

Open Bible Stories — The Rich Young Ruler

Introduction

Key Idea

The story of the rich young ruler teaches us that the cost of following Jesus involves denying ourselves and putting Jesus first above all.

Core Belief Verse

"And he said to all, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.'" Luke 9:23-24

God's Big Story

The eternal God created all things in six days.

He made a good and perfect world.

He made humans in his image to fill the earth and rule over creation.

But humans rebelled against God and ruined God's creation.

God set to restore his world through his promise.

God made a covenant with Abraham. He promised to bless all nations through Abraham.

God kept his promises across the generations.

God provided Abraham with a promised child, Isaac.

God gave Isaac a wife and she bore twins, Jacob and Esau.

God blessed Jacob and his sons, and the blessing continued to the next generation.

God rescued Joseph, one of Jacob's sons, and used him to rescue his family.

God caused his people, the Israelites, to multiply in the land of Egypt; eventually, they became slaves.

But, God raised up a deliverer, Moses, to deliver his people from their slavery.

God judged the Egyptians with harsh plagues; in the final judgment, he passed over his people who covered their doorposts with the blood of a sacrificed lamb.

Then, God delivered the Israelites by bringing them out of Egypt and crossing the Red Sea on dry land.

God made a covenant with the Israelites and made them his people.

God tested Israel in a series of wilderness wanderings and eventually brought his people into the promised land of Canaan.

God raised up deliverers to lead Israel and rescue them from their enemies.

God formed Israel into a kingdom. He made a covenant with King David and promised to send a king that would rule his people forever.

Many of Israel's kings were evil and the kingdom of Israel divided into two kingdoms.

God sent prophets to warn his people of God's judgment and call them to repent.

When Israel did not repent, God sent his people into exile. After many years, he brought them back to the land.

Throughout the Old Testament, God promised to send his Messiah to deliver his people from their sin.

After many years, the prophet John was born. He would prepare people for the coming Messiah.

At the perfect time, God sent his Son, Jesus, to be born of a virgin Mary.

When John and Jesus grew up, John baptized Jesus as a sign that Jesus was God's beloved Son.

Jesus endured all manner of temptation without ever sinning.

When he was thirty years old, he launched a public ministry of preaching, teaching, and healing.

