CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

AUGUST 23 2025

Scripture Story: Mark 10:17-23; Luke 10:25-37.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 53:, 54; 57.

two seekers



Photo by Terrill Thomas

flashlight

"When Christ's followers give back to the Lord His own, they are accumulating treasure which will be given to them when they shall hear the words, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord' " (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 523).

key text

" 'You know the commandments: "You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal. . . ." ' '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. . . . Then come, follow me.' "

(Mark 10:19-21, NIV)

what do you think?

Rank the following: which do you think is the hardest to give up for following Christ (1—least difficult, 6—most difficult)?

____ popularity or public opinion
____ money/wealth
____ ideas and prejudices
____ security of your future
____ power and influence
____ success and achievement

Which do you think is the most difficult to surrender to Christ? While different people can treasure different things, how does being aware that you might treasure something more than Christ affect your choices?

did you know?

When the rich young ruler came to Christ wanting to know how to achieve eternal life, Jesus gave him "the look." What you may not know is that it is one of several places in the Gospels where Jesus gave someone "the look." However, Mark is the only writer that says, "Jesus looked at him and loved him" (Mark 10:21, NIV). "The look" conveyed a loving appeal to follow. "The look" was a challenge to aim his heart beyond the world. "The look" conveyed grief as well, because Christ knew his heart was so deeply entangled with wealth that such a leap of faith was more than the ruler was willing to take. The word for "look" means to go beyond seeing something to perceiving it.

INTO THE STORY

"On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. 'Teacher,' he asked, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?'

"'What is written in the Law?' he replied. 'How do you read it?'

"He answered, '"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, "Love your neighbor as yourself."'

"'You have answered correctly,' Jesus replied. 'Do this and you will live.'

"But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?'

"In reply Jesus said: 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. "Look after him," he said, "and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have."

"'Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?'

"The expert in the law replied, 'The one who had mercy on him.'

"Jesus told him, 'Go and do likewise.'"

"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!'"

(Luke 10:25-37; Mark 10:17-23, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Read the two stories carefully and *highlight* their basic question for Jesus. What do they want from Him?

Below, make a list of the commonalities of these two seekers as well as the differences.

Commonalities: _____

_____

Differences: _____

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Underline the key words and phrases you see in this passage.

Why do you think Jesus first and foremost directs both seekers back to the law of God?

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Is there anything you can tell from the text that signifies either of these seekers is genuine? What evidence (if any) is there that their heart might be in the right place?

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Why do you think Jesus asked, "Why do you call me good? No one is good—except God alone"?

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What do you think is the message God has for you in these stories?

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punch lines

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" **(Matthew 6:19-21, NIV).**

"But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD" **(Joshua 24:15, NIV).**

"Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts" **(Deuteronomy 6:5, 6, NIV).**

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another" **(John 13:34, NIV).**

"The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple" **(Psalm 19:7, NIV).**

"For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? For what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" **(Mark 8:36, 37, NASB).**

further insight

"For if the things of this world are cherished, however uncertain and unworthy they may be, they will become all-absorbing."

—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 520

"All should consider what it means to desire heaven, and yet to turn away because of the conditions laid down."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 523

Sabbath

Read Philippians 3:1-14.

Read and respond to the voting question in the *What Do You Think?* section of this week's lesson. As you think about the list of things that tend to get in the way of people making a full surrender to Christ, which elements have little or no pull on you? Why? Note Paul's testimony and passion in today's Bible reading for following Christ alone. Look carefully at his list of things he can say about himself in verses 3-6. Is there anything on the list you ranked that would have a hold on Paul? Is it your desire to be able to say with Paul, "Nothing gets in the way of my relationship with God"? As you reflect on the areas you are compelled or influenced by, pray a specific prayer of surrender today.

Sunday

Read Mark 8:36, 37.

Read the *Into the Story* section and use the questions in the *Out of the Story* section to guide your study. Which story speaks to you personally today? Which seems more dangerous: knowing you treasure worldly things but not having the courage to be willing to surrender them, or not knowing your heart is so entangled while thinking you are fine? For both seekers Jesus brings them to truth about their treasure (the lawyer—his prejudice, the ruler—his wealth) and urges them to surrender. If you were brought to such a place today, how would you respond? What do you think God is saying to you by these two encounters?

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Monday

Read Mark 10:17-21.

In today's reading, what do you think Jesus saw in the man who asked what he needed to do to inherit eternal life? What do you think Jesus saw in the ruler? Think of someone you know who genuinely wants to do the right thing or who desires to follow Christ but somehow can't seem to do it. Pray for them today and perhaps send them a note or an e-mail encouraging them with the news that Jesus sees them and loves them.

Tuesday

Read Hebrews 11:25, 26.

Read the quote from *The Desire of Ages* in the *Flashlight* section and reflect on the things you do for a reward. List them. It seems as though everything we do has a reward, but not everything has the same reward. What is worth more to you than eternal life? Whom do you know who values heaven and eternal life more than anything else on earth? If you want to make their day, tell them in whatever way you think is best, "I want to thank you for the way you love eternal life more than anything else." See what happens.

Wednesday

Read Jeremiah 7:23.

The *Punch Lines* in this week's lesson pierce through the pleasantries of life and hit the core issue: What do we want most? What do we treasure? What are we willing to do, to give, to resist, to embrace to obtain our heart's desire? If you were to order the *Punch Lines* in a Bible study for the rich young ruler, what order would you put them in, and why? If you were to do a Bible study for the expert in the law, how would you organize these verses to make the greatest impact? Why? Think of someone you know who reminds you of the lawyer or the ruler, or both, and dedicate time to pray for them today.

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Thursday

Read 1 John 5:12.

Make a list of your assets—the things you own. It doesn't have to be a specific list, but a general category of "my stuff." Make a list of things you want to acquire before you die. Make a list of things you want to achieve before you die. Make a list of experiences you want to have before you die. Make a list of things you want others to say about you when you die. (You can use the Notes section of this guide.) Not to be morbid, but examine this list. Surely it contains noble attributes. But would you trade any or all of those things for eternal life with Christ? The easy answer is no. But the real answer is to be played out in your life as you live each day. Today, make a priority list of five things to do today, but make sure you include the one thing you would never trade anything for.

Friday

Read Joshua 24:15.

Reflect on experiences in your life when you were torn between two good things. How do you make decisions in the here and now about noble things to achieve? By what reference point do you look at the things you want or choose to do? Take time to ruminate on a biblical character who had to make big decisions that were monumental to the ultimate outcome of their life. As you look at their story, consider how your story resonates with the great challenge for all who choose to follow Christ—the challenge to make Him first and best above all.

this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 53; 54; 57.

*A special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages*, entitled *Humble Hero*, has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press® Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.