



## Daily Devotionals: With Jesus One-On-One | February 6, 2022

### Day 1 – Devotion

If you've ever been to the circus, then you know one of the main events is seeing trapeze artists grab on to the trapeze bar, jump off their platform, swing out, and then let go *hoping* to be caught by their partner as they momentarily fall 25 feet from the floor.

What's really inspiring about a trapeze artist isn't just the external logistics associated with the feat. The internal disposition of the jumper and the catcher are just as impressive – courage, fortitude, trust, and surrender.

The trapeze artist has been an apt illustration for the idea of surrender for some time. To “surrender” carries with it this idea of “letting go,” “giving up,” and “abandoning oneself entirely to something else.” And that's exactly what a trapeze artist does. They “let go,” they “give up” their grip on the trapeze bar, and they “abandon themselves entirely to something (or someone) else.”

I wonder if the Rich Ruler in **Luke 18** couldn't have taken some pointers from the trapeze artist.

### Read Luke 18:18-30.

In this story, the Rich Ruler appears so confident, so self-reliant. No pleasantries before his question to Jesus, no moment of reflection when Jesus reminds him of the commandments of God: “Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not bear false witness, honor your father and mother.”

“All these I have kept from my youth,” he replies. So, Jesus goes a layer deeper.

In **verse 22**, Jesus says, “You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

Ah, here's the heart of the issue. This man, the Rich Ruler, was obviously religious. And obviously obedient. But perhaps even more obvious to us in reading is the fact he wasn't *surrendered* to God.

So long as obedience to God didn't interfere with his life's plans, his budget, his dreams, and his goals, he was good to go! But Jesus immediately confronts this man's heart. Jesus knew that the Rich Ruler wasn't fully surrendered to God (which is the key to living an eternal kind of life, by the way), and he helped him to see it. This is probably why we read the Rich Ruler's reaction in the text: “When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was very wealthy.”



His heart was tied to his possessions and his wealth, not his God.

Scholar N.T. Wright says this about the Rich Ruler,

“That was why the rich ruler became sad. In order to inherit the life of the new age, he had to abandon the values of the old and *trust himself totally* to the new, like a diver throwing himself forwards into the water. He couldn't seriously be seeking for the new age if he couldn't abandon the symbols of the old. The commandments were good and important; but if he was wedded to possessions...then he would never be able to accept God's kingdom like a child, with the humble *trust* that allowed God to be God.

The Rich Ruler missed out on the Kingdom of God and eternal life (“the life of the new age”) because he hadn't surrendered his all to God. He couldn't yet totally trust.

And perhaps there were all kinds of reasons for that...

- Perhaps he simply loved his wealth too much
- Perhaps he couldn't let go of his need for control
- Perhaps he had a stronghold of fear that he couldn't overcome
- Perhaps he didn't have an internalization that God is sovereign and loving and good

Whatever the reason, his lack of surrender was exposed, and he walked away sad.

### Questions for reflection:

- If Jesus came up to you and said, “Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then, come follow me.” Would you do it? What does your response indicate about your total trust and surrender to God?
- Maybe you're not very materialistic and could “sell it all.” Here's a hard question: Is there anything in your life (experiences, a hobby, relationships) that if Jesus asked you to give it up, you'd hesitate and “walk away sad?” What is it?
- What do you think was the main reason for the Rich Ruler's hesitation in surrendering everything to follow Jesus? What hesitations do you often feel when it comes to fully surrendering to God?
- What are Jesus and His Kingdom worth to you compared to the things of this world?



## Day 2 – Bible Study Breakdown

For today’s devotional work, let’s not only look at Luke’s account of the Rich Ruler’s story, but Matthew and Mark’s accounts as well. Both Matthew and Mark also recorded renditions of this story. Reading all three stories together, noting their similarities and dissimilarities, can help give us a fuller picture of the person of Jesus and of this story.

Read through the account of this story in **Luke 18:18-30**. Once finished, go through these Scriptures again slowly. Only, as you go through it this time, using your pen or pencil (it’d be helpful to have a couple different colors), go through and mark what similarities and differences you see in each account.

If there are words that are unique to only one of the gospel accounts of this story, notate that. If there are words that are similar between two accounts but not a third, notate that. If there are words similar in all three accounts, notate that too.

When you’re finished, spend some time with the questions below.

**Matthew 19:16-30**

**Mark 10:17-31**

**Luke 18:18-30**

### Questions for reflection:

- How did this exercise of looking intentionally at all three accounts of the Rich Ruler’s story help you to slow down and notice every word of the text?
- What words or phrases stuck out to you from this exercise? What thoughts, ideas, or feelings do you have about those specific words or phrases?
- What might God be inviting you into after this study?



