



WEEK THREE:

Knowing the Good

SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 19:16-26

Then someone came to him and said, "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?" And he said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments." He said to him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; Honor your father and mother; also, You shall love your neighbor as yourself." The young man said to him, "I have kept all these; what do I still lack?" Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." When the young man heard this word, he went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astounded and said, "Then who can be saved?" But Jesus looked at them and said, "For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible."

REFLECTION

There was a man who felt incomplete. Something was missing. Even though he seemed to have it all, he was not sure if his life was whole. He was wealthy, respected, loving, and lived at peace with others. What more could he need?

He was not sure what he needed, so he asked Jesus about it. The young man wanted to know how to have eternal life. He wanted his earthly life to have meaning and wholeness.

Jesus told him the way to meaning and wholeness was to follow the commandments (rules/laws) God gave Israel. Maybe you've heard of the Ten Commandments. These commandments help guide us toward love and justice. This is good advice. The rich young man had tried living this way, but he still didn't feel whole. So, Jesus told him, "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me."

Perfect? Can anybody be perfect?

In the time of Jesus, the word "perfect" meant "whole" or "grown-up" or "virtuous" or "complete." Think of it this way. Jesus saw a young man with a lot of wealth and power at an early age. Maybe today, the young man would be a YouTuber or a top gamer. Jesus told him that if he wanted to grow as a human being, level up his maturity, he would have to let go of his riches and figure out what mattered most to him.

Something amazing happens when we hold our stuff a little looser and give riches away. When we give to our neighbor, when we choose to love our neighbor more than our wealth, we become the people God created us to be. We become whole. Jesus knew this is very difficult for rich young men, but Jesus also said all things are possible with God!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What makes you feel whole and complete as a person? When do you feel the most whole?
- The rich young man was sad when he heard Jesus' final advice. Why do you think he was sad?
- How can our earthly treasures hold us back from wholeness? How can we hold them a little looser?

ACTIVITY

The young man in the story today was searching for wisdom. Young people can learn how to be wise with time, experience, and reflection. Older people can help us know what is most important. Many people have learned lessons about what really matters, and they are good at helping us let go of things that do not bring wholeness. Wise people understand treasures.

Choose a couple of older people you consider to be very wise. Tell them the story of the rich young ruler and ask them what it means to them. Here are some questions you can ask to learn more:

- When you were younger, were you a wise person? What good choices did you make? How did you become wise?
- Was there a time in your life you gave up something important to feel complete or mature?
- What are your most important physical and invisible treasures?

PRAYER

Dear God,
You include us and embrace us
even when we do not feel perfect or whole.
There is nothing we can do to cancel your love for us.
Inspire us to make wise choices,
have generous hearts, and seek invisible treasures.
Amen.

