 19:21](#)).

In our struggle to protect the glorious truth that man is saved by grace and grace alone, we often forget and neglect another great truth: to follow Christ is to serve and minister to our neighbor. To follow Christ is to deny self completely, all that we are as well as all that we have ([Luke 9:23](#)).

##### **Luke 9:23 (NASB)**

**“<sup>23</sup> And He was saying to *them* all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.”**

When we love our neighbor as ourselves, then we show that we truly love God. If we do not love and minister to our neighbor (above self), then we do not love God.

When we deny self by giving all we are and have ([1 John 4:20](#)), then and only then do we receive heaven and the treasures of heaven. To deny self, to give all we are and have, is a hard saying; but Christ demands it. Our attempts to soften it do not annul His demand.

##### **1 John 4:20 (NASB)**

**“<sup>20</sup> If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.”**

**The young man rejected Christ for three reasons.**

**1. Unbelief:** he was not willing to entrust his life to Christ. There was some lack of belief that Jesus Christ was really God's very own Son standing before him.

**2. Self-righteousness and pride:** his concept of religion was keeping laws and doing good in order to secure God's acceptance. He felt that he had the power and goodness to make God approve and accept him.

**3. Love of the world:** he was rich and was unwilling to give up the comfort and possessions he had obtained. He made the fatal mistake that so many make with wealth, power, and fame.

- a. He loved the things of the world more than he loved people. He preferred hoarding and extravagance, preferred living sumptuously and comfortably to helping those who were so desperately in need: the hungry, thirsty, poor, diseased, suffering, orphans, widows, widowers, empty, lonely, and the lost.
- b. He loved the things of the world more than he loved the hope of eternal life.
- c. He loved the position and recognition and esteem and power of the earth more than he loved Christ.

**Mark 10:28 (NASB)**

**“<sup>28</sup> Peter began to say to Him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed You.”**

**Luke 9:23 (NASB)**

**“<sup>23</sup> And He was saying to *them* all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.”**

**Luke 14:26-27 (NASB)**

**“<sup>26</sup> If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.**

**<sup>27</sup> Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”**

**Luke 14:33 (NASB)**

**“<sup>33</sup> So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.”**

## B. The Danger of Riches, [Matthew 19:23-26](#)

[\(Matthew 19:23-26\)](#) **Introduction:** the words "then said Jesus" connect this passage to the experience of the rich young ruler. Jesus took the rich young ruler's rejection and *warned* all men about the dangers of wealth.

Wealth is fraught with dangers and pitfalls.....

- a. for the man who is seeking to be rich.
- b. for the man who is already rich.

The dangers are many, and they are entangling and enslaving—so much so that Christ made the shocking statement that it was extremely difficult for a rich man to be saved.

The words are strong; the idea is shocking. However, Christ loves and cares for all men including the rich, so He had to be truthful. It is extremely difficult for a rich man to enter heaven. The dangers that face the rich are real and terrible, so the warning must be real and truthful.

1. **The fact: wealth pulls a person from the Kingdom of Heaven (v.23).**
2. **The great difficulty illustrated: it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God (v.24).**
3. **The shock: who is saved if wealth is not God's blessing and a blessing of righteousness (v.25)?**
4. **The only hope for the rich (v.26).**

### 1. [\(Matthew 19:23\)](#) **Wealth—Materialism—Pride—Worldliness:** **wealth pulls a person away from the Kingdom of Heaven.**

It is difficult for a rich person to enter heaven. Christ made this statement because of the things that *pulled* the rich young ruler away. Wealth does pull a person away from heaven. There is a lure, an attraction, a force, a power, a pull that reaches out and draws us when we look at or possess wealth. There are pulls so forceful that they will enslave and doom any rich man who fails to turn and embrace God.

1. *Wealth creates the big "I"* (cp. [Matthew 19:16, 20](#)).

[Matthew 19:16 \(NASB\)](#)

“<sup>16</sup> And someone came to Him and said, "Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?"

[Matthew 19:20 \(NASB\)](#)

“<sup>20</sup> The young man said\* to Him, "All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?"

The wealthy are usually esteemed, honored, and envied. Wealth brings comfort, possessions, position, power, and recognition. It boosts *ego* and makes a person self-sufficient and independent in this world.

As a result, there is a tendency for the rich to feel independent and self-sufficient, to live as though they need nothing; and in such an atmosphere and world of thought God is forgotten. A person forgets that there are things that money cannot buy and events from which money cannot save. Peace, love, joy—all that really matters within the spirit of man—can never be bought. Neither can money save a person from trouble, disaster, disease, accident, or death—the trials that are sure to come upon all.

**2. *Wealth tends to make a person hoard* (cp. [Matthew 19:21](#)).**

**Matthew 19:21 (NASB)**

**“<sup>21</sup> Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be complete, go *and* sell your possessions and give to *the* poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”**

The Bible lays down the principle for handling money for all men, even for the poor:

**Ephesians 4:28 (NASB)**

**“<sup>28</sup> He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have *something* to share with one who has need.”**

**Matthew 19:19 (NASB)**

**“<sup>19</sup> HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER; and YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.”**

**Matthew 22:39 (NASB)**

**“<sup>39</sup> The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’”**

The world reels in desperate need. People are starving, sick, unhoused, unclothed, and suffering by the millions; and teeming millions are spiritually lost and without God in this world and doomed to die without ever knowing Him. When any of us sit still and objectively look at the world in its desperate plight, we ask: **"How in this world can any man hoard and not help—even to the last available penny? Why would any man keep more than what he needs for himself and his family?"**

As God looks at the rich, He is bound to ask the same questions. In fact, His questions are bound to be more pointed and forceful. This is exactly what Christ said to the rich young ruler:

**Matthew 19:21 (NASB)**

**“<sup>21</sup> Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be complete, go *and* sell your possessions and give to *the* poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”**

**3. *Riches tend to make a man selfish.*** For some unexplainable reason, the more we get, the more we want. When we taste the things of this world and become comfortable, we tend to fear losing our possessions.

We struggle to keep what we have and to get more. True, many are willing to make contributions—but only a certain amount, an amount that will not lower their overall estate, or standing, or level of comfort and possessions. There are few who give all they are and have to Christ in order to meet the needs of the world.

