

**LESSON 2: QUESTIONS FROM A RICH YOUNG MAN**

This includes:

- 1. LEADER PREPARATION**
- 2. LESSON GUIDE**

**1. LEADER PREPARATION****LESSON OVERVIEW**

Sometimes the hardest thing for young Christians to figure out is what they're "supposed" to be doing. Christianity is too often defined as being a "good" person and doing "good" stuff, and staying away from "bad" people and "bad" stuff. But just living as a "good" person is not what Jesus wants us to pursue most passionately in life. In this lesson your students will explore an interaction Jesus had with someone who lived a really good life—and it should come as no surprise that Jesus called him to more than just good living.

**LESSON OBJECTIVES**

- 1. WHAT:** We need to avoid the trap of thinking that the Christian life is all about a list of "good" things we should do and "bad" things we should avoid.
- 2. WHY:** Just as Jesus was trying to help the rich young man by shifting his focus—from the things he did to something much greater—we, too, can make that shift.
- 3. HOW:** Teenagers will examine the interaction between Jesus and the rich young man, with a focus on Jesus' powerful use of a question.

**PRIMARY SCRIPTURE**

Matthew 19:16-22

**SECONDARY SCRIPTURE**

Philippians 2:12-18

**TEACHING PREP**

**LEADER  
TIP**

**Use this short overview to prepare for your lesson. While you may not want to convey this information word-for-word with your group, you'll want to absorb it as you prepare to lead.**

**Read Matthew 19:16-22.**

In this passage, Jesus was talking to a rich young man—someone who had invested all of his life and energy in being a "good" person. When he asked Jesus if there was anything he had forgotten to do (so that he could be sure he was going to heaven), Jesus responded with a question of his own. Jesus was trying to focus this good person on the one who is good (Jesus) rather than the good things he had been doing.

It is easy for us to focus on the wrong things in this Christian life—even if they are good things in and of themselves. This young man had done a lot of good things with his life. Likewise, your students probably have a list of noble and noteworthy things they are currently trying to accomplish. In this lesson we are trying to get at the root of those things: Are your teenagers doing good things because they have to, or is something deeper driving them?

Some of the questions that emerge from this Scripture are things all of us ought to consider. How might we fall into the same trap as the young man? How can we better focus our life on Christ as opposed to just doing good things for him?

## **THE BEFORE & AFTER [OPTIONAL]**

### **TEXTS OR TWEETS**

**Send one or both of these messages to your students prior to your meeting. As with the rest of the curriculum, edit these questions to fit the needs of your ministry.**

- Is there more to being a Christian than just doing good things? Join us this week as we explore the purpose of our faith!
- Do you ever feel like you've got it all together as a person, but don't really connect with Jesus much? Join us for a discussion tonight!

### **PARENT EMAIL**

**Send this email to parents following the lesson to encourage them to continue the conversation at home. Feel free to edit and customize the email to fit your ministry needs.**

Dear parents,

We're halfway through our series focusing on the questions of Jesus. Each week, students are examining a different passage of Scripture to discover what was behind some of the questions Jesus asked in the Gospels.

In this second lesson, we explored Matthew 19:16-22, where Jesus encountered a rich young man. He had lived an exemplary life but felt that something was still missing. Jesus' question about his focus on the good things of this life rather than a focus on "the One who is good" challenged the young man's priorities.

This week, I encourage you to spend a few minutes talking with your teenager about our lesson. Consider building your conversation around these questions:

- Is it possible to be "good enough" in this Christian life?
- How does Jesus' question for the rich young man affect us today?
- Do you think the rich young man eventually changed for the better after having met Jesus? Why or why not?

Have a spectacular week!

**LESSON 2: QUESTIONS FROM A RICH YOUNG MAN****2. LESSON GUIDE****GETTING THINGS STARTED [OPTIONAL]****LEADER  
TIP**

Prior to your meeting, gather a stack of blank index cards (or adhesive notes) and place them on a table in the middle of your space, along with enough pens or pencils for each of your students.

Welcome your students and invite them into your meeting area. Open in prayer, and then lead students in this opening activity.

Ask students to think through all the things “good” people do. (Keep in mind that this is purely a general, mental activity—it should not be directed at your students, given that some of them may or may not be doing these things on a regular basis.) Give them about three to five minutes to make a detailed list. The result should be a stack of cards with phrases such as “be nice to people,” “go to church,” or “tell the truth” written on them.

**NOTE:** If students have a difficult time coming up with more than 5-10 things, feel free to throw out some questions that might prompt them. Maybe ask, “Who is the best person you know? What kinds of things does he or she do?”