He taught his disciples about the life of compassion, sacrifice

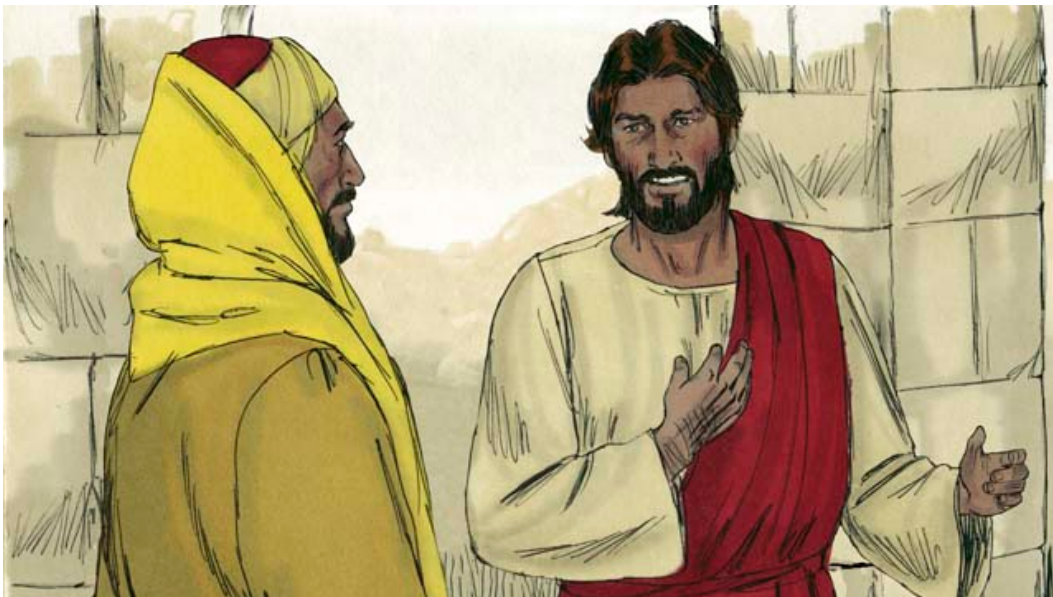
The Story: The Rich Young Ruler

28-01



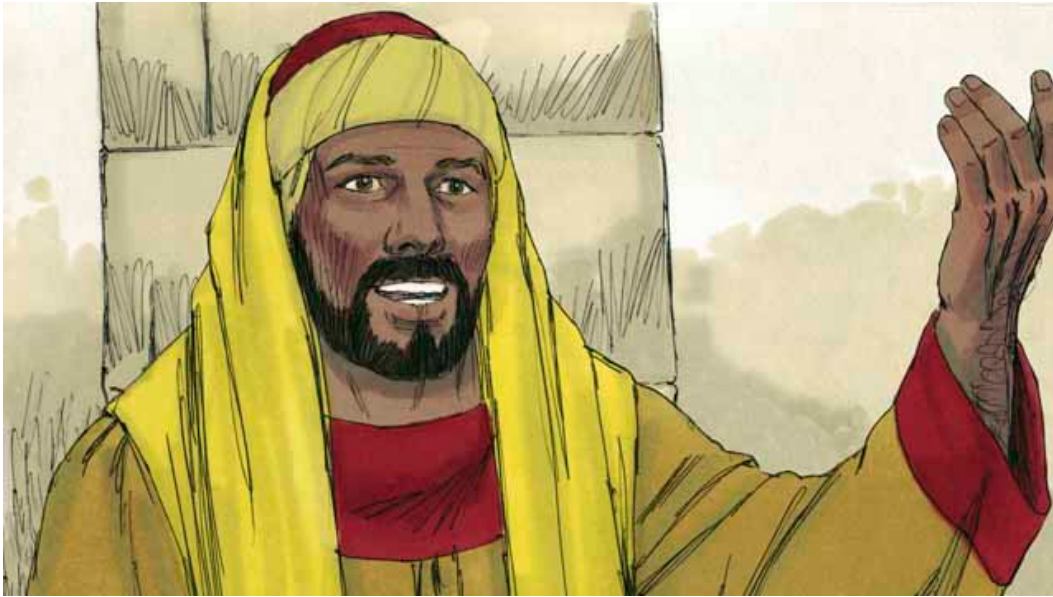
One day, a rich young ruler came up to Jesus and asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to have eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me 'good'? There is only one who is good, and that is God. But if you want to have eternal life, obey God's laws."

28-02



"Which ones do I need to obey?" he asked. Jesus replied, "Do not murder. Do not commit adultery. Do not steal. Do not lie. Honor your father and mother, and love your neighbor as you love yourself."

