

## Luke 18:18-30

<sup>18</sup>Then a certain ruler asked Him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

<sup>19</sup>“Why do you call Me good?” Jesus replied. “No one is good except God alone. <sup>20</sup>You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not bear false witness, honour your father and mother.’”

<sup>21</sup>“All these I have kept from my youth,” he said.

<sup>22</sup>On hearing this, Jesus told him, “You still lack one thing: Sell everything you own and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me.”

<sup>23</sup>But when the ruler heard this, he became very sad, because he was extremely wealthy.

<sup>24</sup>Seeing the man’s sadness, Jesus said, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God! <sup>25</sup>Indeed, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God.”

<sup>26</sup>Those who heard this asked, “Who then can be saved?”

<sup>27</sup>But Jesus said, “What is impossible with man is possible with God.”

<sup>28</sup>“Look,” said Peter, “we have left all we had to follow You.”

<sup>29</sup>“Truly I tell you,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the Kingdom of God <sup>30</sup>will fail to receive many times more in this age — and in the age to come, eternal life.”

Berean Study Bible, UK

---

1

### Luke 18:18-30

Respect lays a foundation. 18-19

Rules established boundaries. 20-21

Responsibilities enable progress. 22-23

Remarkable creates perspective. 24-27

Rewards are the consequences. 28-30

---

2

### What good is it? Luke 18:18-30

Mistaking what is good. 18:18-23

    The mistake of ‘you are good’. 18-19

    The mistake of ‘I am good’. 20-21

    The mistake of ‘things are good’. 22-23

Mastering what is good. 18:24-30

Good is difficult. 24-25

Good is Godly. 26-27

Good is worth it. 28-30

---

3

### **How to live forever. Luke 18:18-30**

I must accomplish what is eternal. 18:18-23

I need information that is eternal. 18-19

I need a framework that is eternal. 20-21

I need a journey that is eternal. 22-23

I must accept what is eternal. 18:24-30

I need to accept my need of God. 24-27

I need to accept I must follow Jesus. 28

I need to accept I will be rewarded. 29-30

---

4

### **Mistakes made by money-makers. Luke 18:18-30**

The desire for wealth will distract me. 18-19

1 Timothy 6:9

The desire for wealth will delude me. 20-25

Proverbs 3:8-9

The desire for wealth will distort reality. 26-30

Mark 4:19, Luke 8:14

---

5

### **Luke 18:18-30**

Come to the right person. 18

Come with the right attitude. 18

Come with the right question. 18

Come to receive the right answer. 19-20

Come to receive the right next step. 22

**Luke 18:18-30**

Right God. 18

Right answers. 19

Wrong response. 21

---

**Smart answers to tough questions. Luke 18:18-30**

When you have no answer. 18:18-19

Smart answers come from smart people. 18a “Good Teacher”

Smart answers require personal engagement. 18 “what must I do...?”

Smart answers relinquish presuppositions. 18-19 “Why do you call Me good?”

When you get no answer. 18:20-22

Smart answers are God’s answers. 20 “You know the commandments”

Smart answers are honest answers. 21 “All these I have kept”

Smart answers are complete answers. 22 “You still lack one thing”

When you don’t like the answer. 18:23-30

Smart answers are more than emotion. 23 “he became very sad”

Smart answers are often tough answers. 24 “How hard it is”

Smart answers are worthwhile answers. 30 “receive many times more”

---

**Expand your horizons. Luke 18:18-30**

Focus on the micro-issues. 18:18-23

My character. 18-19 “Why do you call Me good?”

My actions. 20-21 “You know the commandments:”

My decisions. 22-23 “Then come, follow Me.”

Focus on the macro-issues. 18:24-30

My perceptions. 24-25 “How hard it is...”

My salvation. 26-27 “Who then can be saved?”

My outcomes. 28-30 “receive many times more”

**Seeing the bigger picture. Luke 18:18-30**

Learning to see people. 18:18-19

Can you truly see people? 18a "Good Teacher"

Can you truly see yourself? 19 "Why do you call Me good?"