### Day 3 – Scripture Survey

For today, let's take some time to look at the context of the Rich Ruler passage. Whenever we're reading the Bible, we want to always be the kind of people who read the Bible with good interpretation principles. One of the principles is the idea that "Context is King."

What do we mean by this? Well, just like we don't jump into a movie without the beginning or the ending in mind, we also don't want to jump into a passage of Scripture without looking at its surroundings.

To give us some context, read the following Scriptures below and answer the associated questions in the space provided.

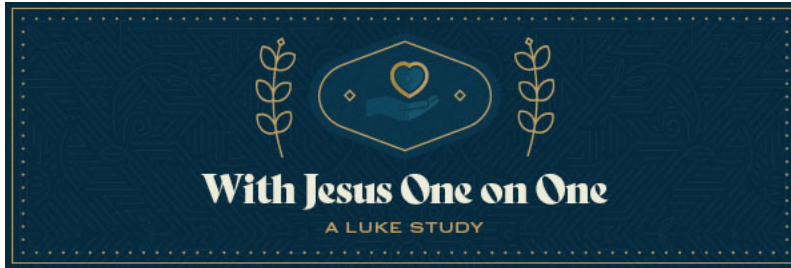
#### Read Luke 18:15-17

Why do you think Luke places this story of Jesus and the little children right before telling us about the Rich Ruler? How do the children and the Rich Ruler differ?

#### Read Luke 19:1-9

Why do you think Luke places this story of Jesus and Zacchaeus right after telling us about the Rich Ruler? How are Zacchaeus and the Rich Ruler the same? How do they differ?

One of the main themes in Luke's gospel is his emphasis on the inbreaking of the Kingdom of God into the life of the world through the person of Jesus. We see this in all kinds of passages. Look up the following verses and note how they showcase the inbreaking of God's Kingdom. Then, **re-read Luke 18:18-30** and jot down how you think that passage contributes to this overall theme.



**Luke 4:14-21**

**Luke 5:17-20**

**Luke 6:1-5**

**Luke 8:43-48**

**Luke 9:1-6**

**Luke 18:18-30**

How does this passage contribute to Luke's overall demonstration of the inbreaking of God's kingdom through Jesus?



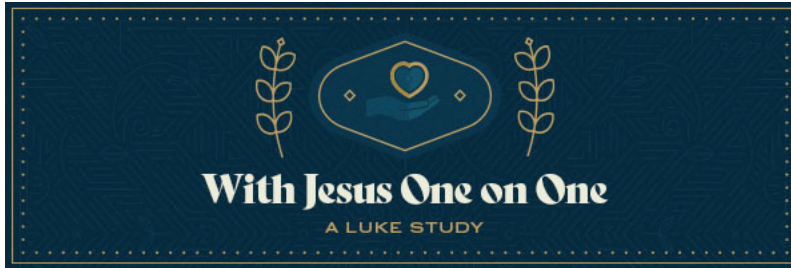
## Day 4 – Story

In this series, we're looking at people who are one-on-one with Jesus and how these interactions changed them and can change us. What's interesting about the interaction between Jesus and the Rich Ruler in **Luke 18:18-30** is how stark the terms of absolute surrender are presented... and how difficult that can be.

As you begin this devotion today, spend some time re-reading **Luke 18:18-30**.

When you've finished reading, spend a few minutes in prayer asking God what you might take from this story from John's life. Still your mind, preparing to think deeply and ask God to share what He wants you to discover. Then, ponder the following reflection questions.

- As you look back over your life, how was surrender to God and His ways modeled for you by your family of origin? Was your family wholly committed to following God in every area? Or were there potential areas where they'd hesitate? Are there any parts of your life where hesitation to fully follow Jesus might stem from?
- As you look over your life, when was a time Jesus asked you to give something up for him and you did? Describe what that experience was like for you.
- Have there been times in your life you knew Jesus was asking you to surrender something, but you refused? What was that like? What tensions were you feeling? What feelings shaped that decision? What happened as a result?



## Day 5 – Application

This week, we've spent significant time one-on-one with Jesus and the Rich Ruler. We considered the Rich Ruler's story, studied the inbreaking of God's kingdom, pondered the topic of surrender and our own reactions to Jesus' words, and more.

So, how do we practically apply a passage like this?

Using the questions below, consider what God might be inviting you to *do* because of your devotionals this week:

- What's something God might be inviting you to surrender to deeply trust in *his* goodness and sovereignty?
- Do you want to model a posture of surrender and total trust to God to your loved ones? How do you plan to do this? List 2-3 practical ways.
- What have you failed to surrender to God? What practical steps can you take to confess this to a trusted friend today?