



Ten Commandments 4: Respecting Others

Zacchaeus and the last three commandments

Note: Scripture used in this Bible Study is from the New King James Version.

The last three Commandments (Ex. 20:15-17) concern an individual's possessions, both physical property and perceived reputation. The teachings of Jesus and the case of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10) reveal the primary importance of one's spiritual condition...

Respond to Jesus for Salvation (Luke 19:1-10)

Luke 19:1-10

- 1 Then Jesus entered and passed through Jericho.
- 2 Now behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich.
- 3 And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature.
- 4 So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way.
- 5 And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house."
- 6 So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully.
- 7 But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, "He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner."
- 8 Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold."
- 9 And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham;
- 10 "for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Jesus Cares for Us (Luke 19:1-5)

What do we know about this town Jericho that Jesus passed through?

- Jesus and His disciples were proceeding to Jerusalem from Galilee. They followed the traditional route along the eastern side of the Jordan River. The road crossed the river near Jericho and began the ascension to Jerusalem.

- Jericho is only 15 miles northeast of the city of Jerusalem. However Jerusalem is 2500 feet above sea level and Jericho is 740 feet below sea level making the road between the two cities is winding and steep. The geographic features made Jericho a strategic location.
 - Jewish pilgrims combined with commerce to the east brought heavy traffic through the city.

Who was Zacchaeus?

- The name "Zacchaeus" means "righteous one." However, unlike many biblical characters, this one failed to live up to his name.
- He was a "tax collector."

What was the significance to his being a tax collector?

He had bid and contracted with the Roman government to collect certain taxes. Under Roman law he was entitled to exact a profit from those he taxed. The government set quotas for taxation but never established strict regulations for their collection.

What was the problem with this Roman tax collection system?

The system presented unlimited opportunities for exploitation. Unscrupulous collectors frequently overcharged to increase their revenue.

What kind of tax collector was Zacchaeus?

A chief tax collector and he was wealthy.

What is the significance of the word "chief" in describing the kind of tax collector Zacchaeus was?

The term "chief" probably means Zacchaeus hired others to do the actual collection.

What do you think the people who were taxed thought about Zacchaeus?

As chief tax collector he was especially hated both because of the excessive profits he made and because of his collaboration with the occupation forces of Rome.

Was Jericho a good place to be in the tax collection business?

As the result of its heavy traffic Jericho was one of the region's most lucrative locations for collecting taxes.

How do you think Zacchaeus became wealthy?

- Zacchaeus presumably received a percentage on all the commodities that passed through the city.
- He likely was guilty of the evils common to his profession and took advantage of the Roman tax collection system to make himself wealthy.

What kind of lifestyle do you think Zacchaeus had?

- His riches enabled him to enjoy an affluent lifestyle.
- However his prosperity failed to satisfy his real needs in life.
 - As a companion to its profit his profession had brought the hatred of his neighbors.
 - Associates were foreigners or people who feared his political power, not real friends.

Did Zacchaeus' wealth provide him everything he needed?

No, his most significant need was a genuine relationship with God.

When Jesus passed through Jericho this time, it was His final trip to Jerusalem before He was crucified... What do you think the people thought of Jesus at this time?

As Jesus made His final journey to Jerusalem, the Lord was a controversial figure.

- His popularity had diminished as the nature of His teachings became more obvious.
- Some of the common people still were attracted to Jesus but each day more of the populace were persuaded against Him.
- Most of the masses were just curious about the rabbi who generated such bitter debate. Great crowds gathered to see Him. These crowds grew larger as Passover approached.

So we see that Zacchaeus was attempting "to see who Jesus was." Was he attracted to Jesus by a quest for religious peace? Or was he merely curious?

Probably just curious. We don't go seeking God, it is God who seeks us... It is Jesus who came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10)...

I Jn 4:19 - We love Him because He first loved us. Even if Zacchaeus's search for religious peace were subliminal, it must have influenced his actions.

Why did Zacchaeus climb a sycamore tree?

His small stature prevented him from seeing over people or from forcing his way into their midst. No one would make way for the detested tax collector. To see Jesus, Zacchaeus dashed up the road ahead of where the crowd had assembled. He located a sycamore tree suitable for his purposes. The sycamore was easy to climb because of its large low hanging branches.

