

## Q &amp; A—COULD YOU EXPLAIN MATTHEW 19:30?

*“BUT MANY WHO ARE FIRST WILL BE LAST, AND THE LAST FIRST” (MATTHEW 19:30).*

Matthew 19:30 begins with the word “but.” This little conjunction is important because it connects the point of Matthew 19:30 to the events that have previously occurred and statements previously made. Therefore, to understand the statement of verse 30 we need to be familiar with the context that precedes it.

If we back up to verse 16 we will find the account of a character often titled “the rich young ruler.” This ruler was evidently a Jew because he admits to keeping the Jewish law (Matthew 19:17-19). He was also rich, as verse 22 says “he had great possessions.” Yet, as Jesus commands this young man to share his wealth with others “the young man...went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions” (19:22). Thus, here we have a high-ranking Jew, a devout young man, and a wealthy citizen. In rank, we might say he was esteemed highly, or first, among men.

Immediately following this conversation, Jesus converses with His own disciples. In verse 27, He specifically talks to Peter. Peter makes the statement, “See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?” (19:27). Reflecting upon Peter’s previous occupation we remember he was a fisherman, along with James, John and Andrew (Matthew 4:18-22). Yet, these fisherman “left their nets...and followed Him” (4:20,22). By the world’s standards, these men were simple, common and low-ranking—last among men.

Yet, notice the difference in the characters. The “rich young ruler,” though highly esteemed among men, was not willing to part with his possessions to do God’s will (Matthew 19:22). The “fisherman” from Galilee, though unsophisticated in comparison, were willing to give up their work to follow Jesus and do His will.

What rewards did these men have in their lives? The rich young ruler had the reward of popularity, high-esteem and prominence. The apostles were mocked, tested and persecuted for their faith. Yet, what rewards would these men have in the life to come? Matthew 19:29 says, “...everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive a hundred-fold, and inherit eternal life.” Thus, those who are in first place now and reject God will be in last place in the life to come. Those who are in last place now and persecuted for their faith, even by their own families, will be first-rate in heaven.

Jesus was rebuking those who refused to sacrifice and commending those who did. Are you trading in heaven’s glory for earthly fame or fortune? *Joshua R. Welch*

## “FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT” PEACE

The word “peace” in Galatians 5:22 is translated from the Greek term “EIRENE.” It is used 88 times in the New Testament and in other places it is translated as “quietness” or “rest.” It is understandable why the Christian should bear the fruit of “peace” after realizing the various relationships that are restored by following Christ.

First, our relationship with God has been restored. The direct result of our renewed relationship with God is “peace with God” (Romans 5:1). No

longer must we feel a great gulf of separation from God. No longer must we feel the shame, guilt and fear that results from our sin. We are forgiven and our consciences may rest at such a blessing.

Second, our church relationship should be filled with peace. Our unity with the Spirit will put us in a “bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3). This “peace” is regardless of nationality, race or gender (Ephesians 2:14-17). Yet, God does demand purity before true peace can exist (James 3:17-18).

Finally, the Christian seeks peace with all people (Hebrews 12:14). Following the path of evil will make peace with our fellow man unlikely (Romans 3:17). True followers of Christ do not want to be at war, but should seek to pursue peace—even with our enemies (Romans 12:18).

Imagine a world that is guilt-free, treats each other like family and where war, both personal and national, is avoided rather than sought. Such utopian ideals can exist as we unite in Christ. *JRW*

*“BUT THE  
FRUIT OF THE  
SPIRIT IS...”  
(GALATIANS  
5:22-23).*

