

Eternal Life

Session 7 • Matthew 19:16-30



ENGAGE

PREPARE: Display **Pack Item 2** (*Poster: Outline of Matthew 14–28*). Make copies of **Pack Item 14** (*Handout: Greatness in the Kingdom*).

READ: Enlist a volunteer to read the opening paragraph on page 57. Engage adults to share some of the things they learned about work as they were growing up.

ASK: Do you agree or disagree that nothing is free and everything worth having must be worked for? Explain. (p. 57)

INFORM: Distribute copies of **Pack Item 14** (*Handout: Greatness in the Kingdom*) to each person in the group. Encourage adults to scan the article silently and to note insights about how ancient Israelites defined greatness.

CONTEXT: Share that after another heated confrontation with religious leaders, Jesus took time to bless a group of children. Draw attention to the following from **Understand the Context** to explain why Jesus allowed the children to come to Him:

- “Jesus spoke of the dependence of children as an example of the childlike humility needed by all to be a part of the kingdom of God. . . . This thought links

this humility with the proper way to enter eternal life as explained in the next verses in this chapter.” (p. 57)

ASK: How is childlike humility different from our cultural understanding of a strong work ethic?

TRANSITION: *Matthew connected being like a child (Matt. 19:13-15) to our focal passage about the young man looking for eternal life. As we study this walking object lesson, consider what eternal life means to you and how you can demonstrate your relationship with God in practical ways each day.*

EXPLORE THE TEXT

EXPLAIN: Direct adults to **Pack Item 2** (*Poster: Outline of Matthew 14–28*). Point out that the events in today’s session took place as Jesus’s ministry turned back toward Jerusalem.

READ: Invite a volunteer to read Matthew 19:16-22 aloud as the group considers the man’s motivation for coming to Jesus.

ASK: What was the significance of this man’s question?

ENLIGHTEN: Share the following to explain the “why” behind the man’s questions about eternal life:

- **(19:16)** From all indications this man’s question was sincere. What is surprising is the fact that this wealthy young man would admit he lacked eternal life. He knew something was missing from his life. He was eager to fix his emptiness. Here was a young man seeking hope for this life and for life after death.

ASK: What are some common views on how to receive eternal life? (p. 59)

SHARE: *This man thought he had it all together. He claimed to keep all the commands, including those focused on our “horizontal” relationships with others. But Jesus cut through the man’s delusions. He revealed some gaps in the man’s understanding of what it means to keep the law. More important, He pinpointed the man’s biggest failure: allowing his stuff to become his god. None of us can fill God’s spot in our lives with material possessions. We can’t earn salvation, and we can’t earn a meaningful relationship with Him.*

INTRODUCE: Remind the group that a crowd (Matt. 19:2) and the disciples (19:13) were with Jesus during the encounter with the young man. Explain that, in the next verses, we see that even Jesus’s closest followers were flabbergasted by the scene.

READ: Invite a volunteer to read Matthew 19:23-26 aloud as adults listen carefully for the reaction of the disciples.

ASK: Why were the disciples “utterly astonished” (v. 25)? (p. 59)

EXPLAIN: Note that Jesus reinforced His statement with a hyperbole of a camel passing through the eye of a needle. Point out that the picture of a large camel trying to fit through such a tiny opening would have seemed impossible. Share that, in essence, Jesus was saying squeezing a camel through a needle and a rich man getting into the kingdom both required acts of God.

RECAP: Explain why the disciples were shocked by Jesus’s words:

- “Jesus’s statement here was in direct contradiction to the traditions of Judaism that intimated that a person’s wealth gave evidence of God’s favor. Wealthy Jews often thought they could purchase a more favored position with God through their gifts to the temple or through the giving of alms to the poor. Jesus, however, taught something very different. . . . Wealth or poverty didn’t matter. Only God can bring salvation to a person, for with Him all things are possible. Salvation and entrance into the kingdom of God is dependent on God and God alone.” (p. 62, Day 4)

ASK: Why was Jesus so hard on rich people? (p. 59)

READ: Invite a volunteer to read Matthew 19:27-30 aloud as the rest of the group considers the tone of Peter’s words and Jesus’s response.

ASK: How would you characterize Peter’s tone with Jesus? Why? (p. 59)

SHARE: Acknowledge that Peter’s statement and question sounds greedy or self-serving. Remind adults that he probably was trying to process what Jesus was saying. Note that he may have been confused and wondered how the sacrifices he and the other disciples had made fit into Jesus’s bigger plan.



The Synoptic Gospels

Learn more about how the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke offer a unified, yet distinct, portrait of Jesus’s life and ministry.

ASK: What have you left behind to follow Jesus? Is there anything that hinders you from following Jesus? (p. 59)

RECAP: Note that Jesus did not chastise Peter, but pointed him beyond worldly rewards toward eternity. Highlight what Jesus promised:

- “The reward of a hundred times more speaks of a reward that is out of proportion to what is sacrificed. It will be much more than is expected. This reward may be referring to rewards both now and in eternity. Those who give up houses and lands, relationships and riches, for His sake will receive more than they give up.” (p. 63, Day 5)

EXAMINE: Guide adults through the Plan of Salvation on the inside front cover. Explain that the young man walked away from Jesus because he wasn’t willing to accept Him as Lord and Savior. Urge adults to consider

where they stand with Jesus and let them know that you will be available to speak with anyone who has questions about a relationship with Jesus.

CHALLENGE

SUMMARIZE: Review these points from this week’s Bible passage:

- We can affirm that eternal life cannot be achieved by human achievement.
- We can be encouraged knowing salvation is received as a gift from God.
- We can know that following Jesus is worth it, no matter what it costs—the greatest reward being eternal life.

ASK: How are you trying to “do good” as a way to please the Lord? How has today’s study pointed you toward a different standard for your relationship with God?

DISCUSS: Direct adults to read the **Apply the Text** question on page 59. Remind adults that, while hard work is noble and good in many areas of life, it’s not a way to connect with God. Challenge the group to consider how to receive salvation and God’s daily blessings as His gift of grace, not as a payment for hard work.

AFTER THE SESSION

This week, spend time praying for each adult, especially those who may need to speak with you about the Plan of Salvation. Text or call each person, thanking them for being in the group and offering to pray for them.