



## 2. Conversations move at the speed of trust

### Discussion guide – Series II

#### HOOK:

- **Starting activity:** Play the question game before starting discussion.\*
- Have you ever met someone, and hit it off straight away in meaningful conversation? What was it about you – or them, that enabled this?
- Think of a time when a conversation was awkward. Without mentioning names, what do you think makes conversations with some people awkward?

#### REVISION OF VIDEO:

- What was the point of the bicycle illustration?
- Would you agree that for many Christians, conversational skills might be a greater need than gospel skills? Why?
- What is the meaning of the statement 'big talk follows small talk'?

#### BOOK: Luke 19:1-10 - Jesus at the table with known 'sinners'

A few tensions existed in the room, because not only were Tax Collectors corrupt back then, they were also considered to have sided with the Romans in their military occupation of Israel.

- Do you get the impression that Zacchaeus and friends were comfortable around Jesus, or do you think they felt judged by him, and why?
- What do you think must have happened in their conversations to get past possible initial awkwardness to a conversation that changed Zacchaeus' life?\*\*

#### LOOK:

- How good are you at asking questions that get others talking about their own thoughts, experiences or feelings (rather than doing most of the talking yourself)?
- **Activity:** What sorts of interesting questions could you ask to get to know someone better? (Make a list) \*\*\*
- Consider these three scenarios:
  - Have you ever tried to engage a conversation with someone on a topic where they declined to engage the conversation? What happened and how did it make you feel?
  - Have you ever had someone initiate a conversation with you about something, but you didn't engage because you weren't interested?
  - Have you ever had someone engage you in a conversation about something you weren't interested in, but because of the way they talked about it you became interested? What happened?

#### SUMMARY COMMENT:

Because conversations move at the speed of trust, it's important that we learn how to enjoy 'small talk'. Without this we will not have opportunity to engage in much 'big talk'.



**TOOK (Application):**

Jesus' conversation with Zacchaeus only happened because Jesus first gave him time, and then engaged a conversation.

- Who are you going to give some time to this week to get to know them better and potentially open up a conversation?
- What questions could you ask your friends, to get to know them and their thoughts better?

**PRAY:**

- ...that your passion to be a positive Christian witness to others will grow.
- ...for the 5 friends you listed who you would like to encourage to consider the Christian offer of forgiveness, life and hope from God.

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\* In the 'question game', members engage conversations in which they are only allowed to ask questions. As soon as someone either (a) makes a statement or (b) replies in a way that would not be natural within a conversation (e.g. a random and unrelated question, or pausing for a very long time, etc.) they are out. Play an elimination game in pairs. Last person standing wins.

\*\* Maybe Jesus engaged in 'small talk' without any hint of judgement. As trust built, he then continued to feed conversation through the use of stories and questions. Then, gradually, as trust grew, things opened up.

\*\*\* From the video – there were some questions about their background or current interests: Where do you come from? Tell me about your family? What do you do with your time? What do you do for recreation (hobbies / sports)? *(For credits - Caleb Leadership Course in New Zealand)*. Another idea is to ask questions about a person's hopes and dreams: E.g. If you could change one thing in this world with your life, what would it be? If you could have any job at all – and anywhere in the world, what would you want to do, and where? If you could magically become any person on this planet, who would it be and why? Questions like this can reveal a lot about what's on a person's heart – and because questions beg questions, they can open two-way conversations.