

SHARE THE BIBLE LESSON

WEEK 18

Jesus confronts the rich young ruler

Matthew 19:16–26



DAY 1

Deny your own goodness • Matthew 19:16–20

READ

Matthew 19:16–26

EXPLAIN

The truth of Matthew 19:16–20

How good do you have to be to be saved? This young man was a good man. He was rich, powerful, moral, and highly respected (Matt 19:22; Luke 18:18). Still, as good as he was, he didn't understand that he fell far short of God's definition of "good." Jesus explained that it is God, not man, who defines what is good. Since God's law reflects God's character, Jesus quoted the 5th through the 9th commandments (Exod 20:12–16), plus the 2nd greatest commandment that sums them up (Matt 22:39; Lev 19:18). Jesus chose these commands that deal with human relationships because the way we treat people reveals what we think about God (1 John 4:20). Unfortunately, the young man thought that these laws covered only outward behavior. He did not see that God's law also concerns the heart (Ps 51:6), that anger is the same as murder and lust the same as adultery (Matt 5:22, 28). Blinded by pride, he thought he actually loved his neighbor as himself. This man did not have eternal life, for he depended on his own goodness and not on Jesus.

ASK

1. Who came to Jesus with a question?
HA rich young ruler, someone who was well-respected by people.
2. What did the rich young ruler want?
Eternal life.
3. How did he think he could get eternal life?
By doing something good.
4. Why did Jesus tell the man to keep the commandments?
To see if the man would confess that he was not good enough.

DISCUSS

1. Do you obey God's law better than others? Are you (or is anyone) good enough in God's sight (Rom 3:23)?
2. Is the law more like a ladder or a mirror? What is one the main purposes of the law (Rom 3:19–20)?

DAY 2

Devote yourself to Jesus • Matthew 19:21–22

READ

Matthew 19:16–26

EXPLAIN

The truth of Matthew 19:21–22

If no one can do enough good to be saved, why did Jesus tell the man to sell everything he owned and give to the poor? Jesus was not teaching salvation by works. He was exposing the young man's heart, showing what this man really loved and trusted: possessions. Wealth is an idol both of the rich and the poor. We all want more. We love money because it gets us what we want. We trust money because it gives us security. So Jesus was warning the man that it was impossible to serve two masters (Matt 6:24). To live in Christ's kingdom, we must serve Christ alone. Unfortunately, this man was controlled by his wealth, not by Jesus, so he went away grieving (19:22). He wanted eternal life, but he did not want Jesus. He wanted to be good, but he did not want to admit he needed Christ's goodness on his behalf. He wanted Jesus to teach him, but he would not let Christ control Him. He was seeking eternal life out of love for himself, not out of love for Jesus.

ASK

1. What did Jesus tell the man to do with his wealth?
He told him to sell all his possessions and give to the poor.
2. Why did Jesus tell him to sell everything?
To reveal what the man loved and trusted most—himself or Jesus. To get rid of the wealth that was keeping the man from loving and trusting Jesus alone.
3. What did Jesus tell him to do last?
“Follow Me.” Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. Only those who love and serve Jesus alone receive eternal life.
4. How did the man respond?
He went away grieving.

DISCUSS

1. How do you respond when you can't have something you want? What does your reaction show about what you love and trust most?
2. Is money itself evil (1 Tim 6:10; Deut 8:18)?

DAY 3

God reconciled Joseph's broken family • Matthew 19:23–26

READ

Matthew 19:16–26

EXPLAIN

The truth of Matthew 19:23–26

Can a camel go through the eye of a needle? Of course not! It is the largest animal in Palestine! In the same way, it is impossible for the rich to enter heaven. But why single out the rich? In those days, wealth was seen as a sign of God's blessing. The Jews thought the rich were the most likely to be saved. So if it's impossible for the rich to be saved, as Jesus said, then no one can be saved.

Jesus made it clear: with men, salvation isn't just hard—it's impossible (Rom 3:20). Even our best behavior is like dirty, nasty clothes (Isa 64:6). We cannot even repent unless God intervenes (2 Tim 2:25). We cannot come to Jesus unless the Father draws us (John 6:44). We are blind unless He opens our eyes (2 Cor 4:4–6). We are spiritually dead—not just sick or weak—unable to do anything to come back to life (Eph 2:1). Our only hope is to depend entirely on God alone. We can have great hope in God, for “Salvation belongs to the LORD!” (Ps 3:8; Jonah 2:9).

DAY 3 CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ASK 

1. How hard is it for a rich person to get into heaven?
It is impossible without God, like a camel going through the eye of a needle.
2. Who is the only one who can save us?
God.
3. Since only God can give eternal life, what should you do?
Depend on God, not on yourself or your own personal achievements or behavior.