When Jesus came into sight, how was He able to address Zacchaeus by name?

- Jesus had been to Jericho previously and may have learned the name of the infamous tax collector.
- Or even more likely, He may have used divine insight which He did on many other occasions.

What do you think the crowd thought of Jesus having such a personal conversation with Zacchaeus?

It must have shocked the crowd, especially those devoted Jews on their way to celebrate the Passover (see verse 7).

What were the priorities that Jesus had in this case?

For Jesus the welfare of an individual was always more important than taboos or social protocol.

How was what Jesus said to Zacchaeus pretty bold?

Jesus invited Himself to dine in this man's home.

What did this bold public act of Jesus demonstrate to Zacchaeus?

It indicated significant acceptance of a person whom others rejected.

Did Jesus place any conditions on His acceptance of Zacchaeus?

This acceptance was unconditional. Jesus did not demand His host change his ways before the meal.

Jesus Changes Us (Luke 19:6-9)

Why was Zacchaeus unaccustomed to the kind of acceptance Jesus showed him?

Other Jews would have nothing to do with him. They refused even to speak to him. But Jesus was going to eat with him!

How did Zacchaeus respond to Jesus inviting Himself to dine at Zacchaeus' house?

He descended from the tree as rapidly as possible and welcomed Jesus into his house.

How did the crowd express what they thought about the actions of Jesus?

They observed everything and quickly expressed their opinion of Jesus' decision. The Greek word rendered "mutter" sounds like the buzzing of angry bees.

Why did the crowd mutter against Jesus?

Most Jews of Jesus' day considered a man like Zacchaeus as unclean. Entering the home of an unclean man was sacrilege. Fellowship with him contaminated Jesus in the minds of the religious pilgrims.

How did Zacchaeus address Jesus in verse 8?

"Lord" conveys its full Christian meaning here.

Zacchaeus's use of the word here shows he had repented of his past behavior and had placed his faith in Jesus.

How did Zacchaeus go from being a curious tax collector to a repentant disciple of Jesus?

- The uncommon acceptance Jesus showed Zacchaeus certainly got his attention but this by itself was not enough to make him repent.
- He had been supernaturally transformed by Jesus.

Why does Jesus go out of His way to save those rejected by society?

They are the ones ready to respond to Him and the ones who most appreciate what He did for them.

Why does Jesus Go out of His way to save those who are rejected by society like Zacchaeus?

They are the ones ready to respond to Him and the ones who most appreciate what He did for them. Being rejected by society is often a preparation for being introduced to Jesus.

What did Zacchaeus commit as he repented of his sin?

Half of his considerable assets would be donated to charity. The remainder would be used to amend the injury he had caused others to whom he had defrauded.

Why did Zacchaeus give up his wealth?

Wealth no longer was important to Zacchaeus, he had a new value system.

According to the Old Testament one who confessed acquiring property unjustly was required to return the stolen property and add one fifth its value as compensation (Lev. 6:5; Num. 5:7). Restitution of "four times the amount" was restricted to stealing a sheep (Ex. 22:1; 2 Sam. 12:6). How does this apply to the restitution Zacchaeus promised?

The excessive restitution Zacchaeus promised reveals the depth of his remorse and the extent of his transformation.

How did Zacchaeus show respect for others?

- By making amends for his disrespectful behavior and helping others in need.
- The fact that he trusted Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord indicates he would have respect for others because this is one of the defining characteristics of being a Christian.

Did Jesus base Zacchaeus's salvation on his willingness to make restitution?

Zacchaeus's change in attitude was the result of his salvation.

Did Jesus base Zacchaeus' salvation on the fact that he was a son of Abraham (or of God's people, the Jews)?

No. Rather He expressed the verdict that the true "son of Abraham" responds to God in faith as a spiritual descendant of Abraham...

Luke 3:8 - "Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. More important that being a physical descendant of Abram is to be a spiritual descendant of Abraham. Even Gentiles who are Christians are spiritual descendants of Abraham.

So if it wasn't because Zacchaeus repented, or due to his race, how did he become saved?