As Christ said, *"It is difficult, very difficult for the rich* [meaning those who have anything in comparison with most of the world] *to enter heaven."* If we do not have compassion and take care of our brothers (fellow-man) when they are in desperate need, how can we expect God to have compassion and take care of us when we face the desperate need for heaven?

It is foolish for us to think that a loving and just God will meet our need for life when we would not meet the need of our fellow man for life. The rich (**all of us who have anything in comparison with the rest of the world**) have the means to help and to reach the world with the gospel if they just would.

5. *Wealth attaches a person to the world* (cp. [Matthew 19:22](#)).

**Matthew 19:22 (NASB)**

**“<sup>22</sup> But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property.”**

Wealth enables a person to buy things that.....

- a. make him comfortable
- b. please his taste
- c. stir his ego
- d. expand his experience
- e. challenge his mental pursuit
- f. stimulate his flesh
- g. stretch his self-image

If a man centers his life upon the things of the world, his attention is on the world and not on God. He tends to become wrapped up in securing more and in protecting what he has. Too often, he gives little if any time and thought to heavenly matters. Wealth and the things it can buy (**can and usually do**) consume the rich.

**DEEPER STUDY # 1**

**([Matthew 19:23](#)) Hardly (*duskolōs*):** the word means barely or with great difficulty. It is difficult, very difficult for a rich man to enter heaven. Why? In one simple sentence, it is difficult for a rich man to give all that he has to help the needy—to give all that has been so pleasing, so comfortable, so ego boosting, and so rewarding in possessions and position and self-esteem.



## DEEPER STUDY # 2

([Matthew 19:23](#)) **Rich**: Who are the rich? This question desperately needs to be asked of every individual in light of the desperate needs of the world. Every one of us needs to compare what we have with what the vast majority of the world has. The rich are persons who have anything to put back beyond meeting the needs of their own family (**and by needs is meant *real* needs**). This is exactly what Christ and the Bible say time and again (cp. also [Mark 12:41-44](#); [Luke 21:1-4](#); [Acts 4:34-35](#)).

### [Mark 12:41-44 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>41</sup> And He sat down opposite the treasury, and *began* observing how the people were putting money into the treasury; and many rich people were putting in large sums.

<sup>42</sup> A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which amount to a cent.

<sup>43</sup> Calling His disciples to Him, He said to them, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury;

<sup>44</sup> for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on."

### [Luke 21:1-4 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>1</sup> And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury.

<sup>2</sup> And He saw a poor widow putting in two small copper coins.

<sup>3</sup> And He said, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all of them;

<sup>4</sup> for they all out of their surplus put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on."

### [Acts 4:34-35 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>34</sup> For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales

<sup>35</sup> and lay them at the apostles' feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need."

In a summary statement, who are the rich? **The rich are any of us who have anything beyond what we need.** What Christ demands is that we give all that we *are and have* to meet the needs of those in such desperate need, holding back nothing. This is often the great complaint against Christians, that we just do not believe, not to the point that we are willing to follow the sacrificial example of Christ. The evidence of our unbelief is seen in Christ's insistence that we give all we have to feed the starving and to meet the desperate needs of the world, and yet we do not do it.

Gandhi, the great leader of India's independence, is said to have never embraced Christianity for this very reason. How many others have rejected Christ because of our hypocrisy?

**Matthew 19:21 (NASB)**

“<sup>21</sup> Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be complete, go *and* sell your possessions and give to *the* poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”

**Matthew 19:29 (NASB)**

“<sup>29</sup> And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life.”

**Matthew 6:21 (NASB)**

“<sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

**Matthew 22:39 (NASB)**

“<sup>39</sup> The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’”

**Luke 12:31-34 (NASB)**

“<sup>31</sup> But seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you.

<sup>32</sup> "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom.

<sup>33</sup> "Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys.

<sup>34</sup> "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

**Luke 19:8 (NASB)**

“<sup>8</sup> Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much.”

**John 13:35 (NASB)**

“<sup>35</sup> By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

**John 15:10 (NASB)**

“<sup>10</sup> If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.”

**Romans 12:9 (NASB)**

“<sup>9</sup> *Let love be* without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.”

**1 Corinthians 10:33 (NASB)**

“<sup>33</sup> Just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but the *profit* of the many, so that they may be saved.”

**2 Corinthians 8:9 (NASB)**

“<sup>9</sup> For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.”

**Ephesians 4:28 (NASB)**

“<sup>28</sup> He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have *something* to share with one who has need.”

**1 Thessalonians 3:12 (NASB)**

“<sup>12</sup> And may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also *do* for you.”

**Hebrews 13:5 (NASB)**

“<sup>5</sup> *Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU."*”

**DEEPER STUDY # 3**

**([Matthew 19:23-24](#)) Kingdom of Heaven:** the Kingdom of Heaven evidently means the same thing as the Kingdom of God, eternal life, and salvation. The Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God are interchanged when Jesus says, "it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven" ([Matthew 19:23](#)) or "Kingdom of God" ([Matthew 19:24](#)). Eternal life ([Matthew 19:26](#)) and salvation ([Matthew 19:25](#)) belong to the very same concept. Eternity and salvation, the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven, is the very subject being discussed in [Matthew 19:16-30](#). Having eternal life, being saved, or entering into the Kingdom of God or of Heaven is more difficult for a rich man than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.

The Kingdom of Heaven and of God is revealed in four different stages throughout history.

1. There is the spiritual kingdom that is at hand; it is present right now ([Matthew 4:17](#); [Matthew 12:28](#)).
  - a. The present kingdom refers to God's rule and reign and authority in the lives of believers.

**Ephesians 1:18-23 (NASB)**

“<sup>18</sup> *I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,*  
<sup>19</sup> *and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might*  
<sup>20</sup> *which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,*  
<sup>21</sup> *far above all rule and authority and power and*

dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

<sup>22</sup> And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church,  
<sup>23</sup> which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”

**Philippians 2:5-11 (NASB)**

“<sup>5</sup> Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

<sup>6</sup> who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

<sup>7</sup> but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men.

