



A young man approached Jesus and said, "Teacher, what good must I do to gain eternal life?" He answered him, "Why do you ask me about the good? There is only One who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments." He asked him, "Which ones?" And Jesus replied, "You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; honor your father and your mother; and you shall love your neighbor as yourself." The young man said to him, "All of these I have observed. What do I still lack?" Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." When the young man heard this statement, he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

**Introductory Prayer:** Dear Lord, I believe in you because you know what is best for me and what I must do to reach heaven. I hope in you because you have called me to detach myself from worldly things in order to possess you. I love you because you are greater than any of the things you have created.

**Petition:** Lord, grant me spiritual detachment from material things.

**1. Are You Sure?** Sometimes we ask for or desire something without really considering the conditions necessary to obtain it. We understand that most things cannot be obtained for free; nevertheless, in the spiritual life we easily forget this. What the rich young man asks for is the most valuable, the greatest possible achievement, but he thinks getting it will be easy. Maybe he was accustomed to being able to buy whatever he wanted with money. He probably didn't even think that Christ might tell him to detach himself from his possessions. The fact that we could want something, but not want to do what is necessary to attain it, should raise a question: Do we really want it?

**2. A First Step to Eternity:** Christ takes the young man's question seriously. He doesn't want to waste the young man's time allowing him to think things are easier than

they really are. Sadly, in today's society people are used to seeking what requires the least effort. This is not the way of a true Christian. To get to heaven – and everybody should really want to – one thing is totally necessary: “Keep the commandments.” That means to avoid sin. God's love for us precedes the commandments. When we love someone, we do not treat that person in any old way, but rather in a way that reflects the love we have for that person. So, we keep the commandments not just to follow a moral code, but to show in a specific way our love for God. This step is very important, but it is only a first step to heaven.

**3. Not So Sure:** The rich young man had no trouble with living the commandments. Feeling confident, he asks for more, and Christ asks him to leave his possessions. He wasn't expecting this. He went away sad, because he had many possessions. The problem is not having possessions, but that having many possessions makes us more preoccupied with material things than with “things of above,” as St. Paul would say (see Colossians 3:1). In the Gospel, Jesus says, “Where your treasure is there will your heart be also” (Matthew 6:21).

**Conversation with Christ:** Dear Lord, help me to love you above all things. I realize that I am attached to things that sometimes lead me to forget you. And yet, I can't avoid hearing in the depths of my soul your words: “You cannot serve two masters” (Matthew 6:24). Help me understand that it is not worthwhile to have many things, but not have you.

**Resolution:** I will examine myself to see what commandments I am not living fully and detach myself from some concrete thing that prevents me from doing so.