

1) **CHILDREN AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD - Mark 10:13-16**

“And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them; [14] But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. [15] Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.” [16] And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.”

a) **CLEARLY, THE DISCIPLES HADN'T GRASPED THE TEACHING OF JESUS IN 9:35-37**

“And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, “If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.” [36] And he took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, [37] “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me.”

People aren't made big by finding impressive things to do (see also 9:41 - **“For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward”**). As Jesus saw His disciples rebuking these parents for bringing children, He realized the need for further, deeper teaching on the subject of **ministry in the kingdom of God**. People aren't made great by having big ministries. They are made big by bringing a servant's heart to whatever ministries they have.

b) **IT'S IMPORTANT THAT THE THINGS OF GOD GET AN EARLY START IN HUMAN LIVES.**

Jesus seemed to instinctively recognize this. It's not that children's souls are worth more than adult ones. But it is true that the adult life is more likely to be built around the things of God **when those truths get a head start in the earliest years**. As always, it's easier to **prevent** than **correct and rebuild**.

c) **EVEN ADULTS MUST RESPOND TO JESUS AS THESE CHILDREN DO**

Of course, children aren't perfect. Jesus isn't saying they are. But they are **very impressionable and shapable**. If Jesus can get a hold of their hearts **before bad influences corrupt them**, they can very simply be **shaped and molded** by what they learn. Jesus is saying we adults tend to lose that quality as we age. Our pride plays a bigger role in our decisions. We care more about image and visible success and reputation - even to our spiritual detriment.

2) **THE RICH MAN WHO CAME TO FOLLOW JESUS - Mark 10:17-31**

“And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” [18] And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. [19] You know the commandments: ‘Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.’” [20] And he said to him, “Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.” [21] And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” [22] Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. [23] And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!” [24] And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, “Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God! [25] It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God. [26] And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, “Then who can be saved?” [27] Jesus looked at them and said, “With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.” [28] Peter began to say

to him, "See, we have left everything and followed you." [29] Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, [30] who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life. [31] But many who are first will be last, and the last first."

a) **THE TELL-TALE REQUEST - MARK 10:17**

"And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, 'Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' This question came from a man who felt he was doing everything right in his life. He had been keeping all the rules. **He's moral but empty.** This comes out more strongly in **Matthew's account of the same incident - "All these I have kept," the young man said. "What do I still lack?"** Good works certainly must be the fruit of true conversion. But by themselves, they will never fill man's thirst for the living God.

b) **JESUS POINTS OUT WHO HE IS - MARK 10:18**

"And Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.'" As long as this young ruler views Jesus as merely another **"good teacher"** (17) he is on the wrong track. If Jesus is a good teacher **only** then keeping His rules is all that's needed for eternal life. Much more is required if He's the Lamb of God.

c) **JESUS' STRANGE REQUEST - MARK 10:19-21**

"You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.'" [20] And he said to him, **"Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth."** [21] And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, **"You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."**

It's interesting to see how Jesus probed this man's heart. He does not start with the first four commandments dealing with **man's relationship with God**. Rather, He begins with the last six commands dealing with **man's relationship with his fellow man**. While the ruler said he had kept all of these commands, clearly he has not. If he really loved his neighbor as much as he loved himself he would have no problem giving his wealth to meet his neighbor's needs. Now we are ready to see the purpose of Jesus' hard command (21). It cuts to the heart of this man's blind righteousness and disillusionment - **Luke 9:23-24 - "And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. [24] For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it."**

This is how sin is exposed in our hearts. Most of us can feel that we are pretty decent in our treatment of people around us. But sin is only truly seen from God's perspective when seen in the light of the His greatest commandment **Matthew 22:36-37 - "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" [37] And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."** Our little merit systems look truly shabby. The exceeding sinfulness of **loving anything more than God** drives us to Christ for cleansing and forgiveness.

d) **SMALL MEASURES WILL BE INEFFECTIVE IN DEALING WITH IMPURE HEARTS - MARK 10:22-27**

"Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. [23] And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" [24] And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God! [25] It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." [26] And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, "Then who

can be saved?" [27] Jesus looked at them and said, "With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God."

Why did Jesus make the demand so stern? The demand is stern **only if you look at what Jesus was taking away from the man.** The demand becomes an act of love when you consider **what Jesus was trying to give the man!** Perhaps we think Jesus was demanding rather than giving because our minds are too easily fastened to earthly riches. Jesus called for drastic measures because **materialism is such a deep rooted and terminal disease.** Sometimes half a dose of medicine is no better than no medicine at all. **Small measures will be ineffective in removing cherished idols from our selfish hearts.** Only drastic measures will do - See also **Mark 9:42-48.**

e) **THE BEAUTIFUL PROMISE OF REWARD - MARK 10:28-31**

"And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" [29] And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer." [30] They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he did not want anyone to know, [31] for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise."

This is the flip side of the same coin. Did the rich man gain by holding on to his riches, or did he lose far more? The point is, **Jesus didn't come just to empty our lives of what we possess.** He wasn't embarrassed to talk lavishly about real rewards for following and serving Him. The rich ruler wasn't really that wise or shrewd. He was acutely short-sighted.