

Today's Big Question: how can we know true goodness?

A rich ruler came to Jesus with a question. He was fascinated with Jesus and His teachings. The ruler's question shows that he obviously saw some sort of authority being displayed. He asked: "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" ([Luke 18:18](#)). What a question! To whom would you consider asking such a question? Certainly not just anyone. To the ruler, there was an authoritative morality to Jesus. He had a goodness about Him. As the ruler asked the question, he called Jesus "Good Teacher."

The response from Jesus was jaw dropping. "Why do you call me good? No one is good but One, that is, God." ([Luke 18:19](#)). Ouch. Was the ruler thinking that Jesus was a good man just like himself? Immediately, the ruler and everyone else in the entire world were isolated from Jesus in that one small answer. No one is good. "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" ([Romans 3:23](#)). We are all wretched sinners, and now the ruler had to face this fact. Only God is good. That is the difference between Jesus and the rest of humanity. He is God.

How many of us might like to respond as the rich young ruler did? We may also like to say that we have kept the Ten Commandments (something none of us have done). Jesus answered his question in the most heart-wrenching manner for each of us when we consider our own souls. Would you sell it all, give it to the poor, and follow Him? Would you give everything up for Him? We cannot even know goodness apart from Jesus. He is and always has been sinless and holy. We fall short every time.

The wonderful thing is that Jesus also became our great substitute. His goodness has been transferred to us through faith in Him. Nothing in this world can compare to the goodness we share in Christ, because it has nothing to do with us and everything to do with Him. Jesus is essentially giving us a lesson above every other lesson on goodness. To even begin to understand what is good we have to gaze upon Christ. We understand what good is when we reject all that this world offers and take the free gift of Salvation in Jesus Christ and share in His perfect goodness.

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