

GOD & VOCATION BIBLE STUDY

PURPOSE

Remember that 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 (10 MINUTES)

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

SCRIPTURE DISCUSSION (30 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)

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

⁵ When 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."

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

⁸ Meanwhile, 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."

- 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?



FINDING PEACE WITH GOD

Humanity craves peace with God? Peace with God is the soil from which we were created. “In God’s image,” that’s what the creation story tells us. Made to be intimately connected to the God who made us. Shalom was God’s intent for creation; with Creator, within ourselves, with one another and with creation.

Shalom is a Hebrew word meaning wholeness, health, and complete peace. But shalom has been broken between God and us.

To restore shalom, pray this prayer:

“Creator, thank you for the invitation to Shalom. I want peace with you. Teach me today how to experience peace with you, with myself, with others and with creation”





How to Grow

1. Believe it or not, the way of Jesus is the journey toward Shalom. It is how we seek peace. The way of Jesus is a team effort. You need a community of Jesus followers with whom to seek Shalom.
2. Jesus told his followers to pursue him and his way of living above our own needs, trusting God to take care of us. Check out Jesus' invitation to focus on the Kingdom of God and its justice and righteousness (Read about it in Matthew 6:33).
3. "Would you like to become a follower of Jesus? Jesus was not merely wise sage. Jesus claimed to be Shalom in person, and claimed to be available today to walk with you, talk with you, and guide you in his paths. Please pray this prayer. "Jesus, I would like to walk with you and talk with you and live your ways of shalom. Please teach me how, today and for the rest of my life."