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Matthew 19:16-26

16. “And someone came to Him and said, ‘Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?’

17. And He said to him, ‘Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is *only* One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.’

18. *Then* he said to Him, ‘Which ones?’ And Jesus said, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER; YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY; YOU SHALL NOT STEAL; YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS; 19. HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER; and YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’

20. The young man said to Him, ‘All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?’

21. 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.’

22. But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property.

23. And Jesus said to His disciples, ‘Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

24. ‘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.’

25. When the disciples heard *this*, they were very astonished and said, ‘Then who can be saved?’

26. And looking at *them* Jesus said to them, ‘With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’”

Often times when studying this passage people will ask, “Does this mean that Jesus expects me to sell my possessions in order to follow Jesus?”

That’s a good question!

Upon close examination of this passage we find that Jesus’ judgment concerning this man obtaining eternal life, was based on five of the ten commandments, plus the command “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” In the case of this particular individual, in order to be complete he needed to sell his possessions and give to the poor. For him, this would fulfill the commandment to “love your neighbor as yourself.”

Jesus’ judgment as to who will obtain eternal life is done on an individual basis. The golden rule, first stated in the law of Moses--Leviticus 19:18--becomes the fulcrum for judgment by Jesus in His New Covenant.

Because the man in Matthew 19:16-22 “owned much property” and had an abundance, his completion for eternal life was contingent upon “loving his neighbor” by being generous and sharing his material wealth to help others in their need.

Do you need to sell your possessions to inherit eternal salvation? Well, that depends on how materially wealthy you are and the needs of others around you. The question really becomes: “Are you loving others as yourself?”

I Timothy 6:17-19 reads: “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. *Instruct them* to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, 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.”