DISCUSS 

1. Are you “basically good”? Why or why not (Eph 2:1–3)?
2. How can you tell if you are trusting in your own goodness or in God alone to be saved? Do you do good things out of love for God or out of fear of punishment?

DAY 4*Like a child • Matthew 18:1–4; 19:13–15***READ** 

Matthew 18:1–4; 19:13–15

EXPLAIN **The truth of Matthew 19:13–15**

When the rich young ruler came, the disciples let him interrupt Jesus. But right before that, the disciples had tried to turn the children away. Why? They gave preference to the rich and respectable. They were acting like salvation depends on human achievement. In response, Jesus declared that the kingdom of heaven is reserved for those who are completely dependent, just like little children. Children are unable to provide for even their most basic needs, and are completely dependent on others to care for them. They are weak and needy. They have no credentials and no accomplishments. They are exactly the opposite of the rich young ruler. Salvation is not for those like the rich man, who think they can get salvation by their own strength or resources (Matt 19:16). Rather, salvation is for the weak and dependent. Jesus welcomed the children to show the disciples that salvation is for people who, like “infants” (cf. Luke 18:15), depend wholly on the Father.

ASK 

1. Who rebuked the people for bringing children to Jesus?
The disciples.
2. What did Jesus say?
“Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for such belongs the kingdom of heaven.”
3. What are little children like?
Helpless, dependent, weak, needy, poor.
4. Why does the kingdom of heaven belongs to those who are like little children?
Because we must depend wholly on God to save us, like a baby depending on a parent.

DISCUSS 

1. What are babies or little children like? What can they do? What do their parents have to do for them?
2. Why is it silly to brag about being a Christian (1 Cor 1:18–2:5)?

READ 

John 3:1–16

EXPLAIN **The truth of John 3:15–16**

The rich young ruler wanted eternal life, but what is eternal life? First, it is “eternal” because it begins in this life and never ends. It is everlasting, unending life. It is life that continues, even after the believer has experienced physical death (2 Cor 5:8). Second, it is “life.” Just as a body with physical life responds to its physical environment, so also a person with eternal life is responsive to spiritual life, knowing God truly and personally (John 17:3). So eternal life refers to more than just eternal quantity of life—it also refers to divine quality of life. Believers participate in the eternal life of their Savior, Jesus Christ. While the full enjoyment of this life is not experienced until the believer is resurrected and glorified, dwelling with Jesus in heaven, it begins now, in this life, as the Spirit of God takes up residence in the life of the believer (Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 6:19–20). Who has this life? Whoever believes in the Son, whom God gave because of His great love for the world.

ASK 

1. What is eternal life?
It is life that lasts forever, and it is life in a right relationship with God, knowing Him truly and personally.
2. Who has eternal life?
Whoever trusts in God’s Son, Jesus.
3. Why did God send His Son?
Because of His great love for the world.

DISCUSS 

1. How old is the oldest person you know? How does their age compare to eternity?
2. What are you most excited about: living forever, or living in a close personal relationship with God?

NEXT WEEK**Jesus teaches the parable of the equal wages***Matthew 19:27–20:16*



Presentation Ideas

A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards®

Use appropriate A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards® with the lesson.



Betty Lukens Flannel Graph

Use appropriate flannel graph pieces with the lesson.



Is It Hard to Get to Heaven?

Before teaching the lesson ask the children who wants to go to heaven. How hard do they think it is to get to heaven? In today's lesson, a certain animal will tell about getting to heaven, so they must watch and listen carefully to find out what animal it is. As you teach the lesson, paste the various parts of a camel picture onto the board until by the end of the lesson the children can see the complete camel. Ask them what this animal tells us about heaven. Finally, explain the last part of the lesson to them which is that it is harder for this camel to go through the eye of a needle than for us to save ourselves.

Praise and Worship

Humble Thyself In The Sight Of The Lord

Holy, Holy, Holy

Change My Heart, O God

PRACTICE THE TRUTH

"That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments." —Psalm 78:7

Choose ideas from this section that review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



A Spotless Heart

After teaching the lesson explain to the children that in order to get to heaven we need a spotless heart. Draw a heart on the board and then begin going through the commands of scripture one at a time. Ask the children whether they have ever disobeyed this command and make a mark on the heart each time they acknowledge their sin. After some time it will be apparent that our hearts are not just stained, but black with sin. Who then can be saved? Explain that only God can save us because only Jesus' blood can erase the sin in our hearts.



Impossible/Possible Reminder

Give students double sided craft page strips. Instruct students to fold on the dotted line. When completed the flap should cover over the "IM" of "IMPOSSIBLE" making the word "POSSIBLE."



"Questions and Answers"

Have the students write out the questions and statement in the verses from Matthew 17.



“Jesus confronts the rich young ruler”

Use this worksheet to reinforce the key truths of today’s lesson. The worksheet is located at the back of the lesson.



