



When people encounter Jesus, they walk away different .

“I have come into the world as **light**, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in **darkness.**” *John 12:46*

Church and God are for the good people .

After this he went out and saw a **tax collector** named Levi, sitting at the tax booth. And he said to him, “**Follow me.**” *Luke 5:27*

Levi encountered grace .

God loves sinners .

And leaving everything, he rose and **followed** him. *Luke 5:28*

A true encounter with grace transforms your life.

For the **grace** of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, **training** us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age... *Titus 2:11-12*

And Levi made him a **great feast** in his house, and there was a **large company** of tax collectors and others reclining at a table with them. *Luke 5:29*

Levi wanted his friends to encounter grace as well.

And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples, saying, “Why do you **eat** and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” *Luke 5:30*

Don't be like the Pharisees .

“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but **sinners** to repentance.” *Luke 5:31-32*

“*Very often what God first helps us towards is not the virtue itself but just this power of always trying again.*” – C.S. Lewis

**Group Prep**

In preparation for small group, read Luke 5:27-32, then answer the following discussion questions. To compare stories, read Mark 2:13-17 and Matthew 9:9-13.

**Introduction**

Levi was a tax collector. Tax collectors at this time were absolutely despised because they dishonestly enriched themselves by collecting taxes for Rome from their own people (see Luke 19:8). Levi was viewed as a very sinful person; so sinful that spending time with him could tarnish one's reputation. But Jesus wasn't concerned with reputation. He was concerned with “the sick,” which led to his encounter with Levi.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Growing up in 1st-century Jewish culture, Levi didn't make the cut. He was released from the educational system and forced to learn a trade because he couldn't cut it as a rabbi or priest. Describe a time in your life when you didn't “make the cut?” How did this experience affect you?

2. Read Luke 5:27-32 aloud. Levi finally made the team! Jesus called Levi to follow him, but then in verse 32, describes a call to repentance. Levi responded to the call of repentance by immediately leaving everything behind. Describe the struggles you encounter with ongoing repentance—removing selfish desire while selflessly following Jesus?

A true encounter with Jesus transforms your life. Read Titus 2:11-12. The remainder of Levi's life would be characterized by following Jesus. What is following Jesus supposed to look like? What aspects of following Jesus do you struggle with?

3. Because of grace, Levi made the team—team Jesus! Levi was so excited that he held a feast for his friends, many of whom were sinners. What could you be doing to encourage others to follow Jesus?

What was Jesus' answer to the Pharisees who asked, “why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” As a group, brainstorm ways you could engage “the sick.” What can you commit to doing this coming month?

4. Because Levi was changed by an encounter with Jesus, he brought sinners to Jesus. Who is currently a part of your life that may have the perspective, “I'm a sinner and God won't accept me?” How will you engage them this coming week?

My action step is \_\_\_\_\_.

I will encourage and pray for \_\_\_\_\_ to follow through, and their action step is \_\_\_\_\_.

My memory verse is \_\_\_\_\_.

This coming week, I'm praying for \_\_\_\_\_.

**Outreach: Groups in Action**

The Colombian Mission team is giving away toys to hundreds of Colombian children. Please collect and donate small toys (i.e. happy meal toys, beanie babies, etc.) and drop them off at your campus' Information Desk.

Support Love One, Emmanuel's foster and adoptive care ministry, by serving in one of two ways: 1) Prepare a meal and drop it off to a foster family or 2) Babysit their children so the foster parents can go on a date night. Please email Kerry Carmichael at [kcarmichael@eclife.org](mailto:kcarmichael@eclife.org) to connect with a foster family needing your support.