



SESSION FOUR

Jesus Forgives Zacchaeus

SCRIPTURE

Luke 19:1-10

BIBLE MEMORY VERSE

[Love] is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

1 Corinthians 13:5-6

LESSON FOCUS

God's love is forgiving.

BIBLE AIMS

During this session, each student may

1. DISCOVER that Jesus showed God's love by forgiving Zacchaeus, the tax collector;
2. DESCRIBE actions that show forgiveness to others;
3. ASK God to help him or her forgive others;
4. PRAY to become a member of God's family, as the Holy Spirit leads.

BIBLE STORY RECAP

When Jesus and His friends went to Jericho, people lined the streets just to see Jesus. One man, a tax collector named Zacchaeus, was too short to see over the people around him. He wanted to see Jesus so much that he climbed up a tree. Then Jesus surprised Zacchaeus. Jesus walked right up to the tree and told Zacchaeus to come down. Jesus wanted to have dinner at Zacchaeus's house!

Everyone was surprised that Jesus would be kind to a sinner like Zacchaeus. Tax collectors were known as cheats and thieves! But Jesus' kindness and love changed Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus said that he would give back FOUR times the money he'd taken unfairly and HALF of all he had to the poor. Jesus forgave Zacchaeus for the wrong things he'd done.

TEACHER'S DEVOTIONAL

Some of us are planners. We neatly file all records, regularly balance the books and use spreadsheets to calculate our debts and assets. Zacchaeus, the tax collector, was probably a planner. Judging by his wealth and his neighbors' dislike of him, he was probably very thorough. He may have even kept a neat set of DOUBLE books—one for the Romans and one for himself.

Planners probably also understand Zacchaeus's initial shock when Jesus called him down from the tree and invited Himself to dinner. That appointment was not in Zacchaeus's personal planner—not even in pencil! But in one act and one statement, Jesus lavished Zacchaeus with a love, forgiveness and acceptance that Zacchaeus had never known. It didn't take Zacchaeus long to recover his balance. He realized the great grace he'd received and declared that he was giving back fourfold to anyone he'd cheated!

Whether or not we balance our books and file our receipts, there is one area of accounting in which we can relax: We need never keep any record of wrong! Jesus tells us to stop keeping our own double sets of books—our "Christian" set and another set in which we note in permanent ink unpaid debts. As forgiven followers of Jesus, we are free to forgive all debts, burn the old records and let Him free us from the pain, bitterness and frustration bound up in every one of those old accounts. The forgiveness God lavishes in Jesus' name frees you to focus on giving your students the greatest treasure ever—God's amazing love!