**ASK:**

- *Was it easy to think up a list of things that “good” people do? Why or why not?*
- *If someone were to live life doing all of the things you just identified, what would that person’s life be like?*
- *How does this list of “good” things correspond with how Jesus wants his followers to live?*

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *Sometimes we feel like all we do are good things. There’s nothing inherently wrong with doing good things, but today we’re going to talk about a question that Jesus asked a guy who based his entire life around doing good things.*

**TEACHING POINTS****LEADER  
TIP**

Use the Teaching Points to help students capture the essence of each lesson with more discussion and less lecture-style teaching. Remember: All throughout these lessons, it’s up to you to choose (1) how many questions you use and (2) the wording of the main points—keep ours, or change the wording to make it clearer for your audience.

Read Matthew 19:16-22 together as a group. Consider dividing verses among your students so several people have a chance to read.

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *Let's spend a few minutes exploring this question of Jesus. At first it doesn't seem like a huge deal, but to the rich young man it meant everything!*

## 1. QUESTIONING THE QUESTION

**ASK:**

- *Based on the young man's question, how do you think he had lived his life so far?*
- *Why didn't Jesus answer the young man directly?*
- *How did Jesus' question get at the heart of what the young man was after?*
- *What do you think Jesus was trying to accomplish with his question?*

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *Sometimes we think that the Christian life is all about a list of "good" things we should do and "bad" things we should stay away from. Jesus was trying to help the young man by shifting his focus away from the things that he did to something much greater. That's a shift each of us can make, too.*

## 2. LIVING THE GOOD LIFE

**ASK:**

- *Why is it significant that the specific commandments Jesus cited are all part of the Ten Commandments?*
- *Of the ones he listed, which do you think is easiest to follow? most difficult to follow? Why?*
- *Is it possible for someone to follow those commandments but not be a Christian? In other words, does following those commandments automatically make you a follower of Jesus? Why or why not?*

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *Jesus continued the conversation with the rich young man by helping him see what a good person he truly was. But there was also something greater at work here. Consider the fact that even after listing out the good things that he should do, there was still something that the young man felt like he was lacking. Despite all of our best efforts, we can never be perfect.*

## 3. FOLLOWING THE PERFECT LEADER

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *In verse 21, Jesus made a very big ask of the rich young man: to give away all of his possessions. Jesus knows that "stuff" can keep us from focusing on "the One who is good." In this moment Jesus was attempting to call this young man to a life of commitment. Jesus was calling him to do more than just be a good person.*

**ASK:**

- *Tell us about a time that you were exhausted from doing good stuff—what did you learn from that experience?*
- *For the rich young man it was his possessions—what are some things that might keep you from following Jesus passionately or consistently?*

- *Why was it so difficult for the young man to do what Jesus asked him to do?*
- *It has been said that everyone who truly meets Jesus experiences life-change—for better or for worse, how did this encounter affect this young man's life?*

### EXTRA DISCUSSION [OPTIONAL]

Ask students to form groups of two or three to discuss these questions.



#### ASK:

- *Read Philippians 2:12-18. How would you summarize the “good life” or “good living” described in these verses?*
- *How can this kind of “good living” point people toward Jesus?*
- *Which instruction or piece of wisdom in this passage do you find most challenging to follow, and why?*

Bring everyone back together, and ask for volunteers to share answers to the previous questions, as time permits.

### LIVING IT OUT

#### ASK:

- *What do you sense Jesus wanting to do in and through your life? What evidence leads you toward that sense?*
- *No doubt we have all been doing good things—especially for those of us who've been going to church for a while. How would you summarize our thoughts from today's discussion about doing good just for the sake of doing good?*
- *If you want to live differently, how might you begin to go about living a life that is centered on Jesus and then reflects the things that he asks you to do?*

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** *Sometimes we can get misdirected—we get caught in the trap of thinking that all we need to do is good stuff. Living a good life is not a bad thing—anyone can do it. Jesus wants to know which one of us would trade our good stuff to follow him. As we seek to follow Jesus, he will send us out to do good things. We don't get to Jesus by doing good stuff; we get to Jesus by simply going to Jesus.*

Ask students to each find a quiet spot in your meeting area for a few minutes of prayer and reflection. Consider praying together as a group or asking if any students would like prayer from the rest of the group.

### SUMMARY



Provide a quick summary or take-home challenge based on (1) this lesson's content, (2) the dialogue that took place today, (3) your understanding of the issues and struggles your teenagers are facing, and (4) the big picture of your youth ministry and what your leadership team wants accomplished with the teaching and discussion time.

**FOR KEEPS [MEMORY VERSE]**

Encourage and/or challenge your teenagers to memorize the Scripture below.

*“ ‘Why ask me about what is good?’ Jesus replied. ‘There is only One who is good’ ” (Matthew 19:17).*