Jesus' acts of acceptance and grace were concrete expressions of God's salvation. Zacchaeus acknowledging Jesus as Lord and repenting of his sins were evidence that he had been saved.

How was what Jesus said in verse 9 as appropriate for the listening crowd to hear as it was for Zacchaeus?

On one hand, they may have been intended to help Zacchaeus comprehend what had occurred. Certainly it also explained to the crowd what had occurred.

What perspective did Zacchaeus exhibit by making the generous restitution that he did?

An eternal perspective...

Matt 6:19-21 - "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

How was what Zacchaeus did laying up treasures in heaven?

It was a testimony for what Jesus did in his life which God can use to bring others to know Him.

Jesus Came to Save Us (Luke 19:10)

Who was the "Son of Man" Jesus spoke of in verse 10?

Himself. "Son of Man" was Jesus' favorite self-description. It occurs 84 times in the four gospels, 83 of which were spoken by Jesus Himself.

What does the name "Son of Man" mean?

It is a Messianic term which designates Jesus as God coming in human flesh. It identified Jesus with humanity

(yet at times amounted to a claim of deity). He filled it with new meaning based on "the Suffering Servant" passages of Isaiah (Isa. 42: 1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13--53:12).

Why would Jesus use this obscure term to describe Himself?

To avoid an outright declaration of His being the Messiah so that only those with discernment would know. Only those with discernment would know who He really was.

How was Jesus' visit to the home of Zacchaeus a picture of His mission on earth?

The purpose of the incarnation was for Jesus "to seek and to save what was lost." God took the initiative in salvation and came to where we are.

Why did Jesus come to earth?

To save us...

John 3:16 - "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Nearly 2,000 years ago God, the Father sent Jesus His Son to make the way of salvation for us. The Son of God became a human being. He lived a perfect life but people executed Him on a cross.

Why wasn't Jesus' death not merely the tragic end of a misunderstood life?

Jesus died for sinners even though they were still participating in sin...

Rom 5:8 - God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

His death was God's ultimate expression of love for us. The Bible shows that Jesus died to save people from the consequence of their sin.

Did Jesus remain dead?

No! On the third day God raised Him from the dead and He is alive today!

What is God doing today?

God still seeks sinners and convicts them of their sins. Conviction is the result of the Holy Spirit putting the truth of the gospel before the lost individual.

How does a person know they are being convicted of their sin?

Conviction has happened when a person realizes a change is needed in his or her life.

How do people become saved?

By trusting in the provision God made for our sins to be forgiven... trusting that Jesus paid the price for my sins...

Rom 10:9-10 - if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

All we do is believe, salvation is a free gift of God...

Acts 16:31 - "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."

What kind of evidence must be present in a person's life who is truly saved?

Repentance of sin and action taken to be a testimony for Jesus...

Ephesians 2:8-10 - For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Respect the Rights of Others (Ex. 20:15-17)

Exodus 20:15-17

15 "You shall not steal.

16 "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

17 "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."

How are these last three commandments related?

The last three of the Ten Commandments concern certain rights that God gives to individuals. People have a right to hold material possessions and to expect others to describe their reputations accurately. Bearing false witness is stealing another's reputation.

What does the Eighth Commandment (v. 15) forbid?

Stealing.

What does it mean to steal?

The word for "steal" means to take something from another person without that person's knowledge or consent.

What has commonly been the penalty for stealing?

Whereas other codes commonly called for death and mutilation, the Bible emphasizes restitution.

What is the biblical principles behind restitution?

- The biblical idea behind ownership is that God owns everything.

- God gives to individuals and to groups the sole authority to hold and to use specific property (stewardship).

From God's perspective, what is a person really doing when they steal?

Rebelling against Him, disregarding God's decision concerning the use of property.

What does the Ninth Commandment (v. 16) forbid?

The Ninth Commandment (v. 16) originally concerned the legal process. Israelites were to be honest in formal legal testimony.

Is giving truthful testimony limited to legal proceedings?

The Bible clearly expands the principle to everyday conversation. The word for "testimony" was derived from a verb that means "to repeat." The word for "false" has the sense of being "untrue or without basis." God's people must never repeat words about others that are not true or are groundless.

So does this mean that as long as what we are saying about some one is true that it is acceptable to God?

