

Read: Mark 10:17-27

What's Number One?

Mark 10:17-23

As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

“Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.’”

“Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.”

Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!”

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The living room was a mess! The floor was covered with bows and ribbons and crumpled up wrapping paper. Empty boxes were everywhere. In the middle of it all, Hayden was sitting in a chair, surrounded by gifts, and she had a great big smile on her face. It had been a great birthday party! She got so many cool new things!

Two days later, it was almost like her birthday never happened. Some of the new gifts were shoved under her bed. Two of them were broken already. The rest of the gifts were piled up in the corner of her bedroom. Meanwhile, Hayden gave out a big gasp of frustration, “Ugh! Mooomm! I have nothing to do! I’m so bored! Can we go to the store to get a new toy?”

Has this ever happened to you? Maybe you get so excited for all kinds of presents at Christmas or on your birthday, and before you know it you want something new or better. Or maybe someone in your family gets the newest iPhone or iPad or the newest game system . . . but soon enough they want the next bigger and better one. It is so easy for us to fall in love with money and possessions, and then to want more!

We hear today why this is so dangerous. A man came to Jesus and wanted to know what he needed to do to go to heaven. He thought he had done all kinds of good things and had obeyed God. Other people probably even thought he was a pretty good person. There was one big problem though—God wasn’t first in his heart. That’s why Jesus challenged him to go and sell all of his things and

then come follow him. But the man couldn't do it. He went away sad because he loved his money and possessions too much.

Watch out for the love of money and "things"—like toys or tools or technology. Quickly they can become number one in our hearts and lead us away from God. That's why Jesus said it can be hard for rich people to enter heaven. Not always, but sometimes people who have lots of money start to love their money and possessions more than God.

Take a moment to think about how much God has given to you. Certainly he has given you many wonderful earthly blessings. But best of all, God has given you his own Son, Jesus, who won for us the greatest treasure of all—life in heaven. What a joy that we can put such a loving God as number one in our hearts.

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- What is something new that you would really love to have?
- What can be dangerous about always wanting new toys, games, and technology?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Why was the man so sad when Jesus told him to sell everything he had?
- What things in your life might Satan tempt you to put as number one in your heart instead of God?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Agree/Disagree: It is better for Christians to be poor and not have much money. Explain your answer.
- Describe the proper way for Christians to live with their money and possessions. What is their attitude? How do they act? What kinds of things do they do?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Jesus, forgive us for loving worldly things so much. Help us always to put you first in our hearts. Amen.

Hymn: CW 421:1-2 – All Depends on Our Possessing

All depends on our possessing God's
abundant grace and blessing,
Though all earthly wealth depart.
They who trust with faith unshaken
In their God are not forsaken
And e'er keep a dauntless heart.

He who to this day has fed me
And to many joys has led me
Is and ever shall be mine.
He who ever gently schools me,
He who daily guides and rules me,
Will remain my help divine.