28-03



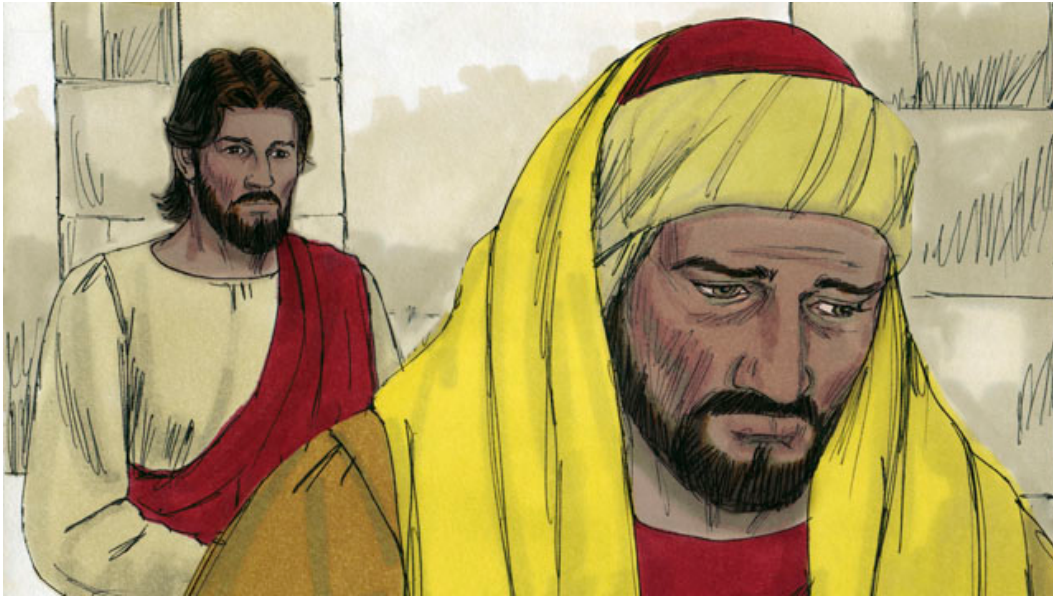
But the young man said, "I have obeyed all these laws ever since I was a boy. What do I still need to do in order to live forever?" Jesus looked at him and loved him.

28-04



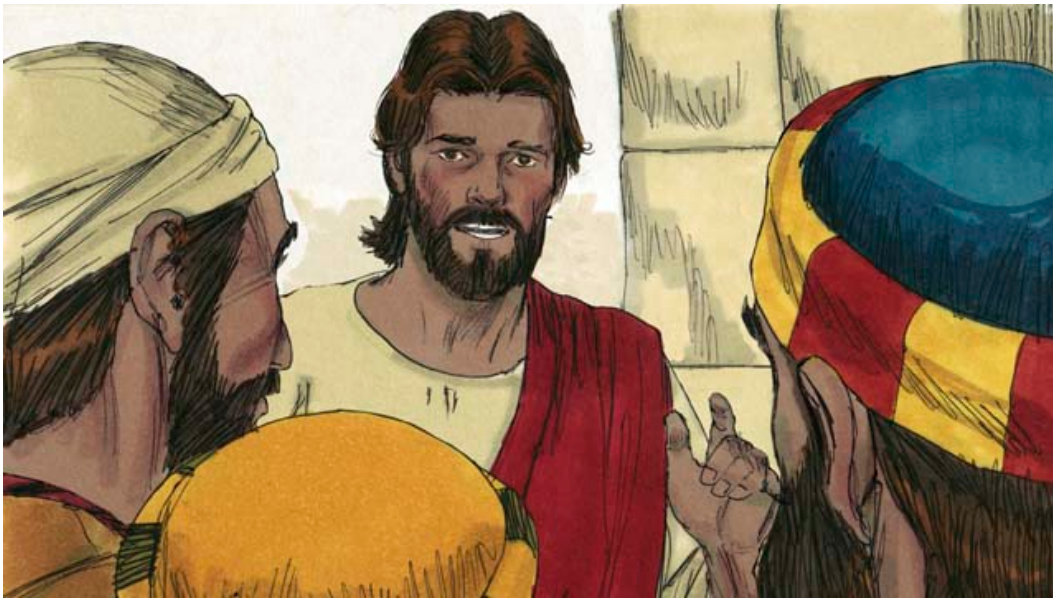
Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, then go and sell everything you own and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me."

28-05



When the young man heard what Jesus said, he became very sad because he was very rich and did not want to give away all the things he possessed. He turned and went away from Jesus.