<sup>8</sup> Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

<sup>9</sup> For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,

<sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

<sup>11</sup> and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

**Colossians 1:13 (NASB)**

“<sup>13</sup> For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son.”

- b. The present kingdom is offered to the world and to men in the person of Jesus Christ.
- c. The present kingdom must be received as a little child.

**Mark 10:14-15 (NASB)**

“<sup>14</sup> But when Jesus saw this, He was indignant and said to them, "Permit the children to come to Me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

<sup>15</sup> "Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it *at all*.”

- d. The present kingdom is experienced only by the new birth.

**John 3:3 (NASB)**

<sup>3</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

- e. The present kingdom is entered now and must be received now.

**Matthew 21:31 (NASB)**

**“<sup>31</sup> Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said\* to them, “Truly I say to you that the tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the kingdom of God before you.”**

**Mark 10:15 (NASB)**

**“<sup>15</sup> Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it *at all*.”**

- f. The present kingdom is a spiritual, life-changing blessing.

**Romans 14:17 (NASB)**

**“<sup>17</sup> For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”**

- g. The present kingdom is to be the first thing sought by believers.

**Matthew 6:33 (NASB)**

**“<sup>33</sup> But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”**

2. There is the professing kingdom that is also in this present age. It refers to modern day Christianity in every generation. It pictures what the Kingdom of Heaven or professing Christianity is like, and what professing Christianity will be like between Christ's first coming and His return. This imperfect state is what is called "**the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven**" ([Matthew 13:1-52](#), esp. [Matthew 13:11](#)).

**Matthew 13:24-25 (NASB)**

**“<sup>24</sup> Jesus presented another parable to them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field.**

**<sup>25</sup> “But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away.”**

3. There is the millennial kingdom that is future. It is the actual rule of Christ or the government of Christ that is to come to this earth for a thousand years.

- a. The millennial kingdom is the kingdom predicted by Daniel.

**Daniel 2:44 (NASB)**

“<sup>44</sup> In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and *that* kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.”

**Daniel 7:18, 22, 27 (NASB)**

“<sup>18</sup> 'But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come.'

<sup>22</sup> until the Ancient of Days came and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom.

<sup>27</sup> 'Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of *all* the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom *will be* an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.’”

b. The millennial kingdom is the kingdom promised to David.

**2 Samuel 7:12 (NASB)**

“<sup>12</sup> When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom.

<sup>16</sup> "Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.”

**Psalms 89:3-4 (NASB)**

“<sup>3</sup> I have made a covenant with My chosen; I have sworn to David My servant,

<sup>4</sup> I will establish your seed forever And build up your throne to all generations.” Selah.

**Zechariah 12:8 (NASB)**

“<sup>8</sup> In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the one who is feeble among them in that day will be like David, and the house of David *will be* like God, like the angel of the LORD before them.”

c. The millennial kingdom is the kingdom pictured by John.

**Revelation 20:4-6 (NASB)**

“<sup>4</sup> Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I *saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and

reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

<sup>5</sup> The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection.

<sup>6</sup> Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.”

4. There is the perfect kingdom of the new heaven and earth that is future.

a. The eternal kingdom is the rule and reign of God in a perfect universe for all eternity.

**John 14:1-3 (NASB)**

“<sup>1</sup> Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.

<sup>2</sup> “In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.

<sup>3</sup> “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also.”

**1 Corinthians 15:24 (NASB)**

“<sup>24</sup> Then *comes* the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.”

**2 Peter 3:10-13 (NASB)**

“<sup>10</sup> But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

<sup>11</sup> Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, <sup>12</sup> looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!

<sup>13</sup> But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.”

**Revelation 21:1 (NASB)**

“<sup>1</sup> Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea.”

b. The eternal kingdom is the perfect state of being for the believer in the future.

**1 Corinthians 15:50 (NASB)**

“<sup>50</sup> Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.”

**Revelation 21:4-5 (NASB)**

“<sup>4</sup> And He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”

<sup>5</sup> And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true.”

c. The eternal kingdom is an actual place into which believers are to enter sometime in the future.

**Matthew 8:11 (NASB)**

“<sup>11</sup> I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline *at the table* with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.”

d. The eternal kingdom is a gift of God that will be given in the future.

**Luke 12:32 (NASB)**

“<sup>32</sup> Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom.”

**2. (Matthew 19:24) Riches— Camel— Needle: it is extremely difficult for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God.**

It is so difficult that Jesus says, "Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." ([Matthew 19:24](#)).

There have been various interpretations of *camel* and *needle* in an attempt to soften the words of Jesus. For example, some have said that the "**needle**" was a small gate in the wall surrounding Jerusalem, a small gate which sat right beside the large gate. It is thought that the large gate was closed at night to protect the city from marauders and enemies, and the small gate was used by the traveling public. The small gate is said to have been called "**the Needle's Eye**" because it was so small that it was difficult for even a single person to pass through.



Others have said that the Greek word Christ used was *kamilos* (a ship's rope or cable) not *kamelos* (camel). Note: the only difference between the two words is that the letter (i) is an (e) in the word for camel (*kamelos*).

**Three things need to be noted about these interpretations.**

1. There is no doubt that Jesus means a literal *needle*. He as much as says so in **Matthew 19:26** "*With men this is impossible.*" What He does is use a **proverbial** saying *for an impossibility*. Most countries have proverbs that express the impossibility of some things. The camel was the largest animal among the Jews, so Christ either used a well known proverb among the Jews or else created one. There is also this point, when Christ chose to speak in parables, He chose the most common and ordinary thing to express His meaning.
2. Attempts to soften the Lord's point are just that: attempts to soften. But nothing can be softened with **Matthew 19:26**, "*With men this is impossible.*" No man, not even the rich man himself, can save a rich man. The danger of riches is very real and terrible. Wealth entangles and enslaves a man so much that it is extremely difficult for a rich man to let go and give his wealth to help the desperate needs of the world. He just cannot accept the fact that he is to **"labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need"** (**Ephes. 4:28**). If a man is rich, it is difficult not to live in personal luxury and to build large estates. Heavy and fancy meals, full and fashionable wardrobes, a fine and large house, recognition and attention, position and power—so much is so difficult to let go. It is the ego that refuses to let go.
3. It is just as difficult for the softening interpretations to be performed as it is for the literal interpretation. How does a camel trying to get through a gate made only for a man soften anything? It would be impossible. And how does threading a needle with a ship's cable soften anything? Again, it is impossible.

