

Group discussion *Each number below includes questions that relate to the scripture. I offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better. Save time for “the big question.”*

Read Luke 19:1-10 aloud.

1. Describe Zacchaeus.

What did he have in his favor?

He was a wealthy home-owner with a high-level position.

What worked against him?

The height of the crowd made it impossible for Zacchaeus to see Jesus. What factors make it hard for people to see Jesus today?
Jesus is not with us physically, Christians who are hypocritical or argumentative, busy lives filled with stuff, “church culture” that is white middle class, boring worship services, etc.

2. In spite of the obstacles, Zacchaeus found a way to see Jesus. Why do you think he wanted to see Jesus so badly?

What insight could this give us about visitors to our church or friends who don't follow Jesus?

There are people among us who desperately want to experience genuine faith. See I Corinthians 14:24-25.

How might Zacchaeus give us clues about the Holy Spirit's work?
See John 16:7-11, where Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit into the world to bring people to faith. Just like he did with Zacchaeus.

How would you know if one of your associates was seeking Jesus?

3. How did meeting Jesus affect Zacchaeus?

Are people changed when they meet Jesus today? How?

When has time with Jesus provoked a change in your life?

4. How did people react to Jesus' choice of a host?

Why was Zacchaeus scorned? Why would Jews look down on a wealthy Jewish man? Isn't wealth a sign of God's blessing?
Zacchaeus accumulated his wealth by squeezing other Jews for taxes. He was wealthy because he skimmed a healthy portion for himself.

Who are some people we might assume have no interest in Jesus or spiritual growth?

There are a thousand stereotypes – bikers, skaters, wealthy people, old, young, different races, intellectuals, Goths, atheists, etc.

How does the story of Zacchaeus challenge our assumptions?

If a guy as ruthless and greedy as Zacchaeus was hungry for an encounter with God, we should not rule out anybody as a potential follower of Jesus. God loves everybody, so the Holy Spirit is working on everybody.

5. What does the story of Zacchaeus teach us about how we should interact with people who do not yet know Jesus?

† **The big question** *If you ask only one question, let this be it. Allow at least 20 minutes. Go around the circle and give each person an opportunity to answer. It's okay if they pass, but at least they get a chance to respond.*

If we asked the people who are with you on a typical weekday how Jesus has made you better, how would they answer?

- Would they say you are a grump or a delight?
- Do they love to see you coming, or do you irritate them because of your faith?
- Would they “climb a tree” to talk to you when they had a problem or a question about God, or would they run the other way?

Resources

Bible notes

- The Romans farmed out tax collection, rather than using a centralized agency like the IRS. Governors owed a certain amount to Rome each year, and they hired locals to collect from each city. These unsupervised collectors were notorious for over-charging. In ancient Israel they were seen as greedy traitors who had sold out to Roman oppressors. (Imagine the IRS sending thugs to your door.)

Prayer ideas –

Praise God for his incredible love that never gives up on us!
Thank God for calling you to faith when you were in a tree.
Pray for open eyes to see the spiritual seekers in the trees around us. And pray for lives that help seekers learn to love God.

Kid-friendly activity. *An activity designed to help kids and adults grow in faith together. Do this first, then dismiss the kids so the adults can talk.*

Sing the song “Zacchaeus was a wee little man...”
Read or act out the story of Zacchaeus from a children’s Bible.

Talk about Zacchaeus before & after...
How happy do you think he was before he met Jesus?

Why do you think people didn’t want Jesus to be with Zacchaeus?
He was a really mean man – like the playground bully.

How do you think this meeting with Jesus changed Zacchaeus?

How does following Jesus change our lives?

Who is someone that you would like to bring to church so they can meet Jesus? Pray for these people.



March 1, 2009

LIFE Group Guide

Luke 19 – Outreach – Doing what God does

By John Grant (jgrant@collegehills.org)

The theme for this meeting: **Reaching out in 2009.**

College Hills is “Pursuing the Heart of God” in 2009. This is week 3 of 3.

Feb. 15 A Year of Growth – Becoming like God
Feb. 22 A Year of Compassion – Seeing what God sees
Mar. 1 A Year of Outreach – Doing what God does

This guide focuses on the story of Zacchaeus and the joy he found when he met Jesus. God had been working on him to get him ready for the encounter with Jesus. What if we could have a similar impact on people? What if God is preparing people around us to meet Jesus?

Note: There will be a special opportunity at the next LIFE group meeting (March 15). Market Street Church will host the Southwest Christian College Chorus at the College Hills building that evening. Your group is welcome to attend that event.

Leadership tip: Looking forward to seeing you next Thursday at 6:30. Can’t wait to see who gets steak with their beans! It will be a delightful, encouraging time to say thanks for your great work for God.

I. Relate *Use a few of these to introduce the theme and “break the ice.” No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage individuals through these questions.*

- ❖ Who told you about Jesus?
- ❖ What is one goal you have set for yourself this year?
- ❖ Who is someone you would like to invite to our group?