

Relying on Something Other Than God

1 John 2:15-17

1 John 2:15-17 (NASB)

¹⁵ “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.

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.”

The rich young man approached Jesus to learn how to secure his future in eternity. Out of loving concern, the Lord engaged him in a dialogue to reveal his wrong thinking and thereby identify a significant spiritual problem. (See [Mark 10:17-31](#))

Mark 10:17-31 (NASB)

¹⁷ “As He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and asked Him, “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

¹⁸ And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.”

¹⁹ “You know the commandments, ‘DO NOT MURDER, DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, DO NOT STEAL, DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS, Do not defraud, HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER.’”

²⁰ And he said to Him, “Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up.”

²¹ 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.”

²² But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property.

²³ And Jesus, looking around, said to His disciples, “How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!”

²⁴ The disciples were amazed at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!”

²⁵ “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.”

²⁶ They were even more astonished and said to Him, “Then who can be saved?”

²⁷ Looking at them, Jesus said, “With people it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God.”

²⁸ Peter began to say to Him, “Behold, we have left everything and followed You.”

²⁹ Jesus said, “Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel’s sake,

³⁰ but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life.”

³¹ “But many *who are* first will be last, and the last, first.”

First, the wealthy man erroneously believed that good deeds were the means of entering heaven. Eternal life is not “bought”; it is a free gift through faith in Jesus Christ. Nor is it something we can attain apart from God. Eternal life becomes ours at the moment of salvation, when the life of God comes to us in the person of His indwelling Holy Spirit ([John 4:14](#); [John 14:16-17](#)).

[John 4:14 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁴“But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.”

[John 14:16-17 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁶“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever;

¹⁷ *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.”

Second, the man’s identity was tied up in material things. Jesus addressed his spiritual problem by issuing a loving challenge: “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” ([Mark 10:21](#)). The Lord was not saying that giving everything away was the path to salvation. He wanted this young man to realize his difficulty—that his possessions owned him. Jesus offered treasure in heaven, but the man turned away. His action revealed what Jesus already knew about him: Attachment to belongings superseded the offer of *true* riches. Jesus then explained that those who have wealth and position tend to trust in themselves and not in God.

In our culture, we have so much more than most people in the world—which means we’re at risk of falling into the same trap. We believe in Jesus for salvation but trust in ourselves for daily living. We depend on our intelligence, talents, material possessions, or family to help us, but God wants us to rely on Him alone. On whom or what do you depend?