Small Group Activity: “Possible with God”

Use this worksheet in a small group. Lead the students in discussing the questions and their answers. The worksheet is located at the back of the lesson.

Coloring Pages

Give each child a copy of the coloring pages at the back of the lesson. He or she can color the pages in class or take them home to color.



MEMORY VERSE

“But Jesus looked at them and said to them, ‘With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’” —*Matthew 19:26*

Possible with God

With
men,
salvation
is...

IMPOSSIBLE

Matthew 19:26

With
men,
salvation
is...

IMPOSSIBLE

Matthew 19:26

With
men,
salvation
is...

IMPOSSIBLE

Matthew 19:26

Possible with God

	With God, all things are...
--	--------------------------------------

	With God, all things are...
--	--------------------------------------

	With God, all things are...
--	--------------------------------------

Jesus

confronts the
rich young ruler



Matthew 19:16-26

Name _____

1. What kind of ruler came to Jesus?

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| a. poor and old | c. tall and blond |
| b. rich and young | d. short and young |

2. The man asked Jesus what he needed to do to gain _____.

3. Jesus told the ruler that no one was good but _____.

4. True or False: The young ruler was right in saying that he had kept the law from his youth.

5. Is it possible to keep the law and be perfect by ourselves? _____

6. How did the man respond when Jesus told him to go and sell all he had? _____

7. It is impossible to be perfect by ourselves, with God it is _____.

Possible with God

“But Jesus looked at them and said to them, ‘With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’”

—Matthew 19:26

Have you ever been very, very good for one whole day, and did you feel like you deserved something special for it? That’s how the rich young ruler in today’s Bible lesson felt. He thought by keeping God’s laws, he could earn a place in heaven. Yet, when Christ told him a good work to do—“...go sell what you have and give to the poor...and come follow Me”—the rich young ruler went away sad because he loved his money more than obeying Christ. By asking the rich young ruler to do a very good deed, Christ revealed what was really in the rich young ruler’s heart. In the word search below circle the sins (**Pride, Selfishness, and Love of Money**) that were hiding in the rich young ruler’s heart.

H L Z F V K U T M Y S
T A X A M C Q T N E M
O H F S I Z P O L N N
I V Q T R Y R F M O S
O L U P K M I J B M U
G M R G G S D L G F F
F V J N H C E P Y O M
N V G N X E A E Q E W
V O E J J O Y R X V H
P S H U G Q C Y B O K
S F J U D P E W C L G

Possible with God

“But Jesus looked at them and said to them, ‘With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’”

—Matthew 19:26

Have you ever been very, very good for one whole day, and did you feel like you deserved something special for it? That’s how the rich young ruler in today’s Bible lesson felt. He thought by keeping God’s laws, he could earn a place in heaven. Yet, when Christ told him a good work to do—“...go sell what you have and give to the poor...and come follow Me”—the rich young ruler went away sad because he loved his money more than obeying Christ. By asking the rich young ruler to do a very good deed, Christ revealed what was really in the rich young ruler’s heart. In the word search below circle the sins (**Pride, Selfishness, and Love of Money**) that were hiding in the rich young ruler’s heart.

H L Z F V K U T M Y S
T A X A M C Q T N E M
O H F S I Z P O L N N
I V Q T R Y R F M O S
O L U P K M I J B M U
G M R G G S D L G F F
F V J N H C E P Y O M
N V G N X E A E Q E W
V O E J J O Y R X V H
P S H U G Q C Y B O K
S F J U D P E W C L G

Then Christ told the disciples that 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, and they asked Him, "Who then can be saved?" Read Matthew 19:26 for the answer and write it in the space below.

It is impossible for anyone to do enough good works to earn a place in heaven. The only way people can be saved is for God to reveal the sin in their hearts, and for them to repent and accept Christ's sacrifice for their sins. Have you asked Christ to search your heart? He wants to do the impossible in your heart.

I know that I cannot earn heaven by my good works because:

I want Christ to search my heart and show me my sins because:

I have disobeyed God's law by:

I want to ask Christ to forgive my sins:

Then Christ told the disciples that 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, and they asked Him, "Who then can be saved?" Read Matthew 19:26 for the answer and write it in the space below.

It is impossible for anyone to do enough good works to earn a place in heaven. The only way people can be saved is for God to reveal the sin in their hearts, and for them to repent and accept Christ's sacrifice for their sins. Have you asked Christ to search your heart? He wants to do the impossible in your heart.

I know that I cannot earn heaven by my good works because:

I want Christ to search my heart and show me my sins because:

I have disobeyed God's law by:

I want to ask Christ to forgive my sins:



“Now behold, one came and said to Him, “Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?” —Matthew 19:16



**“But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful,
for he had great possessions.” —Matthew 19:22**