

## On the Jordache Look, the Victoria Principle, and Eternal Life

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I saw a comic strip decades ago that I've never forgotten, probably in the 1980s, when Jordache jeans and Jordache in general were all the rage. It was one of those single-panel comics, and it showed a rather frumpy-looking man wearing a rather frumpy-looking (and ill-fitting) suit. The man was gazing at himself in a full-length mirror, as was the other person in the picture, the store salesperson. The man in the ill-fitting suit seemed sad as the store clerk said something like this to him: "You don't understand, sir. You can't *have* the Jordache look..."

At roughly the same time, I became aware of another clever line that has also stayed with me, but I do not recall if this was in a comic strip or an article or maybe even a celebrity's story on a late-night talk show. Anyway, the TV series *Dallas* was popular at the time, as was one of the show's sexy stars, Victoria Principal. In the comic strip/article/story, a woman was unhappy because she couldn't improve her looks, despite her efforts to be glamorous. When she demanded to know why, someone explained to her, "It's the Victoria Principle..."

I love these two lines because we can probably all think of times when we could have applied them in our own lives. Sometimes, precisely *what* we want is not available to us. Now, I know what the *Rollings Stones* say. The *Rolling Stones* say, "You can't always get what you want/ But if you try sometimes, well, you might find/ You get what you need." True enough, I suppose. Still, the lines keep playing in my head ("You can't *have* the Jordache look..." and "It's the Victoria Principal") and I think about them now in relationship to that man in today's Gospel who runs up to Jesus, kneels before him, and asks, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

We're all familiar with this one. Jesus responds, "...You know the commandments: *You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; you shall not defraud; honor your father and your mother.*" The man — perhaps hopeful at this moment — answers, "Teacher, all of these I have observed from my youth." More or less, we can probably all answer the same. But then Jesus adds this: "You are lacking in one thing. Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me," and the man's optimism fades.

Because the man has many possessions, perhaps he says to himself, "*I cannot do that*" (the Victoria Principle and/or "You can't *have* the Jordache look"). Either way, he goes away sad, prompting Jesus to tell his friends, "...How hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." The disciples are amazed at this and wonder, "Then who can be saved?" And Jesus's response should embolden all of us — even the man with many possessions — to see ourselves in Paradise: "For human beings it is impossible, but not for God. All things are possible for God." It's the God Principle. Jordache look or no.