28-06



Then Jesus said to his disciples, "It is extremely hard for rich people to enter into the kingdom of God! Yes, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

28-07



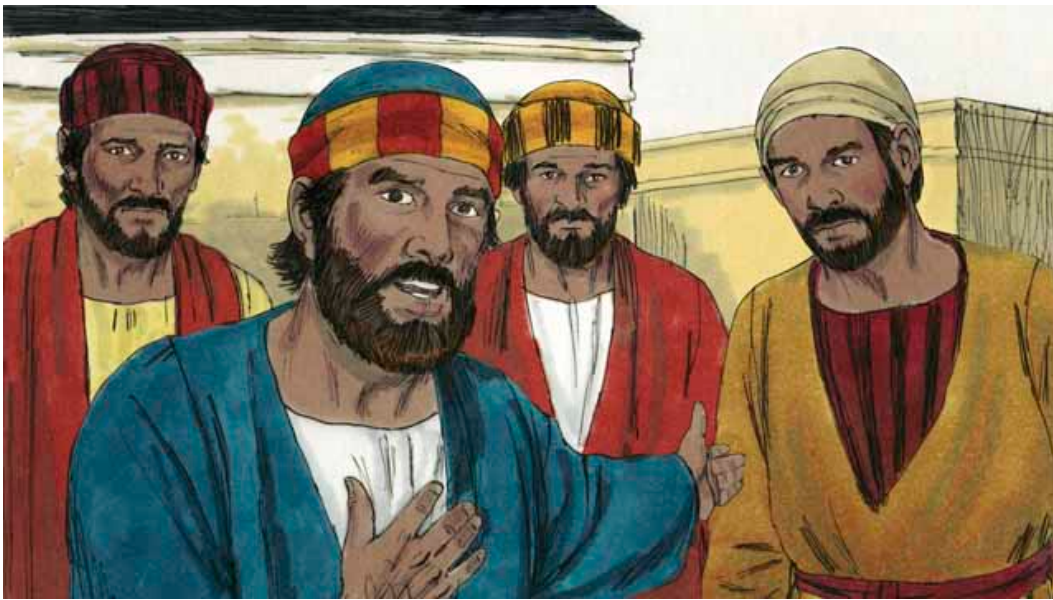
When the disciples heard what Jesus said, they were shocked. They said, "If it is like this, who will God save?"

28-08



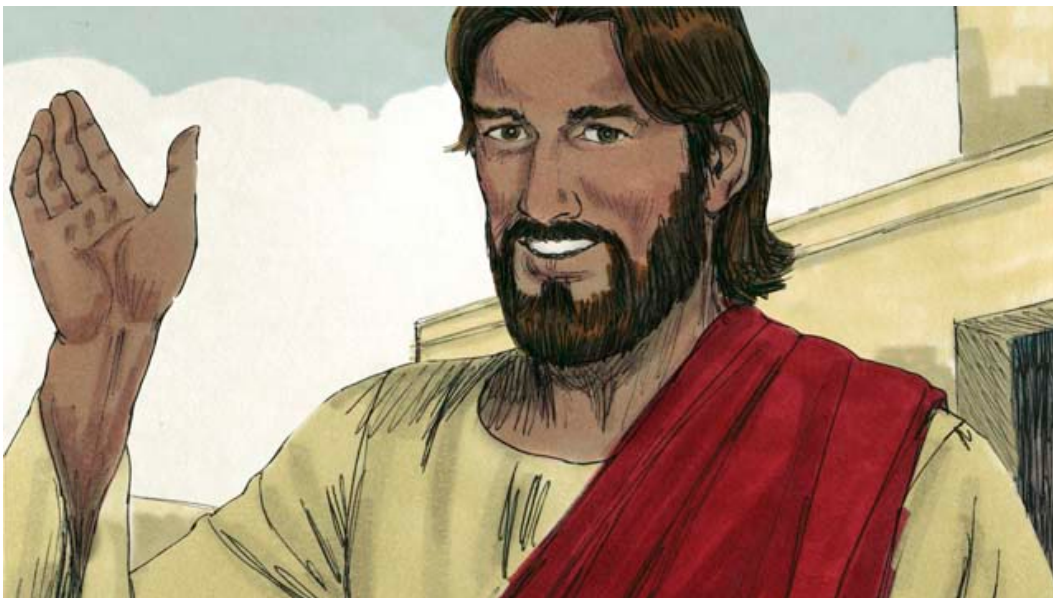
Jesus looked at the disciples and said, "It is impossible for people to save themselves. But nothing is impossible for God to do."

