



## The Nourishing Vocation Project Near and Now:

*Values: What are they, and why do they matter?  
Zacchaeus*

### Warm-up Question

*What is an experience that changed you?*



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### Discussion Questions

1. What do you see in this image?
2. What do you feel looking at this image?
3. What stories from your own life does this image bring to mind?
4. What stories of the world does this image bring to mind?

## Today salvation has come to this house

Read [Luke 19:1-10](#)

### Bible Story Reflection

Change – our lives depend upon it, but sometimes it can be so very challenging. We crave the comfort of the familiar. We fear the unknown that change may bring. We do not wish to lose whatever it is that a particular change may require us to relinquish. And yet, we cannot live if we do not change.

The story of Zacchaeus is a story of profound change – change in both being and doing. Zacchaeus, whose name means “righteous or pure in heart” dramatically changes in the course of ten short verses. At the beginning of the story, Zacchaeus was anything but an embodiment of his name, but by the end, the qualities of his name became lived out in his life with abandon.

As a chief tax collector who was rich, Zacchaeus was a part of a system that allowed or even expected tax collectors to defraud those whose taxes they collected. In such a system, tax collectors paid for the right to collect taxes on behalf of the empire, and in exchange they could charge whatever they wanted, over and above what the empire required, keeping for themselves that which exceeded the required. Zacchaeus literally got rich through an unjust system that encouraged him to defraud others. Through his encounter with Jesus, however, Zacchaeus changes. His priorities shift. His commitments turn away from his own greed and accumulation of wealth, toward justice, equity, and community, and by changing, he upends the system.

The story of Zacchaeus is an opportunity to reflect upon the systems that we are a part of and ask ourselves how our own commitments to those systems perpetuate that which is unrighteous rather than scattering righteousness through both who we are called to be and what we are called to do.



## Discussion Questions

1. Talk about a time when a circumstance necessitated that you change.
2. In what ways do you identify with Zacchaeus?
3. What unjust systems do we knowingly or unknowingly perpetuate?
4. What personal values do you hold that contradict unjust systems?
5. How do your values influence how you function in light of unjust systems?
6. What makes systemic injustice so difficult to challenge and change?
7. What commitments might God be calling you to turn away from so that you can more purposely turn toward justice, equity, and community?
8. How do you think Zacchaeus would tell his own story?
9. What can Zacchaeus teach us about both personal and systemic change?

## Activity Suggestions

Take an [implicit bias](#) assessment. Reflect upon how your hidden biases may contribute to systemic injustice. Choose just one thing that you can work to change your own biases.

Stand or sit in each different corner of the room. From each corner of the room, look only straight ahead. Make notes about what you see from each corner. Reflect upon how changing your perspective changes what you see. Consider how listening to different perspectives might help you effect critical change in your own life.

If you have not already done so, make a comprehensive list of values. Choose your top 20, then top 10, and finally to rank your top five values. In a group generate a list of everyone's top five values. From that list, collectively select the five most important values. Discuss how personal values and group values intersect with each other.

## Prayer Concerns

Advocates for justice, those who suffer beneath systemic oppression, elected officials

## Closing Prayer

Show me, O God, when my values are misguided, and move me to correct my ways. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

