



**Week 3: January 19-25**

10min

Welcome / Introduce Guests  
Celebrate Relational Connections from the Last Week / Open in Prayer / Recall the Guidelines

2min

**Share the Vision: Jesus was fully God and fully man. As a man, Jesus was limited in how many close relationships He could manage. His solution was to recruit twelve men to be His closest disciples. His goal was to share His life with them and to help them mature into effective disciple-makers. Like Jesus, we are limited. We have to be intentional with a few close relationships to be effective disciple-makers.**

5min

**Hook Question:** Outside your family, who are you trying to be most intentional with relationally to lead them to Jesus and help them grow as a disciple?

2min

**Retell Last Week's Story:** *The Woman at the Well (John 4:1-42). LONG STORY! Highlights are fine.*

2min

**Ask someone from your team to read or tell the following background for the story:**

Over the past couple of weeks, we have been watching Jesus be intentional with lost people so that the gospel could be revealed to them. In all cases, Jesus was there for people when their wine ran out. He was alert to the needs and struggles of others around Him and He took action to love them and reveal the truth to them.

This week's story is no different. Last week, we saw Jesus intentionally invest His life in a woman who was the lowest and the least. She was a Samaritan who had lived a scandalous lifestyle. In this week's story, we will see Jesus love and serve another person who was one of the lowest and the least. His name is Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus was not financially low, but he was, relationally, one of the poorest people in Israel.

Zacchaeus was a Jew. However, in the eyes of his people, Zacchaeus had betrayed the Jewish people by becoming a tax collector for the state of Rome. Tax collectors were notoriously crooked people and based on this story, Zacchaeus was no exception. Tax collectors often abused and stole from the people under their control for personal gain. The tax collecting system in Rome was corrupt and there was no recourse or justice for those who were being taken advantage of in the state. As a result, the poor became poorer and the tax collectors became wealthier. A chief tax collector meant having many other tax collectors under your control. This means Zacchaeus was responsible for a tremendous amount of corruption and abuse in his area of authority. Zacchaeus was rich, but he was morally and relationally one of the very lowest and least in all of Israel. How would Jesus relate to Him? This is where our story begins...

12min

**Tell the story from Luke 19:1-10:** *Remember to change up the storyteller often.*  
**Rebuild the story:** *Group members retell the story based on what they remember.*  
**Read the story from Luke 19:1-10:** *Ask the group to read these verses.*

**Discussion Questions: learn to talk about God's Word with others...**

Head Questions: Quicker tempo.

- What do you like or dislike about this story? What stands out to you the most?
- What does this story teach us about people?
- What does this story teach us about God?

Heart & Hand Questions: Slow down & wait!

- What do you think God is trying to show you through this story and our discussion?
- Who could retell the story for us right here one last time?

*Thank your storyteller for sharing the Word. Ask for a volunteer storyteller for next week. Close in prayer.*



## Week 2: Who Is In Your Inner Circle?

Last week, we began to think about circles of relationships and influence in our lives. We saw that Jesus Himself, as a man, was limited in the number of close relationships He could maintain. As an intentional leader, Jesus narrowed His focus to twelve men. He was more intentional about relational discipleship with these men than He was with anyone else.

3-15

20-200

Like Jesus was when He was on the earth, we are limited in the number of deeply personal relationships we can share. Most of us can handle somewhere between 3-15 really close relationships, as indicated in the small circle. We can likely handle far more relationships that can still be meaningful but less relational, as indicated in the larger circle.

Being intentional means that we consider who God wants us to place in the small circle. If you are married, this includes your spouse. If you have children living at home, they would be in this circle. If you have parents you are caring for, they would likely be in your small circle. But who does God want to place in your small circle beyond these first few? Who do you know that is lost that needs you to be in their corner for the sake of leading them to Jesus? Who is in your small group that needs a disciple-maker to take personal interest in them and help them grow?

The challenge is to avoid the pitfalls of a haphazard approach to our smaller relational circle. One pitfall is allowing people to float in and out of this circle based on our emotions. We feel close to someone, so we invest more. We feel the relationship drift, so we invest less. This is an emotional response that lacks intentionality. Another pitfall is not being intentional enough to have a close circle at all. We keep everyone at arm's length, never letting them get close enough to know us or for us to really know them.

Are you being intentional with your small circle? Who is in it now? Who does God want you to place inside the smaller circle? How does God want you to be intentional in those relationships? We will consider more deeply what intentionality in the small circle looks like in our guide next week.