**Thought 1.** In the illustration given by Christ there are some comparisons between a camel and a rich man.

1) A camel is *too big* to go through the eye of a needle; a rich man is too big to go through the gate of heaven.

**1 Timothy 6:17 (NASB)**

**“<sup>17</sup> Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.”**

2) A camel *never thinks* about going through the eye of a needle; a rich man seldom, if ever, thinks about going into heaven.

**Luke 12:19-20 (NASB)**

“<sup>19</sup> And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years *to come*; take your ease, eat, drink *and* be merry.”

<sup>20</sup> "But God said to him, 'You fool! This *very* night your soul is required of you; and *now* who will own what you have prepared?’”

**Proverbs 18:11 (NASB)**

“<sup>11</sup> A rich man's wealth is his strong city, And like a high wall in his own imagination.”

**Deuteronomy 8:13-14 (NASB)**

“<sup>13</sup> And when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and gold multiply, and all that you have multiplies,

<sup>14</sup> then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.”

3) A camel was *not made* to go through the eye of a needle; a man was not made for wealth, not made to be possessed and enslaved by the *things* and *possessions* of this world.

**Mark 4:19 (NASB)**

“<sup>19</sup> But the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.”

**1 Timothy 6:9 (NASB)**

“<sup>9</sup> But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.”

4) A camel *works* for its master; a man is to work for his Master (God).

**Matthew 6:24 (NASB)**

“<sup>24</sup> No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”

**Colossians 3:22-24 (NASB)**

“<sup>22</sup> Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who *merely* please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

<sup>23</sup> Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men,

<sup>24</sup> knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.”

### 3. (Matthew 19:25) Wealth— Salvation: the disciples were shocked, thoroughly dismayed.

Christ was saying something diametrically opposed to what they and everyone else had always thought. They had been taught (**as have succeeding generations, even the church**).....

- a. that prosperity (**wealth, comfort, and things**) is God's blessing.
- b. that a person receives and has because God is blessing him.
- c. that prosperity is the reward of righteousness and obedience.
- d. that God blesses a person with the things of this earth if they are righteous and obedient.

However, Christ was saying the very opposite: that a prosperous person would most likely never enter heaven; that prosperity posed such a dangerous threat to a person that his eternal doom was almost assured. The disciples knew that God would never put a person in such a precarious and dangerous position. They knew that Christ was attacking the world's most cherished and ardent belief: be good (**righteous**) and you will be blessed by God (**and the thought of blessing is always of material blessing**).

They were shocked, thoroughly dismayed: Who then could be saved? The vast majority of people were threatening their own eternal destiny. They were dooming themselves. Since prosperity is not the reward (**sign**) for righteousness, and the rich are barred from heaven, that means that the poor, too, are barred; for they are spending most of their time dreaming and seeking prosperity!

The idea that prosperity is the reward for righteousness, that God blesses a person with the things of this earth if they are righteous and obedient, is so prevalent a view that a comment is needed at this point.

1. God's concern is spiritual blessings, not material blessings. God promises a man the necessities of life (**food, clothing, shelter**) if he seeks God first ([Matthew 6:33](#); cp. [Matthew 6:25-34](#)). God can, if He chooses, bless any of us with whatever and however much He wishes for special purposes, for the purposes of having in order "**to share with one who has need**" ([Ephesians 4:28](#)). But just because a man is prosperous does not mean the man is righteous, and just because a person is righteous does not mean that he is going to be blessed materially. Righteousness and prosperity have nothing to do with each other. In fact, "**It is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.**"([Matthew 19:23](#))

2. Wealth is seldom a good thing. As Christ taught in this passage, wealth is fraught with dangers that make it extremely difficult for the rich to enter heaven. Nevertheless the whole world, rich and poor alike, puts its primary attention upon securing more and more.

3. Wealth is secured by man himself, by his own energy and effort. Man secures wealth by dreaming how to make it (**a vision, perspective**) and having the initiative to make it (**acting and timing**). A man may trust God to help him secure wealth, but a man may have nothing to do with God and secure wealth on his own. There is a sense in which a man's strength and mind are from God, but that has nothing to do with a personal or active relationship with God. Most rich men control their own lives and go about securing their treasure on this earth *without God* ([Matthew 6:21](#)).

**Matthew 6:21 (NASB)**

**“<sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”**

On the other hand a man may trust God to bless him so that he may help others, and God may choose to bless him. But God's choosing to bless him is for the purpose of helping others, not to hoard and live above what is needed (**extravagantly and sumptuously**). In fact what Christ teaches is that the rich are *to live just as sacrificially* as the poor.

**Thought 1.** Something is usually forgotten: man was not made for things (**money, wealth, possessions**), but things were made for man. Yet man allows himself to become enslaved to things, ever lusting after more and more.

Wealth (**money, possessions, things**) is only a commodity—a means, a tool—to help man carry out his purpose and service upon earth. At least, that is what wealth is supposed to be. But most men become the tool and the commodity of money. Few men know why God put them on earth.

**Psalms 118:9 (NASB)**

**“<sup>9</sup> It is better to take refuge in the LORD Than to trust in princes.”**

**Isaiah 2:22 (NASB)**

**“<sup>22</sup> Stop regarding man, whose breath of life is in his nostrils; For why should he be esteemed?”**

**Jeremiah 17:5 (NASB)**

**“<sup>5</sup> Thus says the LORD, "Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind And makes flesh his strength, And whose heart turns away from the LORD.”**

**4. ([Matthew 19:26](#)) Wealth— Salvation— Repentance: there is one hope for the rich man—God.**

1. A rich man must turn away from men. No man can save a rich man nor any other man for that matter.

- a. No man has the strength or know-how to break the power of *seeking things* that hold sway over a rich man. The natural urge within man is to seek more and more comfort and ease and possessions. No man has the

power to break that *natural urge*. The entanglements are too pleasing and enslaving.