Can you truly see God? 19 "No one is good except God"

Learning to see tasks. 18:20-23

Know what I am to do. 20 "You know the commandments"

Know what I have/haven't done. 21 "All these I have kept"

Know what I am yet to do. 22 "You still lack one thing"

Learn to see eternity. 18:24-30

I have my priorities. 24 "enter the Kingdom"

I have my limitations. 27 "impossible with man"

I have my promises. 30 "receive many times more"

**There are none so blind... Luke 18:18-30**

Blinded by success. 18:18-21

I must consider my actions. 18 "what must I do"

I must consider my accountability. 20 "You know the commandments"

I must consider my accomplishments. 21 "All these I have kept"

Blinded by sadness. 18:22-23

I must come to my limitation. 22 "You still lack one thing"

I must come to my decision. 22 "Sell... Then come, follow Me."

I must come to my realisation. 23 "because he was"

Blinded by sacrifice. 18:24-30

I must commit to the Kingdom of God. 24 "enter the Kingdom"

I must commit to the Person of God. 27 "impossible with man"

I must receive the commitment of God. 30 "receive many times more"

## **What were you thinking! Luke 18:18-30**

First thoughts. Shallow thoughts. 18:18-21

Assumptions are by choice. 18a "Good Teacher"

Assumptions must be confronted. 19 "Why do you call Me good?"

Assumptions may be changed. 21 "All these I have kept"

Second thoughts. Challenging thoughts. 18:22-23

My satisfaction must be challenged. 22 "You still lack one thing"

My direction must be challenged. 22 "come, follow Me"

My possessions must be challenged. 23 "very sad, because"

Final thoughts Commitment thoughts. 18:24-30

Answer the eternal questions. 26 "Who then can be saved?"

Answer the priority questions. 28 "we have left all we had to follow You."

Answer the value questions. 30 "receive many times more"

---

12

## **What's missing from your life? Luke 18:18-30**

My life is full. 18:18-21

My life is full of my actions. 18 "what must I do"

My life is full of my accountability. 20 "You know the commandments"

My life is full of my accomplishments. 21 "All these I have kept"

My life is empty. 18:22-23

I must come to my limitation. 22 "You still lack one thing"

I must come to my decision. 22 "Sell... Then come, follow Me."

I must come to my realisation. 23 "because he was"

My life is filling. 18:24-30

I am fulfilled by the Kingdom of God. 24 "enter the Kingdom"

I am fulfilled by the Person of God. 27 "possible with God"

I am fulfilled by the commitment of God. 30 "receive many times more"

---

## **Other possible titles**

Jesus is hilarious

Jesus: God with a sense of humour

Who can be saved?

The danger of being rich

Wealth without money

Walking away from real wealth  
Idol worship of new idols  
Free: Treasure maps  
How good people can get saved  
What do you give someone who has it all (almost)  
Your money or your life  
Throw away your small goals  
Financial advice from the richest person in the world  
The real 'Prosperity Theology'. Luke 18:29-30, Hebrews 11:37-40  
When is enough, enough?  
The 'Eye of the Needle' principle  
What car would Jesus drive?  
Looking through the eye of a needle  
The missing link. 22 "You still lack one thing"  
Cost, Worth, and Value  
The cost of Christ-likeness. The cost of Christ-lessness.  
What is 'Good'?  
Future-proof your future  
Let go of your small questions. Seek big answers.  
Get the big picture.  
Short term pain – long term gain.