Jesus told us that we will be judged for our motives behind what we say...

Matt 12:36 - But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.

Paul referred to such talk as evil speaking...

Eph 4:31 - Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.

What is the problem with gossip, even if it is the truth?

Gossip causes strife between people and passing it on tends to even make it inaccurate (recall the exercise of passing on a story and how it changes).

How is giving false testimony against a person related to stealing from them?

The reputation of every person is a valuable possession. It should not be tarnished or stolen by lies or empty rhetoric.

What does the Tenth Commandment (v. 17) forbid?

The Tenth Commandment prohibits coveting.

What does it mean to covet?

The word for "covet" describes a desire that inevitably leads to an effort to have the object desired.

How does coveting begin?

A coveting desire begins with the visual impression made by the object or individual.

How does coveting lead to other sins?

Coveting objects or individuals will lead to violations of other commandments. For example desire for another man's wife leads to adultery or desire for another woman's ring leads to stealing the ring.

Recognize the Place of Possessions (Matt. 6:19-24)

Matt 6:19-24

19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;

20 "but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

21 "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

22 "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.

23 "But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

How do we demonstrate respect for others with a proper attitude about material possessions?

Respect for others begins with assigning material possessions the proper place in our lives...

God owns it all, we are merely stewards of what He has intrusted to us.

What should we remember about laying up for ourselves treasures on earth (v19)?

Material possessions can never be secure. In ancient Judea clothing, grain, and precious metals were valuable commodities. However expensive garments frequently were ruined when tiny moths ate holes in the fabric.

Rodents and mildew consumed grains. Metals corroded and lost their value. Even when an owner could prevent natural destruction, thieves remained a serious threat. The stone and wood structures of the region offered little resistance to a determined criminal. Therefore Jesus advised against placing too much value on such items.

Do the same problems with laying up treasures on earth exist today?

Yes, we live in a fallen world. Pests, corrosion, and criminals still threaten the value and custody of possessions. Jesus' advice remains valid today.

If a person's objective is to lay up treasures, where would be the most secure place to do this (v.20)?

Since pests, corrosion, and thieves do not exist in heaven, it is the superior location.

How do we lay up treasures in heaven?

A wise individual invests in what God considers valuable...
Invest in things that have eternal value: a witness of Jesus which God can use to save souls.

What does the word "heart" refer to in verse 21?

"Heart" is a biblical term for the will. In other words the decisions a person makes about what is valuable govern how he or she lives every day.

If a person has healthy eyes, what do they need to see?

Light to illuminate the world around them.

What does the combination of healthy eyes and light make possible?

People can see what they do and where they go. They can avoid danger and learn new facts.

What is the spiritual truth that this analogy illustrates?

If Christ is the Lord of one's life, He determines the decisions that one makes from an eternal perspective. This person then lives in light and has a better perception of reality. On the other hand if material possessions dominate one's desire, that person moves through a black darkness, unable to see even a few inches ahead.

What is the ultimate choice behind where to lay up treasure and where to fix one's vision (v. 24)?

The ultimate choice is between who is one's master, God or money.

How can you say people either serve God or money?

Money is of the world, you either take actions motivated by things just in this world or you act with God's eternal perspective that transcends this world.

Is the term money here limited to cash in the bank?

Does this mean that a person can live pay check-to-pay check without saving anything and not have to worry about money being a master over him?

- Here "money" is inclusive for all physical wealth. It includes material property as well as currency.
- A person can be motivated by money even if they don't have any...
1 Tim 6:10 - For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

So is it evil to have wealth?

Not if you have a righteous attitude about it...

- A righteous attitude is to see wealth as a tool to use in serving God.
- An unrighteous attitude about money is an avenue for selfish pleasure.

How is the alternative to serving God idolatry?

Idolatry is worship of something created rather than the Creator. A wise individual chooses to serve the Creator, not something that is itself a created object.

What is the prerequisite for serving God?

Knowing Him. It is not possible to serve one whom you do not know.

How do we come to know God?

By responding to Him in believing in Jesus...

John 3:16 - "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Jesus later elaborated on what it means to have eternal life in a prayer to God the Father:

John 17:3 - "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."