

# ONE MEAL AT A TIME

[LEADER PREP GUIDE]

## GETTING STARTED

We've all had incredible meals, but let's build one together. Take a salt shaker and toss it to a person in the group. That person gets to pick the first element of a perfect meal. Then toss it to another person to add another element. Keep passing until you create the ultimate dining experience.

**Leader Note:** Think outside the box. Elements could include exotic foods, locations, music, guests, or chefs!

## OVERVIEW

Some of the most special moments in our lives happen around meals. Jesus often used eating food as an opportunity to teach an important lesson. In Luke 19, Jesus met a man He HAD to share a meal with, and it transformed the life of a very unexpected dinner guest—a wealthy social outcast named Zacchaeus. What made his story even more surprising is that it followed the story of another rich man who had an encounter with Jesus. The two interactions couldn't have been more different.

**Open up and read Luke 18:18-27 Then jump down and read the story of Zacchaeus in Luke 19:1-10.**

**Leader Note:** Use the following questions to make sure everyone understands the passage. Then, read the "One Meal at Time" summary before moving on to the application questions.

## UNPACKING THE VERSES

**Leader Note:** Tax collectors were often Jewish people who sold out to the Romans. They made a living by overcharging people and pocketing the difference. Jericho was a busy city on an important trade route with significant taxing opportunities. Zacchaeus would likely have been very rich, but at the cost of extorting his fellow Jewish people.

1. Why would a rich, powerful, corrupt man climb a tree to see a traveling preacher? What do you think he was hoping to find?

**Leader Note:** Short for a man in this region at this time was likely less than 5 feet tall! Despite being short, he was still a powerful man. This abuse of power likely made him an outcast. Climbing a tree certainly didn't help his image, so what he was looking for must have been worth the potential ridicule.



2. Jesus said He “must” come to Zacchaeus’ house “today.” What do you think compelled Him? Why was this person or moment so important?
3. Compare Zacchaeus to the young ruler. How are they similar? How are they different?

**Leader Note:** Zacchaeus’ name in Hebrew means “righteous.” His peers would have seen him at best as a crooked businessman, and at worst a traitor to their people. The crowd may have seen a criminal to put on trial, but Jesus saw a man who was lost, a person who needed to be found. For a deeper dive, see Jesus’ parable in Luke 18:9-14 about who is truly righteous.

## ONE MEAL AT A TIME

There are many people in our lives whom we seek to avoid. Sometimes we avoid people because interaction with them is awkward, but other times we avoid people because of our differences, past experiences, bad reputations, or the pain they have caused us. The crowd felt justified in ignoring Zacchaeus and was shocked when Jesus invited Himself over for a meal. We can’t give a person salvation, but we can introduce them to the One who can. Who are we inviting to our tables?

## LIVING IT OUT

1. Who do we feel justified in avoiding?
2. When Jesus ate a meal with Zacchaeus, the crowd called Jesus’ reputation into question, but Zacchaeus was worth it to Jesus. What would building a relationship with someone like Zacchaeus cost you?
3. Jesus came to earth and sought out people like Zacchaeus. If you are called to be Jesus’ disciples, who are you seeking? Where will you find them? What will they look like?

## PRAYER

**Leader Note:** End your time together by asking God to help give you eyes to see people the way that Jesus did and to have the courage to engage them despite the perceived costs.

*God, we are thankful that while we were still lost, You found us. We know that no matter how hard we try, we aren’t nearly as good as we wish we were. In fact, we are just as broken and sinful as anyone else. Help us to see others the same way we see ourselves—as sinners in need of a Savior. Father, give us the courage to ignore the critics and pursue people the way that Jesus did. Teach us to love people despite the costs, because that is how you first loved us. In Jesus’ name. Amen.*