---

## **Quotes and illustrations**

### Quotes on eternal life

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16

Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life. John 4:14

The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23

If we discover a desire within us that nothing in this world can satisfy, also we should begin to wonder if perhaps we were created for another world. C.S. Lewis

Eternal life is not a peculiar feeling inside! It is not your ultimate destination, to which you will go when you are dead. If you are born again, eternal life is that quality of life that you possess right now. Major Ian Thomas

Believing the right things about Jesus isn't enough. You're not adopted as God's child until you confess and turn away from your wrongdoing and receive the freely

offered gift of forgiveness and eternal life that Jesus purchased with his death on the cross. Until you do that, you'll always be on the outside looking in. Lee Strobel

When you live in the light of eternity, your values change. Rick Warren

Don't let obstacles along the road to eternity shake your confidence in God's promise. The Holy Spirit is God's seal that you will arrive. David Jeremiah

My home is in Heaven. I'm just traveling through this world. Billy Graham

For death is no more than a turning of us over from time to eternity. William Penn

When you are united with the eternal God, you must of course, live eternally. IBD

### Quotes on riches

Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death.  
Proverbs 11:4

Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, Proverbs 30:8

And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19

What does it profit a man to gain the whole world, yet lose or forfeit his very self?  
Luke 9:25

<sup>25</sup> For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. <sup>26</sup> What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? Matthew 16:25-26

<sup>35</sup> For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and for the gospel will save it. <sup>36</sup> What does it profit a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? <sup>37</sup> Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?  
Mark 8:35-37

He who lays up treasures on earth spends his life backing away from his treasures. To him, death is loss. He who lays up treasures in heaven looks forward to eternity; he's moving daily toward his treasures. To him, death is gain. He who spends his life moving toward his treasures has reason to rejoice. Are you despairing or rejoicing?  
Randy Alcorn

---

### Commentary

---

## Questions, Luke 18:18-19

The rich young ruler asked Jesus an important question. Then, Jesus answered his question with a question of His own. That raises the question, 'How many questions was Jesus asked?'. How many questions did Jesus ask of others? How many questions did the disciples ask? How many questions did His opponents ask? Did Jesus answer every question He was asked?

The answer to those questions is: I have no idea. Different commentators come up with widely different answers. The number of questions put to Jesus may be as small as 135, or as large as 307, or any number in between. Likewise, reports of the number of questions He answered differs widely.

With no definite number of questions or answers, I won't guess, I'll just stick to this text.

---

## Good, Luke 18:18-19

Today's false assumption is 'we are all good', and we must 'learn to see the good in everyone'. When asked, 'can I help you?' we answer, 'No thanks. I'm good'.

"Why do you call Me good?" Jesus replied. "No one is good except God alone. v19  
The word 'good' occurs some 372 times in the Old Testament. It is almost always used as an adjective. Such as, good land, or good fruit. Throughout all of history, up until the interview with this rich young ruler, no one, except God Himself, had been given the personal attribution of 'good'.

Everything that God does is 'good' and is demonstrated in Creation.

I was good. Genesis 1:1, 1:10, 1:12, 1:18, 1:21, 1:25, 1:31

The Promised Land was 'good'

You are about to cross over and take possession of that good land. Deuteronomy 4:22

We are expected to act in 'good' ways

Do what is right and good in the Lord's sight, so that it may go well with you, Deuteronomy 6:18a

The first hint of 'good' as a personal attribute:

And the Lord said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. Exodus 33:19

The next statement of 'good' as a personal attribute is in the Psalms:

Good and upright is the Lord. Psalm 25:8

I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord. Psalm 27:13a  
Taste and see that the Lord is good. Psalm 34:8  
I will hope in Your name, for Your name is 'Good'. Psalm 52:9  
For the Lord is good and His love endures forever. Psalm 100:5  
Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever. Psalm 106:1, 107:1, 118:29, 136:1  
You are good, and what You do is good; teach me Your decrees. Psalm 119:68  
Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good; sing praise to his name... Psalm 135:3  
The Lord is good to all; He has compassion on all He has made. Psalm 145:9

At the dedication of the first temple in Jerusalem

The singers raised their voices in praise to the Lord and sang: "He is good; his love endures forever." 2 Chronicles 5:13, 7:13, (6:41), Ezra 3:11

