

## **Introduction: An invitation to intimacy with God... rejected**

<sup>17</sup>As He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

<sup>18</sup>And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.

<sup>19</sup>You know the commandments, DO NOT MURDER, DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, DO NOT STEAL, DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS, DO NOT DEFRAUD, HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER."

<sup>20</sup>And he said to Him, "Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up."

<sup>21</sup>Looking at him, **Jesus felt a love for him** and said to him, "One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and **you will have treasure in heaven;** and come, follow Me."

<sup>22</sup>But at these words **he was saddened**, and he went away grieving, for he was one **who owned much property.**

Mark 10:17-22 (NASB)

Following Christ on the pathway of paradox:

1. Barriers to intimacy with God:

- The World's \_\_\_\_\_

*<sup>15</sup>Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. <sup>16</sup>For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. <sup>17</sup>The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.*

1 John 2:15-17 (NASB)

- The World's \_\_\_\_\_

*<sup>18</sup>And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word, <sup>19</sup>but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.*

Mark 4:18-19 (NASB)

- The World's \_\_\_\_\_

*<sup>14</sup>Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and were scoffing at Him. <sup>15</sup>And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God."*

Luke 16:14-15 (NASB)

## 2. Overcoming the world's barriers to intimacy with God...

- **Begins with a new \_\_\_\_\_**  
*<sup>5</sup> In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:  
<sup>6</sup> Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;<sup>7</sup> rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!<sup>9</sup> Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,*  
Philippians 2:5-9 (NIV)
- **Requires a \_\_\_\_\_**  
*<sup>23</sup>And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. <sup>24</sup>For whoever wishes to **save his life will lose it**, but whoever **loses his life for My sake**, he is the one who **will save it**. <sup>25</sup>For what is a man profited if he **gains the whole world**, and **loses or forfeits himself?**"*  
Luke 9:23-25 (NASB)
- **Embraces a new \_\_\_\_\_**
  1. The way to "life" is \_\_\_\_\_  
*<sup>20</sup>I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.*  
Galatians 2:20 (NASB)
  2. The way "up" is \_\_\_\_\_  
*... Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me; for the one who is least among all of you, this is the one who is great.*  
Luke 9:48 (NASB)
  3. The way to "gain" is to \_\_\_\_\_  
*<sup>38</sup>Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure--pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.*  
Luke 6:38 (NASB)

- A prayer of paradox for seven days:

*Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi*

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
and where there is sadness, joy.  
O Divine Master,  
grant that I may not so much seek  
to be consoled as to console;  
to be understood as to understand;  
to be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive;  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
and it is in dying  
that we are born to eternal life. ~ Amen*

### Discussion Questions:

1. What kept the rich young ruler from experiencing intimacy with God?
2. What is the “world’s system?” How does it keep us from experiencing intimacy with God?
3. What is a paradox? How does understanding the meaning of this word help us in our spiritual journey?
4. What specific steps do you need to take to overcome the world’s barriers to your intimacy with God?
5. What would your first step to overcoming the world’s barriers look like this week?