

# CHRISTIAN MONEY \$ENSE

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## A "Short" Example in Stewardship

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*Zacchaeus was a wee little man.  
A wee little man was he.  
He climbed up in a sycamore tree,  
For the Lord he wanted to see.  
And as the Savior passed that way,  
He looked up in the tree.  
And He said, "Zacchaeus, you come down,  
For I'm going to your house today."*

If you have spent any time with the children in your church, you will recognize the above song. Children love it. Parents love the smiling faces on the children when they sing it. Through this song, we come to see the kindness that Christ showed to Zacchaeus, and we come to appreciate him, too. However, there is one group that did not appreciate Zacchaeus—those who knew him!

Jesus met Zacchaeus while passing through Jericho just before the Triumphal Entry (Luke 19:1-10). Zacchaeus was a Jew employed by the Roman government as a chief tax collector. As such, he would have been in charge of other tax collectors in his geographical region. Most likely Zacchaeus practiced extortion and bribery in his position. His countrymen viewed him as a traitor.

Jesus taught much about money. Money was Zacchaeus' occupation. Zacchaeus must have been intrigued by the rumors of Christ. He wanted to see Jesus. But because he was short, he had to climb a tree to get above the crowds and see Christ. "When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.'" So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly" (Luke 19:5-6, NIV).

Good for Zacchaeus! The crowd must have been happy for him! But, "all the people saw this and began to mutter, 'He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.' But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, 'Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four

times the amount.' Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost'" (Luke 19:7-10).

Why did Christ come to earth? He came to "seek and to save what was lost." What was lost that needed to be found? Us. Romans 3:23-24 says that all of us have sinned, but Christ came to redeem us from the life and penalty of sin. Did Christ say, "Today salvation has come to this house" because of Zacchaeus' offer to give money? In other words, did Zacchaeus buy his way into heaven? No, but Zacchaeus' generosity was an expression of the fact that he had been "found" by Christ.

Zacchaeus' salvation touched the area of his life where he struggled the most—money. Before he met Christ, Zacchaeus was greedy. After he met Christ, Zacchaeus was generous. He purposed to right his wrongs and meet the needs of others even when viewed with contempt. Those who knew Zacchaeus wanted to see him punished—not repentant and forgiven. Do you encourage new believers in their faith—even those who are different from you or have more than you?

If you are a Christian, do you view money differently than those who are not? Do you view money differently from before you were saved? Do other people notice the change? Your financial stewardship is a thermometer of your spiritual life. How is your stewardship? Are you hot or cold toward God?

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BBC Foundation has been ministering to churches and individuals regarding biblical stewardship since 1992. Send your questions on finances and stewardship to: BBC Foundation, 538 Venard Rd., Clarks Summit, PA 18411. Phone: (800) 451-8668, website: [bbcfoundation.org](http://bbcfoundation.org); e-mail: [info@bbcfoundation.org](mailto:info@bbcfoundation.org)