



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Shepherd's Path

## A Shepherd's Personal Devotions

### God's Top Ten Series, Lesson 34

**Lesson Title:** Keep God Number One!

**Take Home Point:** Keep God number one.

#### **Warm-Up:**

"If I miss one day, I know it. If I miss two days, the critics know it. If I miss three days, the audience knows it." That's how concert pianist Artur Rubenstein described his recognition that his piano practice needed to be first in his priorities. He could not afford to let anything get in the way of daily rehearsal to ensure he did his best. Marathon runners have the same perspective on training. It takes discipline and clear focus on a goal to overcome any temptation to relax for a few days or lighten up on training. In fact, anyone who is determined to reach or sustain an extraordinary level of accomplishment understands the need to keep the goal number one, the highest priority. Any other priority risks missing the mark, which is the same as failure.

**Read:** Exodus 20:3-6, Mark 10:17-27

#### **Observation (What happened?):**

From Exodus 20:5, how does God feel about our worshipping anything but him?

What was in the way of the rich man that kept him from wholeheartedly following God?

#### **Interpretation (What does it mean?):**

Why do you think Jesus "looked at him and loved him" (Mark 10:21)?

Why were the disciples so amazed that it was hard for a rich man to be saved?

#### **Insight:**

So what was in the way of the rich man? It wasn't being rich, it was his love of being rich. When Jesus challenged him to make a choice, wealth came first. He probably hadn't been challenged like that before. It was too much for him to set his wealth aside to follow God. It appears Jesus was moved by the heart of this man who had been careful to keep the commandments; perhaps he kept them out of true devotion, not just to score points with God. But Jesus got to the heart of the matter – the one thing in the way of the wealthy man's complete dedication. What Jesus told his disciples was also a complete reversal of the religious teaching of the Jewish leaders, who taught that wealth was a sign of God's approval. That is why the disciples were dismayed when Jesus said how hard it was for a rich man to enter the kingdom. Their assumption was that since this person was wealthy, he was already in the kingdom and blessed by the Lord. And that is still taught today in many circles. It is dangerous, and quite wrong, to equate ease of life with the approval of God. He seeks our complete trust and devotion, not our physical comfort.

#### **Application (What does it mean to me?):**

What gets in your way of putting God first? How do you deal with it?

Pray for your small group to resist the many different ways Satan and the world pulls their attention away from God.