

# REACHING THE LOST

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## Introduction

Have you ever found yourself lost? I mean, *really lost*?

Most of us know how it feels to be lost. *But have you ever been lost and not even known it?*

In the world today, 70% of people are spiritually lost and most of them don't even know it. Luke 19:10 says, *"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost"* (ESV).

Sadly those who are lost aren't just wandering aimlessly; they are experiencing a life that is less than abundant while heading for an eternity separated from God. They may never have heard that there is another, better, truer way. They have yet to personally meet the Giver of Life.

As believers, we have been commissioned to participate with God in finding the lost and exposing them to this abundant life.

This training module will help you understand the lost in our culture and give you ideas and tools to help you pray, share your story and invite them into relationship with God and His people.

## Focus Competency

**Participate in reaching the lost through prayer, invitation and evangelism**

## Assignments

- Read the Bible passage and complete the Bible Study
- Why do you struggle to pray for the lost, befriend the lost or invite the lost to be part of your church family? Be prepared to share your answers with your Coaching group.
- Make a list of at least three people you know who are spiritually lost. Set your alarm for 10:02 am each day and begin praying at that time for those you know who are lost. Then pray that God would use you and others to help them find Jesus. (Why 10:02? Luke 10:2 says, *"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."*)
- Make a list of three places you frequent where you could begin to make a new friend who might not share your faith. Now, what are three ways you could genuinely initiate relationship with this new friend?
- Consider your story of faith. Take some time and write out your answers to the following questions. Answer these questions:
  - *What was your life like before you placed your faith in Jesus as your Savior or Lord?*

- Who shared the good news of Jesus with you?
- Did you believe immediately after hearing or were there objections/questions you had to work through?
- What has your life been like since you became a follower of Jesus?
- Why would you want someone you care about to become a follower of Jesus?
- How would our church be different if every leader was intentional about looking for and engaging the lost?

## Read Luke 19:1-10

*“And He entered and was passing through Jericho. And behold, there was a man called by the name of Zaccheus; and he was a chief tax-gatherer, and he was rich. And he was trying to see who Jesus was, and he was unable because of the crowd, for he was small in stature. And he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree in order to see Him, for He was about to pass through that way. And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, ‘Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house.’ And he hurried and came down, and received Him gladly. And when they saw it, they all began to grumble, saying, ‘He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.’ And Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, ‘Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.’”*

## Bible Study Questions

- How is Zaccheus described? How did Jesus respond to him?
- Verse 7 says “they all grumbled.” Who do you think was grumbling? Why did they grumble? What was Jesus response to the grumblers?
- How should Jesus’ interaction with Zaccheus influence our interactions with the lost?

## Looking for the Lost

In the story you just read, Zaccheus was looking for Jesus. He had heard about Jesus and wanted to know what all the talk was about. But Jesus was also looking around for the lost and when he looked up, he saw Zaccheus.

As believers, it's easy to live in a community filled with other believers and wait for the lost to come looking for us. But what would happen if we, like Jesus, began looking for the lost? What

if we befriended the banker, the new neighbor, or the waitress and found a way to expose each one to the hope, peace and love of Jesus?

Jesus didn't begin his relationship with Zaccheus by calling him a sinner. Instead Jesus broke down any dividing wall and invited Himself to dinner. His genuine interest in Zaccheus was irresistible and Zaccheus invited Jesus home.

***When you stop and look around, who do you see? How can you begin to break down barriers and show genuine interest in others? How does your life ooze the hope, peace and love of Jesus?***

## Engaging the Lost

*"I never look at the masses as my responsibility. I look at the individual.  
I can only love one person at a time." Mother Teresa*

In our community, those who are spiritually lost often look like they're headed in the right direction. They have good jobs, are well educated and have happy families. They don't all have big problems and consider themselves atheists. In fact many of the lost regularly consider spiritual things and the meaning of life; some even attend church occasionally. They are intelligent and give to charities. They do good things and appear to live the good life. They lack for little.

But they are still lost.

***So how do we engage our family, friends, co-workers, classmates, and neighbors who don't think they need God and definitely aren't looking for Him?***

Here are a few ideas to consider in no particular order:

1. *Don't start by asking them to go to church with you.* They don't see the need. Instead, go to them. Get to know them... better. Engage. Ask good questions. Listen well to their answers. Be a friend.
2. *Pray.* Pray for them and the things going on in their life. If appropriate, pray with them out loud. Pray too that God would give you COURAGE to speak, a HEART of compassion for the lost, OPPORTUNITY to share your story and the WORDS to say when God's Spirit opens the door. (CHOW)
3. *Be honest about what's going on in your life;* the good and the bad. Don't shield them from the difficulties. Live authentically by modeling through your choices what you say you believe.

4. *When appropriate, share when and how you began following Jesus.*
5. *When God opens the door, walk through it. God loves lost people and His Spirit is actively at work in their lives. When His Spirit has prepared someone to take a next step in their spiritual journey, you'll probably notice it. Join the Spirit in His work. This might be a good time to invite someone to church with you or out for coffee with some of your Christian friends.*

***Which one of these five ideas have you tried? Which one of these would you be willing to try?***

## **Conclusion**

Remember, God's heart is for all to be saved. *"First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."* (1 Timothy 2:1-4)

And, God calls us as His followers to partner with Him and the power of the Holy Spirit to reach those who have not heard or believed. *"... but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."* (Acts 1:8)

You and I are not responsible for the salvation of others. It is God who saves. We are simply responsible to be obedient to the leading of the Holy Spirit as He gives us opportunity to befriend, share our story and invite others into a God-honoring community.