

***Buying Heaven: The Search for a Spiritual Shortcut***  
***Luke 18:18-30***

The rabbis in the 1<sup>st</sup> century constantly wrestled with one core question: Could the entire will of God be distilled down to one foundational principle or definitive act? Jesus was repeatedly asked some form of that often-contemplated question.

The question of this ruler in Luke 18:18 indicates that he was looking for a single act, performed in one moment in time, that could guarantee for all time his ultimate acquisition of eternal. Jesus first pointed the man back to the Law of Moses. The man's answer is essentially, "I've done my best and I sense it isn't enough." Though he was either a member of the Sanhedrin or at least a local synagogue ruler and fabulously rich, he was wise enough to know that though he had done his best, he was on the outside of eternal life looking in.

He did the wise thing coming to Jesus. Jesus gave him the answer he needed to hear...the answer we all need to hear: "Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." First, turn your back on anything that hinders you from making God and His will your first priority. What would Jesus tell you that you need to turn your back on to have a right relationship with God?

Then, Jesus added, "Come, follow me." So, there is really no once-and-for-all act we can do to buy eternal life. There is that "once-and-for-all" moment when we call upon the name of the Lord to be saved. But if that once-and-for-all moment isn't followed by coming and following Jesus, then the "calling on the name of the Lord" is only words.

Jesus wasn't saying we earn our salvation by our follow through. His point was that the follow through proves that our "I do" to Jesus was not a joke.

A.W. Tozer said, "The modern concept of 'accepting Christ' without any intention of following Him has created a generation of spiritual anomalies. True faith alters the course of a life, and it is the subsequent following that bears witness to the reality of the initial belief."