- b. No man can recreate the soul of a man, change it so that he seeks "**those things which are above**" and sets his "**affection on things above, not on things on the earth**" ([Col. 3:1-2](#)). No philosophy, no psychology, no medicine, no education, no politics, no social movement can change the soul of a man.

**Matthew 19:23 (NASB)**

“<sup>23</sup> And Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.”

**Matthew 19:26 (NASB)**

“<sup>26</sup> And looking at *them* Jesus said to them, "With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

2. A rich man must turn to God and His power. God is the only hope for a rich man. Only God can break a rich man's enslavement to this earth—only God can convert and change, turn and save the rich man from the danger and doom of wealth.

How? Very simply. The words of Christ to the rich young ruler tell the rich what to do: "**.....If you wish to be complete , go *and* sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.**" ([Matthew 19:21](#)).

This is a hard saying, a difficult thing for any of us to do—so difficult that we try to escape from its stringent demand and soften and explain it away. *But it is what Christ said. The disciples understood it perfectly* ([Matthew 19:25-27](#)).

**Matthew 19:25-27 (NASB)**

“<sup>25</sup> When the disciples heard *this*, they were very astonished and said, "Then who can be saved?"

<sup>26</sup> And looking at *them* Jesus said to them, "With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

<sup>27</sup> Then Peter said to Him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed You; what then will there be for us?"

In very practical terms, to receive eternal life we must *give all we are and have*. Naturally, this is more difficult for the rich, for "**for he was one who owned much property.**" ([Matthew 19:22](#)).

**There are four practical steps that will help a rich man be saved.**

1. We must listen and heed immediately the inner voice, the pricking of conscience to give our lives and possessions to God. We must turn immediately to God and never turn away.

2. We must study God's Word daily for direction, and talk to and trust God to keep our heart free from the lure and deceptions of possessions.
3. We must use our wealth to help the desperate needs of others. We must *realize, know, and acknowledge* that the vast majority of the world is hungry, hurting, and needing help—desperately so—and that God expects us to use all we have to meet those needs. We must not hoard and live extravagantly in the midst of so much need.
4. We must develop a strong desire for heaven, knowing that our sojourn on earth is ever so short, as brief as the lily of the field.

**Luke 1:37 (NASB)**

“<sup>37</sup> For nothing will be impossible with God.”

**Job 42:2 (NASB)**

“<sup>2</sup> I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.”

**1 Timothy 6:17-19 (NASB)**

“<sup>17</sup> Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.

<sup>18</sup> *Instruct them* to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share,

<sup>19</sup> storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.”

**1 Corinthians 3:11 (NASB)**

“<sup>11</sup> For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

**Hebrews 11:24-26 (NASB)**

“<sup>24</sup> By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,

<sup>25</sup> choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,

<sup>26</sup> considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.”

**DEEPER STUDY # 4**

([Matthew 19:26](#)) **Rich, The:** some rich persons did turn to Christ. They serve as excellent examples for the rich to follow in turning to God.

1. James and John ([Mark 1:20](#); cp. note—[Mark 10:36-37](#)).
2. Matthew ([Matthew 9:9-13](#)).
3. Zacchaeus ([Luke 19:1-10](#)).
4. Joseph of Arimathaea ([Matthew 27:57](#)).

5. Nicodemus ([John 19:39](#) cp. [John 3:1](#). He may or may not have been saved.)
6. Lydia ([Acts 16:14-15](#)).
7. Manaen, a foster brother of Herod, who was probably wealthy ([Acts 13:1](#)).
8. Some women who supported Jesus ([Luke 8:2-3](#)).

## C. The Reward for Believers, [Matthew 19:27-30](#)

[\(Matthew 19:27-30\)](#) **Introduction:** Peter's question is often misunderstood. Peter was not being mercenary; he needed assurance. He wanted to make sure that he and the other disciples were *really saved*. Anyone would need assurance after what Jesus had just said: **“If you wish to be complete, go *and* sell your possessions and give to *the* poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”** ([Matthew 19:21](#)).

Few sell everything and give it all away ([Matthew 19:21](#)), and few, whether rich or poor, control their dreams and urges to have more ([Mark 10:25](#)). The disciples, as all honest men, knew this. They also knew the extreme demands Christ was making to be a true follower of Christ. They, unlike so many of us in our attempts to soften His words, understood exactly what He was saying. The extremity of His words was shocking. They could not see how anyone could be saved, and the answer Christ gave to their question about salvation said nothing to give them *personal* assurance: **“With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”** ([Matthew 19:26](#)).

The disciples sensed a deep need for assurance. Had they done enough and given up enough? They thought so and were almost sure they had, but had they?

Somewhat meekly Peter said, **“Behold, we have left everything and followed You; what then will there be for us?”** ([Matthew 19:27](#)).

Christ used Peter's question to teach a wonderful truth. They and all who followed Him could rest assured—they would be enormously rewarded.

Note the Lord's assuring words: **“Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”**<sup>29</sup> **“And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life”** ([Matthew 19:28-29](#)).

1. **The two essentials for reward (v.27).**
2. **The apostle's reward: shall reign and rule with Christ (v.28).**
3. **The believer's reward: shall receive great reward (v.29).**
4. **The shocking surprise: the severe judgment of believers—perfect justice (v.30).**

### 1. [\(Matthew 19:27\)](#) **Rewards—Believers—Self-Denial: there are two essentials for reward.**

1. A person must forsake all. What is meant by this? Peter and some of the other disciples had families, and they readily met the needs of their families ([Matthew 8:14](#)).



**Matthew 8:14 (NASB)**

**“<sup>14</sup> When Jesus came into Peter's home, He saw his mother-in-law lying sick in bed with a fever.”**

Therefore, *forsaking all* does not mean deserting and shirking our day to day responsibilities to our families. What *forsaking all* means is to renounce and to relinquish all—to give up all unreservedly. It means that a person takes care of his family, yes; but beyond that, he uses what he has to meet the needs of a desperate world. It means that a person serves and puts Christ before all, including family and friends. It means that a person *forsakes all sinful behavior* such as dirty habits, evil associations, crooked ways, off colored jokes and curse words. It means that we allow nothing to interfere with serving Christ. It means to put *following Christ* first. When we put Him first, we discover a wonderful truth: life becomes balanced. All other things, including family, fall into their proper place; and life becomes a most enriching experience (**even if a person's family rejects him**).

