

A WINNING FAITH: WITNESSING FAITH

Use this guide for personal or small group study.

REFLECT >>>

1. Why do you think it's hard in our day to talk about "religion"?
2. A relationship with Jesus lies at the core of the Christian "religion." Have you ever had a conversation with a non-Christian about Jesus? What does our culture believe about Him?
3. Who has been most influential in your walk with Jesus? Why? What did they do that influenced your faith?

READ YOUR BIBLE >>>

- Luke 19:1-10
- 1 Peter 3:15-16

APPLY GOD'S WORD TO YOUR LIFE >>>

1. Why were people surprised or offended by Jesus' interactions with Zacchaeus? How would others have expected Jesus to treat the man?
2. Why do you think Jesus said, "Today, salvation has come to this house." (Luke 19:9)?
3. Can you put Luke 19:10 in your own words? What is God saying?
4. How have Jesus' actions on your behalf affected your heart?
5. Have you ever been questioned or challenged regarding your Christian faith? How did you reply? Were you able to "give the reason" for your hope, "with gentleness and respect"?
6. Is there someone you are currently praying for, who does not know Jesus? Do you have opportunities to walk alongside them in love? Have you spoken to them about Jesus?

Jesus is often surprising in His interactions with people. As a King, He preached a simple message: “Repent, because My Kingdom has come.” But, His actions caught people off guard. In Luke 19, we see Him pass through a whole crowd to reach one man: a small tax collector who had likely defrauded many of those around Him. Why? Because Jesus wasn’t distracted by what others saw on the outside; He had eternity in mind. While others resented and avoided the man, Jesus intended to “seek and save” what was lost. He intended to heal and restore Zacchaeus as a child of God, a person in a covenant relationship with Him. How did He do it? By eating dinner with Zacchaeus and talking with him, showing him the possibility of a relationship with God. Zacchaeus would never be the same again. “Salvation” had come to his house. What about us? God is on the move: are we ready for it? We are not to be troubled or worried by challenges to our faith. Instead, we are to honor Jesus in our heart and “always be prepared” to speak to others who ask about our hope in Christ. Remember: the message is simple, but our actions can be surprising! Walking alongside another person in love yields powerful opportunities to show them the possibility of a relationship with God. It is difficult at times, but this is who we are in Jesus Christ: He came to seek and save what had been lost. God’s love starts with us and moves out to those around us.

PRAY >>>

Father in heaven, You don’t make mistakes and You don’t miss a thing. You loved us before we loved You, and now You call us to see others the way You see them. Forgive me for hurrying to judge others; we all just need a relationship with You. Lord Jesus, today I ask for fresh passion and prayers for the lost and the lonely. Help me to walk alongside someone this week. Give me the love and the words they need to hear. Give us joy when we honor You and courage when we speak Your name in love. You are the reason for the hope we have. Amen.