Prior to the Exile, the prophets spoke only once of God's goodness

Give thanks to the Lord Almighty, for the Lord is good; his love endures forever.  
Jeremiah 33:11

During the Babylonian exile

The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him;  
Lamentations 3:25

God, the Holy Spirit, is described as 'good'

You gave your good Spirit to instruct them. Nehemiah 9:20a (9:25, 9:35) (Psalm 143:10)

---

### **A camel going through the eye of a needle, Luke 18:25**

If you're not laughing out loud when you read some passages in the Bible, you're missing the point. Of course, the message of the Bible is earnestly serious, but some of its stories and sayings are hilariously funny. Some of the loudest laughs are in the teachings of Jesus. He was not only a brilliant teacher, but also a pretty funny comedian. The Bible endorses humour, "There is a time to laugh" (Ecclesiastes 3:4), and "Then our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with shouts of joy." (Psalm 126:2). Some obvious examples of Jesus telling funny stories:

- "say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' while there is still a beam in your own eye" (Matthew 7:4)
- "a mustard seed that so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches" (Matthew 13:31–32)

- “You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel” (Matthew 23:24) His first-century Jewish audience would have found the gnat-and-camel imagery really funny is because it’s also a witty play-on-words in Aramaic: “You filter out a galma,” but you gulp down a gamla!”
- “Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit?” Luke 6:39
- “a camel to pass through the eye of a needle” (Mark 10:25, and Luke 18:25)

Jesus is God, and God laughs (Psalm 2:4) and God sings (Zephaniah 3:17).

---

### Fake news

Once upon a time, some unknown preacher, with a theology of only literal interpretation, attempted to explain away the humour of Jesus’ image of a camel going through the eye of a needle. So, he invented the story of a camel needing to be unloaded and to bend low to fit through a small gate which he labelled ‘the eye of a needle gate’.

However, while there are small gates, beside which camels can be posed for photographs, there is absolutely no historical nor archaeological evidence that these small gates were ever called ‘eye of the needle’ gates. The imagery is picturesque, but fanciful.



Image credit: BiblePictureGallery.com

---

## Parallel texts

Matthew 19:16-21	Mark 10:17-31	Luke 18:18-30
Young and rich, v22	Rich, v22	Ruler and rich, v18, 23
<p><sup>16</sup>Just then a man came up to Jesus and inquired,</p> <p>“Teacher, what good thing must I do to obtain eternal life?”</p> <p><sup>17</sup>“Why do you ask Me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only One who is good.</p> <p>If you want to enter life, keep the commandments.”</p> <p><sup>18</sup>“Which ones?” the man asked.</p> <p>Jesus answered, ““Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, <sup>19</sup>honor your father and mother, and love your neighbour as yourself.””</p> <p><sup>20</sup>“All these I have kept,” said the young man.</p> <p>“What do I still lack?”</p> <p><sup>21</sup>Jesus told him, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me.”</p>	<p><sup>17</sup>As Jesus started on His way, a man ran up and knelt before Him.</p> <p>“Good Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”</p> <p><sup>18</sup>“Why do you call Me good?” Jesus replied. “No one is good except God alone.</p> <p><sup>19</sup>You know the commandments:</p> <p>‘Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not cheat others, honour your father and mother.’”</p> <p><sup>20</sup>“Teacher,” he replied, “all these I have kept from my youth.”</p> <p><sup>21</sup>Jesus looked at him, loved him, and said to him, “There is one thing you lack: Go, sell everything you own and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me.”</p>	<p><sup>18</sup>Then a certain ruler asked Him,</p> <p>“Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”</p> <p><sup>19</sup>“Why do you call Me good?” Jesus replied. “No one is good except God alone.</p> <p><sup>20</sup>You know the commandments:</p> <p>‘Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not bear false witness, honour your father and mother.’”</p> <p><sup>21</sup>“All these I have kept from my youth,” he said.</p> <p><sup>22</sup>On hearing this, Jesus told him, “You still lack one thing: Sell everything you own and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me.”</p>

