

The Gospel of Luke

The Rich Young Ruler

Luke 18:18-27

1. **An Impassioned Question** (v.18)

Jesus' departure on a journey is interrupted by a young man who asked Him the question of utmost importance: how to obtain eternal life (cf. Mk. 10:17). A primary goal of God in the life and ministry of Jesus was to do what was necessary so that people could inherit eternal life (John 3:16; 20:21; cf. Rom 3:26).

2. **A Puzzling Response** (vs.19-20)

Jesus replies by telling the young man that if he wishes to have eternal life, he is to keep the commandments (Matt. 19:17b). Specifically, Jesus points to faithfulness in keeping the second greatest commandment (cf. Matt. 19:16; Mark 12:28ff). This is not the first time that Jesus has been asked this question or responded in a similar way (Luke 10:25).

3. **A Confident Assertion** (v.21)

The young man replied that he had been diligent to obey the commandments from his youth (cf. Phi. 3:6). Unlike others who had been asked a question by Jesus, there seems to be no ulterior motive or intentional deception in his answer (John 4:17; Luke 10:29).

4. **A Further Directive** (vs.22-23)

This final command exposes that this young man, though sincere in his question and his desire for eternal life, was unwilling to forsake all and follow Jesus (Matt. 10:37; 16:24; Luke 9:23). Jesus does not require all believers to walk away from all of our earthly possessions, but He does require that we all be *willing* to do so (Matt. 13:44-46).

5. **An Impossible Salvation** (vs.24-27)

Honestly obtained wealth was seen as a mark of God's blessing upon the faithful Jew. Jesus' intention was to drive the young man, and all who listened to their dialogue, to conclude that obtaining salvation is impossible for men to achieve through law keeping and personal righteousness (cf. Matt. 5:20) so as to expose a desperate need for God's mercy (cf. v.13).