



Vision and Commitment 2018
A year to focus on discipleship

Every day, in
everything
&
everywhere

Opening Up: Including (Luke 19:1-10)

You will need:

Bibles
Pens
Paper

Introduction

- Where do you feel welcome, part of the 'in crowd'?
- Where do you feel tolerated, but not fully included?
- Where do you believe you could never really be included?
- How does each situation make you feel?

Reflection

Read out Luke 18:15-17.

Share your stories with one another of how you were first received into the Kingdom of God by Jesus.

- When and where did you meet him?
- What moved your heart and mind to accept his invitation?
- What difference did it make in your life?

Thank God in prayer or sing a song of thanksgiving at the end of this time of sharing testimony.

Discussion

Read Luke 19:1-10.

- Have you ever been tempted to think that large numbers in Church means success? Why or why not?
- What are the difficulties and dangers of trying to reach and disciple masses of people?
- Have you ever had someone take the time to mentor or disciple you? If yes, what was that experience like? If no, is that something you would want?
- Have you ever mentored or discipled someone else? If yes, how did it go? If no, is that something you would feel comfortable doing? Why or why not?
- Why do you think Luke includes this story of Jesus' interaction with Zacchaeus?
- Why is it so important that Jesus picks Zacchaeus out of the crowd and addresses him personally? Why did he not just teach the crowd as a whole?
- Why would it have been particularly difficult to include Zacchaeus?
- What do the two biblical stories we have read tell us about how Jesus included people?
- Can you think of other stories where Jesus focuses his attention on an individual rather than a crowd?
- What are some obstacles to including people in your own personal life, or in your corps?





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Action

Prepare and eat a meal with a friend this week. Pick out the menu and shop for the food together if you can, then make and eat the meal together. Talk about life and faith together as you do. Maybe this person is a Christian, maybe not, but you are engaging with them one on one and getting a chance to really hear their heart, and to share yours. Try making a habit out of intentionally cooking and eating with other people at least once a week, maybe alternating houses so everyone can give and receive hospitality.

Leader's Guide

The story of Zacchaeus is familiar to many of us, but perhaps we miss out on how remarkable it is that Jesus picks out a hated tax collector, a traitor, to speak with one on one. He could have just spoken to the whole crowd, and sometimes Jesus does, but he often also speaks just to his disciples, or to individuals. (It is always important to note who Jesus is talking to if the Scriptures give us this information.) In this case, Jesus calls out Zacchaeus for special attention, very publicly including a person that the crowd would assume was not eligible for an interaction with Jesus.

Jesus risks alienating the crowd through this invitation. This is clearly not a strategy designed to win over the masses; it was a strategy designed to win over one person. If Jesus had been interested primarily in appealing to the crowd, he would have had to exclude Zacchaeus, or maybe even publicly rebuke him. Zacchaeus had been involved in what amounts to extortion, bribery, 'legal' theft and co-operating with the hated Roman Empire to collect ruinous taxes. But instead of calling down wrath and fire on the tax collector, or just ignoring him, Jesus chose to speak directly to him, desiring a change of heart in him. Luke records this decision as an example of what the Kingdom looks like. This is what it means to participate in the ministry of Jesus, as his disciple, to intentionally include the outcast.

Alongside this lesson of inclusion is the fact that Jesus addresses Zacchaeus as an individual. He knows his name, his situation, and he chooses to spend time with him one on one. Jesus had a lot to do, but this took precedence - and it's not the only time in the Gospels that we see Jesus stopping everything to address one person. He does this with the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4); the Gerasene demoniac (Luke 8); the woman who was bleeding for 12 years (Matthew 9); and many more.

If you are interested in a one-on-one discipling or accountability relationship, ask your small group leader or corps officer about what they can suggest.

Further resources

Infinitum is an accountability resource that helps people engage in spiritual growth together. You can access it here: www.infinitumlife.com

