

MARK OF A DISCIPLE

Disciples of Christ seek God and his perspective (Matt. 6:33).

SCRIPTURE

LUKE 18:18-30

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

By worldly standards, the rich ruler in this passage was “good.” The title “ruler” suggests he was part of the Sanhedrin or possibly a leader in a local synagogue. He had kept God’s commandments since he was a boy (Luke 18:20-21). Because the Jewish people only applied the word “good” to God, it was unusual to address a teacher in that way. Was the ruler acknowledging Jesus as God? Jesus pressed the young man to discover for himself what he believed about Jesus.

Check out the *Teacher Prep Video* for this lesson: <https://vimeo.com/1064810185>



OPENING

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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MEDIA AS STUDENTS ARRIVE

1. Play background music (optional)
2. Display **SERIES TITLE Slide** and announcement slides in a loop or customize the provided **PowerPoint**.
3. Play a 5-minute Countdown Timer 5:00 minutes before you start.

GAME or ICE BREAKER

Based on your group’s size, choose a **Game** from **Deep Discipleship Games** OR use the **Ice Breaker** prompt.

- **Game**—We recommend **Got Game?** or choose another screen game from **Deep Discipleship Games**
- **Ice Breaker**— What is your most prized possession? Why?

DEEP DISCIPLESHIP GAMES

Find free games in **Deep Discipleship Games**. It’s already included with your Deep Discipleship subscription. View the game in advance in case you need supplies or slides.

WORSHIP

Craft a time of worship with a live band or sing along to a playlist.

- Check out our curated Spotify list. We understand that every church has a different theological view of worship. These songs are suggestions, please pick what works best for your church.
- <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/2xmeIKGUjkEE7bJYSCbRwe?si=d254ec715a4749e5>

SLIDES (optional)

Use **SERIES Background & Blank Slides** or **PowerPoint** to create lyric slides.

TRANSITION TO MESSAGE

Include a brief element that transitions students from worship to teaching time, like a prayer or video. This will keep students focused and prepared for the message while the band leaves the stage.

VIDEO (optional)

Show **SERIES Promo Video** or **LESSON Intro Video** after the last worship song.

MESSAGE

Use the following teaching points and suggested illustrations as a starting point to build your message.

POINT 1: The rhetorical question

Read or have someone in your group read Luke 18:18–20

Jesus is asked a rhetorical question, and everyone in attendance would have clearly known the answer. Jesus' answer to the rich ruler is the expected one. He is taking them back to Exodus 20:1–17. The assumption here is that this person is asking Jesus this question because he wants Jesus to assure him that he is in the right and is a good person.

SLIDES (optional)

Use the **SERIES PowerPoint** OR the **Background & Blank Slides** to create these slides to support your message:

- Luke 18:18–20
- Point 1

POINT 2: Jesus gets to the deeper issue

Read or have someone in your group read Luke 18:21–23

Jesus doubles down on his answer in the same way the rhetorical question is asked in verse 18. Obviously, a camel can't pass through the eye of a needle. Jesus is making this obvious statement because he wants to stress that those who have wealth and possessions will struggle to be in a relationship with God. It's so easy for their possessions to take center stage in their lives as they can trust in their wealth more than the Lord.

SLIDES (optional)

- Luke 18:21–23
- Point 2

POINT 3: The needle and the camel

Read or have someone in your group read Luke 18:24–28

Jesus doubles down on his answer in the same way the rhetorical question is asked in verse 18. Obviously, a camel can't pass through the eye of a needle. Jesus is making this obvious statement because he wants to stress that those who have wealth and possessions will struggle to be in a relationship with God. It's so easy for their possessions to take center stage in their lives as they can trust in their wealth more than the Lord.

SLIDES (optional)

- Luke 18:24–28
- Point 3

Since a camel can't pass through the eye of a needle, how can wealthy people be saved? Jesus is clear that with God, anything is possible. But to do the impossible, you need to have Jesus at the center of your life.

