

Episode: God and His Family No. 09

Narrator: Rich young ruler

Primary Scriptures: Luke 18:18-30

Story Summary: Obedience is part of being in God's family

Location: Israel

Time: circa 30 AD

Suggested Memory Scriptures: Luke 18:27

What did Jesus command the rich young ruler to do? Carefully read the account in Matthew 19:16-30 and you might find a surprise. He did not command the man to do anything!

In the story of the rich young ruler, Jesus answers the man's question, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Finally, Jesus observes the man must sell everything he has, give the proceeds to the poor and follow Jesus. The man goes away sad because he is unwilling to pay that price for eternal life.

In God's family, obedience takes different forms. The most obvious is to do or not do the things God has specifically commanded in the Bible. Another form is to follow the teachings of Jesus and be obedient to the meaning of them. Loving God and all mankind might be an example of this. If you know God forbids you to do something, then don't do things like that.

Perhaps the highest form of obedience is to have complete trust in God and his nature...know him so well that you know what he approves of and doesn't approve of, and you do or don't do those things, or be or don't be that way. This is one reason why the Scriptures often advise you to know God.

A loving child shows love and honor for God by being obedient. In John 4:23, Jesus said it plainly, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching." In 1 John 2:5, John wrote, "But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them."

Obedience results in blessings (Genesis 22:18, Leviticus 25:18, Deuteronomy 6:24). Hebrews 5:9 says that Jesus is the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

Obedience to God is the highest form of trust in him. Obedience says, "God, I really want to do something, but I won't do it because I trust you know what is best." This type of obedience is especially hard for Americans because they are surrounded with the message that they have the right to do and be anything they want because that is being true to themselves.

The rich young ruler got the answer to his question of what he needed to do to have eternal life? Perhaps he was asking the wrong question. What if he had asked, "Lord, how can I be obedient to God so that he is honored in all that I do?"