

# Every Perfect Gift



## The Gift of Giving

I used to chafe at the passage of the rich ruler. It seemed impossible, or dare I say, unfair to be asked what seemed impossible – to let go of all possessions to inherit eternal life. Because at first reading, the story of the rich ruler, found in Mark 10:17-21, seemed to be a manual on how to earn a spot in heaven – that is, to follow the commandments and provide everything you have for the poor.

But not quite. Even if you could follow all the commandments and give everything to the poor, it would still be impossible to *earn* a spot in heaven. Why? Because it's not yours to earn – it's God's to give.

You can never earn heaven, salvation, eternal life, or God's love. And thank God for that as it frees you from trying to achieve this impossibility. Instead, you can let go of the burden of earning God's love and *accept* the love God has freely given – no strings attached. As a friend of mine said, "We are generous receivers first – every good thing is a gift from God. If you pretend that it is all your stuff or yours to control it makes it harder to share."

It's worth highlighting too, that, "Jesus, looking at him, loved him" (Mark 10:21). Jesus' response to the rich ruler was not to shame but to love him. Jesus tells the rich ruler to leave his possessions **first for his benefit**, saying, "you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."

Jesus is pointing out that you suffer when you let possessions or the work to obtain possessions cut you off from what matters – family and friends as well as your relationship with God. You cannot try harder to be good. You can, however, accept God's love and follow Jesus. If you do this, you can learn to trust God for your needs, and you don't need to hold tight to your possessions for security. | [tens.org](https://tens.org)

*Gillian Doucet Campbell, MA, CFRE, is the Director of Stewardship and Development with the Anglican Diocese of Niagara*



### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

What areas in your life or possessions do you find hard to share with others or give to God?

Do you sometimes find yourself trying to earn your spot in heaven?

How do you accept God's love – is it easy or do you have to work at it?