2. A person must follow Christ. A person who really follows Christ has no sense of regret and no desire to complain. He is truly a new creature: **“the old things passed away; behold, new things have come”** ([2 Cor. 5:17](#)). He is satisfied and complete ([Col. 2:10](#)).

**Colossians 2:10 (NASB)**

**“<sup>10</sup> And in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority.”**

**Mark 10:28 (NASB)**

**“<sup>28</sup> Peter began to say to Him, Behold, we have left everything and followed You.”**

**Luke 5:27 (NASB)**

**“<sup>27</sup> After that He went out and noticed a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax booth, and He said to him, Follow Me.”**

**Luke 9:23-24 (NASB)**

**“<sup>23</sup> And He was saying to *them* all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.**

**<sup>24</sup> "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.”**

**Luke 14:33 (NASB)**

**“<sup>33</sup> So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.”**

**Luke 18:29-30 (NASB)**

**“<sup>29</sup> And He said to them, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God,**

**<sup>30</sup> who will not receive many times as much at this time and in the age to come, eternal life.”**

**Philippians 3:8 (NASB)**

**“<sup>8</sup> More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the**

surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ.”

**Thought 1.** We face two great dangers that can lower our reward.

- 1) Not forsaking all for Christ: hanging on to some things whether behavior, habit, relationship, or possession.
- 2) Super-spirituality: after forsaking all for Christ, there is always the danger of thinking that we have given up and sacrificed more than others.

Several areas in particular lend themselves to spiritual pride.....

- a. suffering
- b. service and works
- c. financial and benevolent gifts
- d. talents and spiritual gifts
- e. ministry and ministerial position
- f. being saved from the depth of sin

**Thought 2.** Some attempt to bargain with God. This is not to be. We are to go ahead and forsake all, trusting and following Christ ([2 Cor. 6:17-18](#); [1 John 2:15-16](#)).

[2 Corinthians 6:17-18 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>17</sup> Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE," says the Lord. "AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you.

<sup>18</sup> "And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty.”

[1 John 2:15-16 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>15</sup> Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

<sup>16</sup> For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.”

## **2. (Matthew 19:28) Reward— Apostles— Regeneration: the apostles were to be wonderfully rewarded.**

They were to receive a great honor—the honor of ruling and reigning with Christ Himself.

Note that Christ told them three things.

1. When they would reign with Him.
2. Why they would reign with Him.
3. Whom they would govern and direct in their reign.

The word “**regeneration**” (*paliggenesia*) means recreation, restoration, renovation, renewal, new birth. The word is used one other time in the New Testament referring to the new birth of an individual ([Titus 3:5](#)).

**Titus 3:15 (NASB)**

“<sup>15</sup> All who are with me greet you. Greet those who love us in *the* faith. Grace be with you all.”

Here Christ uses the word to refer to the "restoration of all things" ([Acts 3:21](#)).

**Acts 3:21 (NASB)**

“<sup>21</sup> Whom heaven must receive until *the* period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.”

A period of time in the future when He will set up the new order of things under His personal rule and reign (cp. [Romans 8:19-23](#); [Isaiah 11:6-9](#)).

**Romans 8:19-23 (NASB)**

“<sup>19</sup> For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.

<sup>20</sup> For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope

<sup>21</sup> that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

<sup>22</sup> For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

<sup>23</sup> And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.”

**Isaiah 11:6-9 (NASB)**

“<sup>6</sup> And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, And the leopard will lie down with the young goat, And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little boy will lead them.

<sup>7</sup> Also the cow and the bear will graze, Their young will lie down together, And the lion will eat straw like the ox.

<sup>8</sup> The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den.

<sup>9</sup> They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.”

That day is often called the day of redemption or referred to as the Kingdom of God.

**Note several things.**

1. The "restoration of all things" is in the future. Christ **did not say** "you who have followed me in the regeneration," but "you who have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will..." The comma is to be placed

after "followed me." The period of time is "when the Son of man will sit on His glorious throne"—a time out in the future.

2. Christ said that the apostles would be rewarded with twelve thrones, each one governing one of the twelve tribes of Israel. When were they to govern? "**In the regeneration,**" when the new order of things shall be set up under the rule and reign of Christ. But when is the new order of things to be? There are two possible answers: either during the millennial reign of Christ ([Matthew 19:23-24](#); [Rev. 20:4-6](#)) or during the new heavens and earth ([Rev. 21:1](#); cp. [1 Cor. 15:23-28](#)).

There are **three passages** in which Christ deals with the regeneration as predicted here.

**Matthew 19:28 (NASB)**

“<sup>28</sup> And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

**Matthew 20:21-23 (NASB)**

“<sup>21</sup> And He said to her, "What do you wish?" She said to Him, "Command that in Your kingdom these two sons of mine may sit one on Your right and one on Your left."

<sup>22</sup> But Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" They said to Him, "We are able."

<sup>23</sup> He said\* to them, "My cup you shall drink; but to sit on My right and on My left, this is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by My Father.”

**Luke 22:28-30 (NASB)**

“<sup>28</sup> You are those who have stood by Me in My trials;

<sup>29</sup> and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you

<sup>30</sup> that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

The fulfillment of this promise seems to be the Messianic kingdom or millennial reign of Christ on earth. This seems to be the way Christ's promise to Israel will be fulfilled.

**Isaiah 1:26 (NASB)**

“<sup>26</sup> Then I will restore your judges as at the first, And your counselors as at the beginning; After that you will be called the city of righteousness, A faithful city.”

3. It should be noted, however, that some find great difficulty in saying there is *ever again to be a distinction between Jew and Gentile*. They say that Christ came to bring peace to all men and between all men, breaking down the wall of

partition between all. They say that the great weight of Scripture is opposed to there ever again being a distinction between Jew and Gentile. This interpretation simply says that when Christ returns, that is it; the end of time will be at hand. When He returns, He sets up His *eternal* reign and rules forever. Therefore, the apostles' rule and reign refers to the church, that is, to spiritual Israel or to the true Israel of God ([Galatians 6:15-16](#); cp. [Romans 2:28-29](#)).

