

GOD & BUSINESS: SESSION SEVEN

PURPOSE

Welcome! We are meeting together to discover and discuss any connections we see between spirituality and vocation. Although our study will flow from a Christian worldview, we welcome perspectives from other faith and non-faith traditions. What we do with our bodies and our lives, our *vocation*, matters deeply. We will explore how our vocation can be a participation in God's work of renewing all things and how vocation is related to the career we are pursuing.

GATHERING (5 MINUTES)

- Which next step did you try after our last study?
- How did it go?
- What did you learn about yourself, humanity, or God?

WARM-UP (15 MINUTES)

Let's consider an important question: What is human flourishing?

Jot down a few of your thoughts before we watch the video. (allow 1-2 minutes)

Watch this video (4 minutes): [The Future of Human Flourishing](#) (scroll down for video)

- What do you appreciate about this content?
- What do you disagree with? What makes you wonder?



SCRIPTURE DISCUSSION (20 MINUTES)

Today we will look at another story from Luke's account about Jesus and his ministry. During this time, tax collectors were known for building personal wealth by extorting their own people (taking more money than they should in their tax collections). They were Jewish people who had been hired by the Roman government, so they were despised by their communities and viewed as traitors.

LUKE 19:1-10 (NLT)

^{1:1} Jesus entered Jericho and made his way through the town. ²There was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was the chief tax collector in the region, and he had become very rich. ³He tried to get a look at Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowd. ⁴So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree beside the road, for Jesus was going to pass that way.

⁵When Jesus came by, he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name. "Zacchaeus!" he said. "Quick, come down! I must be a guest in your home today."

⁶Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy. ⁷But the people were displeased. "He has gone to be the guest of a notorious sinner," they grumbled.

⁸Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, "I will give half my wealth

to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!"

⁹ Jesus responded, "Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What do you appreciate about this content?
- What makes you wonder?
- What do you disagree with?
- Zacchaeus was an outsider in his own community because of the way he built wealth at the expense of his neighbors. Encountering Jesus changed everything. Why do you think Zacchaeus responded so radically to his interaction with Jesus?
- What Jesus calls "salvation" in this section involves redistribution of wealth in a way that would have deeply impacted the whole community. What is attractive to you about this example of Zacchaeus following Jesus? What concerns you or makes you hesitate?

NEXT STEPS (10 MINUTES)

This study series has helped us explore God and some people like Zacchaeus who decided to follow Jesus. In just a moment, we will have a chance to make a decision about Jesus for ourselves, but first, I will explain more about what it means to follow Jesus.



DESIGNED FOR GOOD

In Genesis, we see that God created the world to be a perfect place. We were created for right relationship with God, with each other, and with creation. Things were perfect!



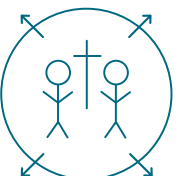
DAMAGED BY EVIL

We long for these kinds of right relationships. But we thought we could run our lives better than God. Instead of placing God at the center, we put our own selfish desires at the center. Then everything fell apart. We damaged our relationship with God, with each other, and with all creation. Today we live in a broken, messed-up world. We have war, depression, anxiety, loneliness, abuse, suicide, drug addiction, shootings, etc. We deeply long for every relationship to be restored. Fortunately, God didn't leave us in this mess.



RESTORED FOR BETTER

Motivated by a deep love for us and creation, God relocated into our world in the person of Jesus. He took all our brokenness onto himself. By dying on the cross and rising again, Jesus broke the power of our broken world. If we're willing to let God take his place at the center of our lives again, and if we are willing to trust Jesus with our lives, we can be restored to a right relationship with God. But that's not the end of the story.



SENT TO HEAL

Once we choose to follow Jesus, he sends us into the world to bring his love and hope, power and justice wherever we go. We get to live and declare this good news as Jesus' witnesses, living lives full of God's love and courage.

WHO IS AT THE CENTER?

Now we have a decision to make. Will we live with ourselves at the center of the story, or will we let God become the center? In order to be sent to heal, we must acknowledge our wounds and turn to Jesus for the healing we need. This is an invitation to turn from our selfishness and trust Jesus with our lives. This is what the Bible means when it says, "Repent of your sins." If we are at the center of the story, our attempts to heal will be warped by our brokenness. What would it take for you to trust Jesus with your life and relationships?

REFLECT ON YOUR LIFE

Trusting Jesus includes embracing, through the cross and resurrection, God's promise that we can be different people and receive a change of heart, both now and for eternity. It takes courage to make Jesus the center of your life and follow his leadership. Are you ready to do that? It's important to interact with God about this, and like Zacchaeus, we can interact with Jesus. Let's take a moment of silence. "Jesus, are you inviting me to follow you?" (30 seconds of silence).

Which next step could you take based on our discussion today?

A) Right now, would anyone like to share about their moment of silence?
If you sensed Jesus inviting you to follow him, what was that like for you and how are you responding?

B) Engagement

Research non-profit businesses and other organizations in your community that help people who are poor or marginalized, rather than operating with an extraction mentality that values profit over people. Find a time to visit or volunteer at one of these organizations and consider supporting their work financially.

C) Perspective and Investment

Study taxing policies in your community and how they impact various neighborhoods (for example, how school districts are divided and how income levels within each district impact schools). Find out when your city council will be discussing taxing policies at an upcoming meeting and then attend. If they have an open floor discussion, speak up and advocate for taxing that would promote economic justice and not come at the expense of the marginalized. Consider attending regularly to stay informed about what is happening economically in your local community.

HELP US MAKE THIS BETTER!

[PLEASE PROVIDE FEEDBACK ON THIS STUDY](#)