28-09



Peter said to Jesus, "We disciples have left everything and followed you. What will be our reward?"

28-10



Jesus answered, "Everyone who has left houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children, or property for my sake will receive 100 times more and will also receive eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first."

A Bible story from: Matthew 19:16-30; Mark 10:17-31; Luke 18:18-30

Community Study: Only One Master—Renouncing Things That Compromise Our Devotion

- **Key Idea:** removing obstacles to commitment
- **Key Passage:** Matthew 6:19-24
- **Main Session:** OBS 28 (The Rich Young Ruler)

Recite the Creedal Verse (3-5 minutes)

The verse below summarizes the teaching of the current passage. Read the verse out loud as a community. Read it again several times as a group until the whole community can recite it from memory.

13 No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."
Luke 16:13

OR

"If anyone wants to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. 24 Whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. Luke 9:23-24

Think Together (5 minutes)

Think about what it means to be committed to God as a servant is committed to a master. Describe how this would help explain what commitment to Jesus looks like.

Christians are committed to God like a servant is committed to a master. This means...

Read the Passage (3-5 minutes)

Christians can only be fully committed to one master. As a community, read the following Bible passage together to understand what it means to be committed to Jesus and his work.

19 Do not store up for yourselves treasures on the earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and

steal. 20 Instead, store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. 22 The eye is the lamp of the body. Therefore, if your eye is good, the whole body is filled with light. 23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body is full of darkness. Therefore, if the light that is in you is actually darkness, how great is that darkness! 24 No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth. Matthew 6:19-24

Explore the Passage (10-15 minutes)

Jesus tells his disciples to be fully committed to God. When Christians are fully committed to God, they live for things that last forever. As a community, use the following questions to discuss the teaching of the biblical passage.

1. How can we tell what we are really committed to?
2. What kinds of things threaten our commitment to God? What things do you/people treasure that can take their commitment away from God?
3. How does this passage help us understand what it means to be fully committed to God and his work?
4. How can your community grow in its undivided commitment to God?

Evaluate Your Own Heart (5 minutes)

Think about what things you treasure in your heart. Identify those things that you treasure that will compete for your devotion to God.

Pray to God (5 minutes)

Divide the community into groups of 2-3 people. Pray for other members of your group, using portions of the above passage. You can use the following examples to help guide your time of prayer.

God, guide [name of person] to store up for themselves treasures in heaven. God, strengthen [name of person] to

treasure things that last forever. God, help [name of person] to not serve money but to serve you alone.

Sing a Song (3-5 minutes)

Choose a song to sing to praise God and encourage one another.

Movement 1: Understand the Story

Read each question aloud. Give the group time to answer before sharing the answer.

Observation Questions

28-01

What did the rich young ruler ask Jesus?

He asked Jesus what he must do to have eternal life.

How did Jesus respond to the rich young ruler calling Jesus "Good teacher"?

Jesus said that there is only one who is good, and that is God.

What did Jesus tell the young man to do in order to have eternal life?

Jesus told him to obey God's laws.

28-02

How did Jesus answer the rich young ruler's question about which laws he needed to obey?

Jesus listed the following laws: Do not murder. Do not commit adultery. Do not steal. Do not lie. Honor your father and mother, and love your neighbor as you love yourself.

28-03

What did the young ruler say about the laws that Jesus listed?

He said he had obeyed those laws ever since he was a boy.

What did the rich young ruler ask Jesus after this?

He asked Jesus what he needed to do to live forever.

What did Jesus do after the rich young ruler asked this question?

Jesus looked at the rich young ruler and loved him.

28-04

What additional thing did Jesus tell the young man to do?

Jesus told him to sell everything he owned and to give the money to the poor, and then to follow Jesus.