ILLUSTRATION: You can connect this truth with Matthew 17:20; even the smallest amount of faith can move a mountain.

Whenever Jesus dives deep into the real issue, the question of "who can do this?" is always present, but Jesus is clear repeatedly. *If you make me the center of your life, you can do more than you could ever know.*



POINT 4: You will gain more than you will lose

Read or have someone in your group read Luke 18:29–30

Instead of our positions or wealth, *Jesus* wants to be the center of our lives—the driving purpose of our hearts. This is counter-cultural to our natural desire for more, so we tend to focus on the sacrifices we make for Jesus instead of all we receive in Jesus. When we see the truth of who Jesus is, we realize he is worth more than we could ever give up and will joyfully sacrifice all to be with him (Matt. 13:44–46).

SLIDES (optional)

- Luke 18:29–30
- Point 4

CLOSING

MARK OF A DISCIPLE

Disciples of Christ seek God and his perspective (Matt. 6:33).

SLIDES (optional)

- Mark of a Disciple

FACILITATOR NOTE: DO YOU HAVE SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION RIGHT AWAY?

- If YES, then **STOP HERE**, divide into groups, and provide Small Group Leaders with the **Small Group Breakout Questions** on the next page.
- If NO, then end your gathering with the **Reflect & Respond** questions and **Prayer** prompt below.

REFLECT & RESPOND

Give the students time to silently think through what they have heard and contemplate these questions:

- What do you value in your heart more than Jesus?
- What keeps you from giving everything to Jesus?

SLIDES (optional)

Use the **SERIES PowerPoint OR** the **Background & Blank Slides** to display the **Reflect & Respond** questions.

FACILITATOR NOTE: Don't rush this part. Give the students a few minutes to consider that giving our whole lives to him is a sacrifice worth making.

PRAYER

Take time to pray that your students will have God's perspective and that their sacrifice is a win for them and the Kingdom of God.



SMALL GROUP BREAKOUT (OPTIONAL)

Pick a few questions from each section to discuss. Close with prayer.

BREAKOUT QUESTIONS**Build Meaningful Relationships**

- Share a story about a time you had to give up something for someone else.
Answers will vary, but the goal is to help students explore their motivations, feelings, and outcomes of the sacrifice.
- On a scale of 0–5 (0=nothing, 5=everything), how much of your life do you think you hold back from God?
Answers will vary. Come prepared to share your own number and how that number has changed over your faith journey.

Share Personal Stories & Ask Intentional Questions

- How would you answer the question the rich ruler asks in verse 18?
The answers may vary, and you might get a few “follow Jesus,” but push your students to be as clear as possible. Ask them to consider how they would answer this question from a friend or family member.
- Do you think following the Ten Commandments is all you need to do to be considered good?
Unfortunately, none of us are capable of keeping all the commandments (Rom. 3:23). Point to the truth that no one is good but God alone. We are incapable of being good on our own. The only thing good about us is Jesus.
- What would be one big thing in your life that you would struggle to give up for Jesus?
Answers will vary. Come prepared to share your own answer to help get the conversation started.
- If the rich ruler had done what Jesus asked, what do you think he would have gained?
Eternal life and a relationship with Jesus would certainly be included. He would have gained freedom from his materialism, forgiveness of his sins, and a new purpose and master in life. Our problem is that we often focus on what we lose by following Jesus rather than what we gain.

Make Life Application & Hold Students Accountable

- Why do you think we focus on what we give up to follow Jesus rather than what we gain?
Too often, we mistakenly see Jesus as a rule-maker instead of a loving Savior. The closer we move to Jesus, the more we will see the things we hold back from God.
- What do you think Jesus could do in your life if you surrendered everything to him?
Answers will vary. Don't rush this question; give your students time to think and challenge them to think big and bold about their answers.

PRAYER

Take time to pray that your students will have God's perspective and that their sacrifice is a win for them and the Kingdom of God.

Use this space to keep track of any prayer requests.

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