

**“What Shall I Do to Inherit Eternal Life?”**  
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Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

*“And behold, a lawyer stood up to put [Jesus] to the test, saying, ‘Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’” (Luke 10:25)*

What shall I do to inherit eternal life? That’s what this lawyer, this expert in the Law, wants to know. It’s what people throughout history, right up to the present day, want to know. How can I make it to heaven? What must I do to secure a place in eternal Paradise?

After having the question put back to him by Jesus, the lawyer provides the correct answer: Love God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself. Jesus responds, “You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.”

So, there you go! If you want to inherit eternal life, if you want to make it to heaven, if you want to secure a place in eternal Paradise, all you have to do is love God and neighbor completely and perfectly. All you have to do is love God above all things, always putting Him first, and love everyone, even your enemies, as much as you love yourself, never failing to show compassion and mercy on all people at all times. If you can accomplish that, eternal life is yours.

Oh, and by the way, you do not get any points for giving it your best effort. The Law of God is clear. It does not say that you are to do your best to try to love God and all people as much as you can. No, it says that you are to love God and all people perfectly and completely twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, your whole life long. If you ever fail in any way, eternal life is beyond your grasp. Do not think that you can sell God on the fact that you are trying hard to be a good person. There are no loopholes in His Holy Law; it means what it says. Either you fulfill His Law completely and perfectly or you have failed (cf. James 2:10). Period. No ifs, ands, or buts.

So, how are you doing? Have you loved God and all people completely and perfectly? Have you always put God first in your life? Have you always shown compassion and mercy to others? If you answer, “Yes,” to these questions, then stop reading this article now, for what follows does not apply to you. But, if you are honest with yourself and answer, “No,” then, by all means, read on, for I have Great News for you!

You see, God did not reveal His Law with the expectation that you would fulfill it and earn eternal life with Him. He revealed His Law to show you your sin. When you look into the mirror of God’s Holy Law, you see your utter failure to heed its impossible demands. That’s good. That’s the whole point. That’s the purpose of the Law. It cuts you to the heart, so that you would fall to your knees and plead to God for mercy, saying, “God, what you demand is impossible for me to fulfill. I have failed to love You completely and perfectly. I have failed to love my neighbor (all people) as myself. I have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed. Have mercy on me, a poor, miserable, sinner!”

And, when the Law does its work in you, bringing you to your knees to plead to God for mercy, the awesome, wonderful, Good News is that He does not say, “Try harder, O sinner!” No! Instead, He says, “I know you have failed. But, I sent My Only-begotten Son, Jesus the Christ, into the world to

fulfill My Holy Law in your place and to pay the penalty you deserve for all your sins upon the cross. For His sake, I forgive you all your sins. You are free. Go in peace!”

The lawyer who sought to test Jesus condemned himself with his own words, for he spoke the truth, but refused to hear the words he spoke. He quoted God’s Law word for word, but failed to realize that he was incapable of fulfilling it. Let it not be so with you. Do not think that you can fulfill the Law of God and earn eternal life. You can’t! But, thanks be to God, there is One who can, and did – Jesus Christ. As He says, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them” (Matt. 5:17).

Dear friends, Jesus came to be your substitute; to do for you what you cannot do for yourself. He lived the perfect, sinless life the Holy Law requires of you, and He shed His Holy and Innocent Blood on the Cross to pay the full price for all of your sins. Through faith in Him, which itself is a gift given from above, you are covered in His perfect holiness and righteousness, and forgiveness, life, and salvation are yours.

So, what can you do to inherit eternal life? Nothing. Eternal life is quite beyond your abilities to inherit through your efforts. But, there is a Way to eternal life, and it is through the One who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life – Jesus. Trust in Him, and Him alone, and you will inherit the eternal life He came to accomplish for you and for all of sinful humanity via His perfect life, sacrificial death, and glorious resurrection. In His Holy and Precious Name. Amen.

In Christ,

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