What reward did Jesus promise the rich young ruler if he would do this?

He would have treasure in heaven.

What command did Jesus tell the man to do after selling his possessions and giving the money to the poor?

Jesus told him to come and follow him.

28-05

How did the rich young ruler feel about Jesus' words?

When the young man heard what Jesus said, he became very sad.

Why did the young ruler become sad?

He was very rich and did not want to give away all the things he possessed.

What did the rich young ruler do?

He turned and went away from Jesus.

28-06

What did Jesus say to his disciples about rich people entering the kingdom of God?

Jesus said that it was extremely hard for rich people to enter into the kingdom of God.

How difficult is it for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God?

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

28-07

How did the disciples respond to what Jesus said?

When the disciples heard what Jesus said, they were shocked and asked who God will save.

28-08

What did Jesus explain to his disciples after they asked their question?

Jesus explained that it is impossible for people to save themselves but it was possible for God to save people.

Is it possible for a rich man to be saved?

Yes, everything is possible for God to do.

28-09

What had the disciples left behind in order to follow Jesus?

They had left everything.

What did the disciples want to know about how they left everything and followed Jesus?

The disciples wanted to know what their reward would be for leaving everything and following Jesus.

28-10

What did Jesus say would be their reward?

Jesus explained that everyone who leaves houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children, or property for the sake of Jesus' name would receive 100 times more in the next world, and also eternal life.

What did Jesus say about who is first and last?

Many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.

Movement 2: Theological Questions

What Does This Story Teach Us?

1. What does it mean/take to follow Jesus? What does this story teach about genuinely following Jesus?
2. What is promised to those who genuinely follow Christ? How does this story teach about future promises for followers of Jesus?
3. What obstacles keep people from following Christ? How does this story highlight some of these obstacles?

Movement 3: Live It Out

Personal Implications & Applications From The Story

Guide the group to discuss practical obedience from this story and name concrete next steps.

1. What have you given up to follow Jesus?
2. What people or things make it a challenge to follow Jesus?
3. How can you, even more, make Jesus the most important in your life?
4. Think about this week. Where does "The Rich Young Ruler" challenge you to obey God in a practical way?
5. How does this key idea shape one decision you need to make right now: The story of the rich young ruler teaches us that the cost of following Jesus involves denying ourselves and putting Jesus first above all.

Movement 4: Retell the Story

Invite the group to retell the story several times until they can tell it clearly and faithfully.

1. Can someone retell "The Rich Young Ruler" from beginning to end in their own words?
2. Retell this story again, but focus on what God did at each key moment.
3. Retell the story in three parts: beginning, middle, and ending. What changed in each part?
4. If you were teaching this story to your family tonight, how would you tell it simply and clearly?

Church Ministry

Reflect on how this story can edify and mature the Christian community. Design a way to minister this story to your church community.

Ministry Preparation: Take time to consider how you could minister this story to others. Record some ministry ideas below.

Ministry Implementation: Minister this story to a group of believers as you had planned. Use the information in this study to help develop a teaching/lesson or lead a discussion of this story with other believers. Record your ministry plan below.

Ministry Reflection: Think about what you learned from ministering this story to other believers. Reflect on your experience below.

Movement 5: Share It

Help each person plan how they will share this story with others before the next gathering.

Report-back next meeting: Who did you share with, and what happened?

1. Who is one specific person you will share "The Rich Young Ruler" with this week?
2. When and where will you share this story with them?
3. What is the one main truth from this story you want them to remember?

Mission Engagement

Consider how you will witness this story to unbelievers. Design a way to share this story and engage them in what it teaches about Christianity and the gospel.

Witness Preparation: Take time to consider how you will witness this narrative to unbelievers. Record some ideas below.

Witness Implementation: Share this story with an unbeliever. Use the information in this study to help develop a teaching/lesson or lead a discussion of this story with others. Record your witness plan below.

Witness Reflection: Think about what you learned from sharing this story with unbelievers. Reflect on your experience below.