<p><sup>22</sup>When the young man heard this, he went away in sorrow, because he had great wealth.</p> <p><sup>23</sup>Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I tell you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.</p> <p><sup>24</sup>Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."</p> <p><sup>25</sup>When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, "Who then can be saved?"</p> <p><sup>26</sup>Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."</p> <p><sup>27</sup>"Look," Peter replied, "we have left everything to follow You. What then will there be for us?"</p> <p><sup>28</sup>Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, in the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on His glorious</p>	<p><sup>22</sup>But the man was saddened by these words and went away in sorrow, because he had great wealth.</p> <p><sup>23</sup>Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!"</p> <p><sup>24</sup>And the disciples were amazed at His words.</p> <p>But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!</p> <p><sup>25</sup>It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."</p> <p><sup>26</sup>They were even more astonished and said to one another, "Who then can be saved?"</p> <p><sup>27</sup>Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God."</p> <p><sup>28</sup>Peter began to say to Him, "Look, we have left everything and followed You."</p>	<p><sup>23</sup>But when the ruler heard this, he became very sad, because he was extremely wealthy.</p> <p><sup>24</sup>Seeing the man's sadness, Jesus said, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!</p> <p><sup>25</sup>Indeed, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."</p> <p><sup>26</sup>Those who heard this asked, "Who then can be saved?"</p> <p><sup>27</sup>But Jesus said, "What is impossible with man is possible with God."</p> <p><sup>28</sup>"Look," said Peter, "we have left all we had to follow You."</p>
---	---	---

<p>throne, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.</p> <p><sup>29</sup>And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for the sake of My name will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life.</p> <p><sup>30</sup>But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.</p>	<p><sup>29</sup>“Truly I tell you,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for My sake and for the gospel <sup>30</sup>will fail to receive a hundredfold in the present age—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and fields, along with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life.</p> <p><sup>31</sup>But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.”</p>	<p><sup>29</sup>“Truly I tell you,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God <sup>30</sup>will fail to receive many times more in this age—and in the age to come, eternal life.”</p>
--	--	---

---

## Music and songs

Songs about God is good, v18

Give thanks to the Lord, our God and King... Forever. Ot 51

God is good all the time (Don Moen)

God is good all the time (Babbie Mason)

Something beautiful. Something good.

Songs about wealth, poverty, value, v22

Chasing after this world... Live with abandon, Ot 36

He owns the cattle on a thousand hills, 12

In the stars... He’s everything to me, Ot 22

I’d rather have Jesus than silver and gold,

Lord, You are more precious than silver,

Matthew 6:24 + Success “No one can serve two masters”

My worth is not in what I own... At the cross (Getty)

No eye has seen... How high and how wide, Ot 52

You are my hiding place... I will trust in You

### Songs about following Jesus, v22

Follow, follow, I will follow Jesus, H

I have decided to follow Jesus, H 742

I have decided to live like a believer (Michael Card)

I will follow Him (Sister Act)

I'm gonna follow You, Ot 107

---

### Thought starters for personal reflection or group discussion

1. Without bursting into tears, can you tell of a time that you have to give up something that was precious?
  2. Write a list of things that are valuable to you, but have little monetary value. What gives them value to you?
  3. The first thing Jesus told the rich young ruler to do was to sell all he owned, v22. Does Jesus expect the same of us? Why, or why not?
  4. Why was the rich young ruler sad, v23? Was sadness an understandable, and an appropriate, response to v22?
  5. The 10 components of maturity include: Repentance, Love, Gratitude, Curiosity, Determination, Flexibility, Cheerfulness, Confidence, Contribution, and Vitality. Which 2 or 3 of these are most beneficial in helping you to maturity?
  6. Compare the promise in Luke 18:29-30, with Hebrews 11:39-40. How do you reconcile the promise with the lack of fulfilment? What can we expect?
-