**Galatians 6:15-16 (NASB)**

“<sup>15</sup> For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.

<sup>16</sup> And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy *be* upon them, and upon the Israel of God.”

**Romans 2:28-29 (NASB)**

“<sup>28</sup> For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.

<sup>29</sup> But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.”

4. Christ said He would reward the apostles with *a particular honor*. Why? The apostles believed and followed Christ in the embryonic or beginning stage of Christianity. They stuck to their belief and endured in the face of unbelievable odds.

**Just imagine!**

- a. Imagine standing before a man who looks just like all other men, merely a man, and believing that man to really be the *Son of God*.
- b. Imagine sticking to and continuing to follow Christ when everyone else had turned away from Him (cp. [John 6:67](#)).

**John 6:67 (NASB)**

“<sup>67</sup> So Jesus said to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do you?"

- c. Imagine following immediately upon the heels of the risen Lord and being instantly responsible for reaching the world. (No wonder God had to plan for His Spirit to infill the disciples as He did on Pentecost and to live within our bodies as He does. ([1 Cor. 3:16](#); [1 Cor. 6:19-20](#).)

**1 Corinthians 3:16 (NASB)**

“<sup>16</sup> Do you not know that you are a temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you?”

**1 Corinthians 6:18-20 (NASB)**

**“<sup>18</sup> Flee immorality. Every *other* sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.**

**<sup>19</sup> Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?**

**<sup>20</sup> For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.”**

- d. Imagine continuing on and on, trying to be obedient and to reach more and more despite unbelievable odds and having to constantly face the harassment of their fellow citizens, the Judaizers or religionists.
- e. Imagine confronting and enduring through unbelievable threats and persecution launched from both an immoral government and a man-corrupted religion that reacted fiercely against those who differed with it.

The apostles not only were responsible for more and faced more than most of us will ever know; they were responsible for and faced more than we can ever imagine (**[cp. 1 Cor. 4:9-13; 2 Cor. 11:24-28](#)**).

**1 Corinthians 4:9-13 (NASB)**

**“<sup>9</sup> For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.**

**<sup>10</sup> We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are prudent in Christ; we are weak, but you are strong; you are distinguished, but we are without honor.**

**<sup>11</sup> To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless;**

**<sup>12</sup> and we toil, working with our own hands; when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure;**

**<sup>13</sup> when we are slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, *even* until now.”**

**2 Corinthians 11:24-28 (NASB)**

**“<sup>24</sup> Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine *lashes*.**

**<sup>25</sup> Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep.**

**<sup>26</sup> I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from *my* countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren;**

**<sup>27</sup> I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.**

<sup>28</sup> Apart from *such* external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches.”

**Thought 1. There are two regenerations.**

- 1) The regeneration of a person's life: a rebirth, a recreation of a person's nature and life (see [John 3:1-15](#)).
- 2) The regeneration of the universe: a remaking of heaven and earth ([Romans 8:21-23](#); [2 Peter 3:10-13](#); [Revelation 21:1](#)).

**Romans 8:21-23 (NASB)**

“<sup>21</sup> That the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

<sup>22</sup> For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

<sup>23</sup> And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.”

**2 Peter 3:10 (NASB)**

“<sup>10</sup> But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.”

**Revelation 21:1 (NASB)**

“<sup>1</sup> Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea.”

**DEEPER STUDY # 5**

([Matthew 19:28](#)) **Judging (*Krino*)—Eternal Life:** to judge, govern, direct; to administer affairs, supervise, and oversee. The assignment of responsibility of duties, of work to be done is being taught here. There is to be **judging**, that is, governing, giving direction and supervision and oversight throughout eternity. Christ told the apostles that they would govern and oversee Israel. Paul said that believers would direct and oversee the world and angels ([1 Cor. 6:2-3](#)). All this activity and responsibility, of course, is under the direction of Christ.

For some unknown reason we so often picture *eternal life* as some dreamy sleep or semi-conscious type of existence. We think of it as some future existence that puts us on a fluffy cloud upon which we float in an eternal state of inactivity. Why man cannot accept the simple statement of Christ that life is to be eternal is difficult to understand.

*Eternal life* is life that goes on and on. There is, however, one basic difference: life shall be perfected—perfected in body, mind, and spirit. It is life lived in the midst of a new heavens and earth (**perfected**)—life lived before Christ and responsible to Christ in all that it is

assigned ([John 3:16](#); [John 5:24](#); [Romans 8:19-23](#); [2 Peter 3:9-18](#); [1 John 5:11-13](#); [Rev. 21:1](#)).

### 3. ([Matthew 19:29](#)) Reward: the apostles are not the only ones to be rewarded.

Every true follower of *Christ* shall be greatly rewarded. Christ said **three things** about the reward of the believer in this verse.

1. The reason for the reward: the believer is to be rewarded because he has left all; he has given his supreme allegiance to Jesus Christ ([Matthew 19:27](#)), the two essentials for reward).

#### [Matthew 19:27 \(NASB\)](#)

**“<sup>27</sup> Then Peter said to Him, Behold, we have left everything and followed You; what then will there be for us?”**

Note that the two closest things to a man are named by Christ: his immediate family and his possessions (**honor and lands**). These are by far the most difficult things to surrender to Christ. Hobbies, habits, pleasures, friends—all can be given up (**subjected to Christ**) quicker than family or possessions. Note also that Christ began and ended the list with material possessions. How enslaving they are, even more so than family for some persons!

2. The present reward: a hundredfold. The Gospel of Mark makes it clear that Christ was speaking of present reward ([Mark 10:21](#)).

#### [Mark 10:21 \(NASB\)](#)

**“<sup>21</sup> Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, "One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”**

No true follower of Christ has ever forsaken anyone or anything and been left alone and destitute by Christ. Christ rewards His true follower manyfold.

