
Rich Young Man....

When an editor of a Christian magazine asked me to write an article about Christian advice to teenagers, my immediate response to myself was that more than advice, teenagers need examples to follow which unfortunately is dwindling fast in Christendom nowadays. However, staying on the topic given to me, I would want to give one advice rather than a list of it.

In all the first three gospels we read a conversation between a certain rich young ruler (I would like to call him Steve) and Jesus. (Mat 19:16-23, Mark 10:17-22 & Luke 18: 18-23). Steve is called a ruler which implies that either he is a prince or a magistrate of some sort who holds a position of power and authority. The gospel narratives tell us that Steve approaches Jesus and asks him about how to achieve eternal life. Jesus responds by saying that you must know and follow all the commandments given in the Law. To which Steve responds that he is following each and every commandment to dot from childhood. Then Jesus gave a final request- sell every possessions and follow Him. As much as he wished to get eternal life and as much as Jesus wanted him, Steve found this unusual request from Jesus too heavy to obey and went away sad and disappointed. After Steve left, Jesus makes this staggering comment- “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God!!” Most of us are tempted to miss the big picture of this conversation by stating that we are not as rich as Steve. However, all my teenage friends, let’s see if this passage can give us some life lessons and in the process we can rescue truth from over-familiarity.

Steve is probably the ideal man who is out there which all of us want to become. Successful at a young age, a ruler with a lot of money and also very much compliant on all requirements of Law. His parents and relatives would have been very proud of him. Steve is not like the prodigal son, who left his father humiliated and squandered all his wealth!! In our current scenario, Steve can be compared with someone who is a regular churchgoer, probably helping out in youth ministry, obedient to his parents. He has no vile habits of drinking or smoking, women, clubbing, etc. Not only he is a successful Christian but he is also very successful in the secular world in terms of career. Who doesn’t want to be Steve? Every one!!

However, Jesus is not impressed with Steve at all. Not by his position as a ruler, not by his money and certainly not by his obedience to commandments to Law. He told very

clearly but lovingly- “you still lack one thing!” And that one thing was his heart. Remember, it was Steve who came to Jesus and it shows that he had a deep desire to get eternal life and had to some extent committed his life towards it in terms of his strict obedience to Law which was the exact requirements during that time. But Steve was not ready to pay the ultimate price which was he himself and his heart.

My young friends, don't let the customs, rules, practices of this world deceive you. Jesus is not interested in what you have you offer to Him, He is interested in YOU! Your talents, your money your service all come secondary. What He really wants from us is that when we live our daily lives in this world, make a conscious effort to set our heart unto Him and have a kind of relationship with him so that when He asks us to leave something for His glory, we are able to do it willingly and not to be disappointed like Steve. Corrie Ten Boom once said- *“I have learned to clutch the things of this world very very gently so that it doesn't hurt when He pries it of my hand.”*

Remember, it was the prodigal son who was ultimately made right with God and not Steve!! Steve with all his upright character and his wealth was unable to ultimately follow Jesus, but the prodigal son with his repentance was able to make it back to his father's house. I am in no way, therefore, suggesting that one ought not to have a good moral living, but it should not take priority over your relationship with Jesus.

To sum up, the only advice to my fellow youngsters out there is to be contented with God's estimate of yours, not of your own, not of your parents and not of your church. See the Kingdom of God above all else, and he will give you everything you need.