

# Matthew 19:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.

## Analysis

Jesus' command 'If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me' exposes the man's true master—wealth. 'Perfect' means complete or mature, not sinless. The call to sell everything revealed whether he loved God supremely or trusted in riches. 'Treasure in heaven' contrasts with earthly wealth. 'Follow me' is the ultimate call—discipleship requires forsaking all competitors to Christ.

## Historical Context

The rich young ruler claimed to have kept all commandments (v. 20), revealing spiritual blindness—no one keeps the law perfectly. Jesus' command exposed his idolatry—wealth was his functional god. His sorrowful departure (v. 22) showed he loved money more than eternal life. The issue wasn't wealth itself but divided loyalty.

## Related Passages

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

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1. What possession or pursuit competes with wholehearted following of Jesus?
2. How does Jesus' call to 'follow me' require relinquishing lesser treasures?

## Interlinear Text

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ἔφη αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς Εἰ θέλεις τέλειος εἶναι ὑπαγε  
said unto him G3588 Jesus If thou wilt perfect be go  
G5346 G846 G2424 G1487 G2309 G5046 G1511 G5217

πώλησόν σου τὰ ὑπάρχοντα καὶ δὸς πτωχοῖς καὶ  
and sell that thou G3588 hast and give to the poor and  
G4453 G4675 G5224 G2532 G1325 G4434 G2532

ἔξεις θησαυρὸν ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ δεῦρο ἀκολούθει  
thou shalt have treasure in heaven and come and follow  
G2192 G2344 G1722 G3772 G2532 G1204 G190

μοι  
me  
G3427

## Additional Cross-References

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**Mark 10:21** (References Jesus): Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

**Luke 12:33** (Parallel theme): Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

**Luke 18:22** (References Jesus): Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.

**Acts 2:45** (Parallel theme): And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

**Luke 14:33** (Parallel theme): So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

**John 12:26** (Parallel theme): If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

**Luke 9:23** (Parallel theme): And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

**Matthew 5:48** (Parallel theme): Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

**John 10:27** (Parallel theme): My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

**Matthew 19:28** (References Jesus): And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.