**Note:** the reward is both human and material.

- a. The human reward is a real and true fellowship among genuine believers. Christ knows when a follower of His has been turned against by those whom Christ loves ever so deeply. Christ knows when to send someone into the life of His own, when to meet the aching need of His follower for true friendship. He more than abundantly meets the need.

#### [1 John 1:3 \(NASB\)](#)

**“<sup>3</sup> What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you**



too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.”

**1 John 1:7 (NASB)**

“<sup>7</sup> But if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

**Acts 2:42 (NASB)**

“<sup>42</sup> They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

**Matthew 18:20 (NASB)**

“<sup>20</sup> For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.”

**Romans 12:5 (NASB)**

“<sup>5</sup> So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.”

**Psalms 119:63 (NASB)**

“<sup>63</sup> I am a companion of all those who fear You, And of those who keep Your precepts.”

**Malachi 3:16 (NASB)**

“<sup>16</sup> Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD gave attention and heard *it*, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who esteem His name.”

- b. The material reward is the meeting of necessities and whatever else God wants us to have left over so that we can help meet the needs of others.

The idea Christ was conveying is that of perfect material care and security. The very reason we seek and seek is because we are basically insecure and have a basic urge to crave more and more. Craving, greediness, fear, and insecurity are most unhealthy and destabilizing. When we forsake all and genuinely follow Christ, He gives us the greatest peace and security possible: Himself and His power to provide for our necessities. We never have to worry or be anxious again ([Matthew 6:25-34](#); [Luke 16:10-12](#). Cp. [Mark 10:29-30](#); [Luke 18:28-30](#); [Ephes. 4:28](#).) There is much more happiness, joy, peace, security, assurance, confidence, satisfaction, completeness, and fulfillment in Christ than in any amount of possessions or worldly companionship and friendship.

**Matthew 6:33 (NASB) (cp. [Matthew 6:25-34](#)).**

“<sup>33</sup> But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

**John 10:10 (NASB)**

“<sup>10</sup> The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have *it* abundantly.”

**2 Corinthians 9:8 (NASB)**

“<sup>8</sup> And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always

having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed.”

[Ephesians 3:20 \(NASB\)](#)

“<sup>20</sup> Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us.”

[Philippians 4:19 \(NASB\)](#)

“<sup>19</sup> And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

[2 Peter 1:11 \(NASB\)](#)

“<sup>11</sup> For in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.”

[Psalms 23:5 \(NASB\)](#)

“<sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows.”

[Psalms 36:8 \(NASB\)](#)

“<sup>8</sup> They drink their fill of the abundance of Your house; And You give them to drink of the river of Your delights.”

[Psalms 68:19 \(NASB\)](#)

“<sup>19</sup> Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears our burden, The God *who* is our salvation.” Selah.

[Isaiah 30:23 \(NASB\)](#)

“<sup>23</sup> Then He will give *you* rain for the seed which you will sow in the ground, and bread *from* the yield of the ground, and it will be rich and plenteous; on that day your livestock will graze in a roomy pasture.”

[Joel 2:26 \(NASB\)](#)

“<sup>26</sup> You will have plenty to eat and be satisfied And praise the name of the LORD your God, Who has dealt wondrously with you; Then My people will never be put to shame.”

[Malachi 3:10 \(NASB\)](#)

“<sup>10</sup> Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this," says the LORD of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.”

3. The future reward is everlasting life ([John 17:2-3](#); cp. [John 1:4](#); [Matthew 19:28](#) Cp. [Romans 8:16-18](#).)

[Mark 10:21 \(NASB\)](#)

“<sup>21</sup> Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, "One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”

[John 3:15 \(NASB\)](#)

“<sup>15</sup> So that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.”

**John 3:36 (NASB)**

“<sup>36</sup> He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

**John 4:36 (NASB)**

“<sup>36</sup> Already he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for life eternal; so that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.”

**John 5:24 (NASB)**

“<sup>24</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”

**John 17:3 (NASB)**

“<sup>3</sup> This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”

**Galatians 6:8 (NASB)**

“<sup>8</sup> For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.”

**Thought 1.** Christ promises to reward His followers presently, reward them with an unbelievable Christian community, fellowship, and security. He founded the church to fulfill this promise. The church has a high calling. Imagine, the local church and its genuine believers are to be as close to one another as families are. The church is to provide a precious fellowship for the alienated, lonely, shy, friendless, and the stranger. It is to meet the needs where families fail.

**A pointed question:** How many churches provide a true fellowship? How often does God have to turn away from local congregations to others in order to meet the needs of a disciple of His?

#### **4. (Matthew 19:30) Reward— Judgment: the Lord's words are clear.**

There is to be a severe judgment of believers—the execution of perfect justice. Our judgment, human judgment, is often inaccurate. *Many persons* shall be switched around: many whom we esteemed and rewarded the highest shall be placed last, and many whom we thought weakest and lowest shall be placed first. Only God knows the true heart of His servants.

**We judge and reward.....**

- a. by visible works
- b. by visible morality
- c. by age and seniority
- d. by friendliness
- e. by years as a Christian
- f. by recognition

- g. by esteem or influence
- h. by ability and skill
- i. by position

However, God sees into the heart of His dear followers, into the heart of every single one; and He shall straighten out the misjudgments of all our dear brothers and sisters in Christ. Christ leaves no doubt: the most humble on earth shall be elevated to be the greatest in heaven. It may be a shocking surprise, but there is to be judgment, a just realignment and positioning of believers ([2 Cor. 5:10](#); [1 John 3:1-2](#)).

**2 Corinthians 5:10 (NASB)**

**“<sup>10</sup> For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”**

**1 Corinthians 3:13-15 (NASB)**

**“<sup>13</sup> Each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is *to be* revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work.**

**<sup>14</sup> If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward.**

**<sup>15</sup> If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”**

**Luke 1:52 (NASB)**

**“<sup>52</sup> He has brought down rulers from *their* thrones, And has exalted those who were humble.”**

**Luke 6:25 (NASB)**

**“<sup>25</sup> Woe to you who are well-fed now, for you shall be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.”**

**Luke 16:25 (NASB)**

**“<sup>25</sup> But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony.”**