

# TREASURE - HEART ATTACK -



## DAY 1

**READ** Luke 19:1-2. The Jewish people called Zacchaeus a “sinner” and an outcast. As a tax collector, Zacchaeus would have been a Jewish member of the community who conspired with Roman officials to extort money from his fellow Jews. Not only was Zacchaeus a tax collector, he was a CHIEF tax collector living in a major city which implies he was probably the head of the entire system and one of the most wealthy and despised. In 2008, Bernie Madoff pled guilty to investment fraud [over 50 billion dollars’ worth]. While he lived a decadent, excessive, indulgent life, he financially bankrupted thousands of his closest friends. *Why did they do it?*

“What induces one man to use false weights, another to set his house on fire after having insured it for more than its value... it is not real want for their existence it is by no means precarious... but they are urged on by a terrible impatience at seeing their wealth pile up so slowly, and by an equally terrible longing and love for these heaps of gold.”

*Nietzsche*

Zacchaeus and Madoff most likely began with a choice or two along the way to sacrifice family, integrity, health, etc. in order to further their own little heaps of gold. We don’t set out to be a Zacchaeus or Bernie Madoff. We develop patterns in our lives and begin to travel the path. *What path are you on? Is it taking you where you want to go?*

## DAY 2

Although we wouldn’t aspire to become people like Zacchaeus or Bernie Madoff, many of us aspire to accumulate at least a little heap of gold.

- *What about the fascination/intrigue of finding that one sure way to get rich quick?*
- *How much time do I spend trying to find a way to get rich?*
- *Have I begun to blur the line in some area in order to get ahead financially?*
- *Have I sacrificed things like integrity, truth, or honor in order to secure more wealth or more stuff?*
- *Have I come to believe I’m owed these things? That I have a right to them?*
- *Have I said or done things I never thought I would for money and/or stuff?*
- *What am I sacrificing in order to get ahead?*

**READ** Matthew 6:22-24. *Where is our focus? With what do we consume our thoughts and time?* Most of us would never choose to be like Zacchaeus or Madoff, but Jesus cautions us to be on guard and watch out by paying attention to the thing upon which we focus and where it will lead us. We shouldn’t be looking for the major Madoff and Zacchaeus behaviors, but rather the subtle patterns in our lives where we discover our tendencies to gravitate toward obtaining more and more. When the love of money takes hold of our hearts, it blinds us to what’s actually happening. Through our lusts and anxieties, it controls and leads us to prioritize it ahead of all other things.

**PRAY:** I don’t want to be THAT person. I don’t want to be consumed with money, power, or stuff. **HELP** me to recognize where my focus is. **HELP** me to re-align my focus on you. **GUARD** my heart.

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. *Proverbs 4:23*

## DAY 3

John Ortberg writes about the *Myth of More*. “... even the most grateful person among us still knows the ache for more.” *But where does the road called “more” lead to?* In a Gallup Poll, respondents, on average, said that 21% of Americans are rich. But only 0.5% said that *they* were rich. Everybody thinks he needs one thing to make himself rich: MORE.

**READ** Proverbs 23:4-5 and 1 Timothy 6:6-9.

*Are you content? Do you consider your life to be full or lacking?*

*What brings you joy and happiness? Are they dependent on money or “stuff”?*

*Could you find contentment if you had less?*

**PRAY:** Lord, **TEACH** me to be content, for I have so much.

**FREE** me from believing the myth that I need just a little more.

## DAY 4

Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. This too is meaningless. *Ecclesiastes 5:10*

Although Zacchaeus accumulated wealth and great power, it was not enough.

**READ** Luke 19:3-4. Being a man of short stature, Zacchaeus could have pushed his way to the front. But perhaps people hated him so much they’d make sure he wouldn’t make it to the front. **THINK** about the heart Zacchaeus must have had.

*Was it filled with arrogance and contempt? Greed? Pride? If he couldn’t make his way to the front of the crowd to see Jesus, wouldn’t it make more sense to scoff at the crowd and simply return home? But what did he do instead? How dignified do you think he looked climbing up a tree?* For Zacchaeus, being able to see Jesus became more important than keeping the appearance of a wealthy and powerful tax collector.

**CONTINUE** reading through verse 10.

“You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.”

*Augustine*

*Is your heart resting in God?*

## DAY 5

**READ** Luke 19:8-10 [again].

Zacchaeus went from accruing wealth at the expense of others to serving people at the expense of his wealth. **NOTICE** Zacchaeus didn’t ask Jesus what he **MUST** do regarding money. The law required giving 10%, but Zacchaeus promised to give 50%. The law said if you cheated or stole from someone, you had to make restitution plus 20% interest. Zacchaeus wanted to do far more – 4 times! That’s 300%! *So why the change of heart? What happened?* Money and wealth were no longer Zacchaeus’ savior, Jesus was. Money became... just money. His wealth became simply a tool for doing good - for serving people. **THINK** about Zacchaeus’ story.

**CONSIDER** where your view of money falls on the spectrum below.

**Of Ultimate Importance**

*(will sacrifice anything to get it)*

**Pretty Important**

*(will sacrifice a lot, but with limits)*

**Valued**

*(It’s a trust given & tool for serving)*

*Is your view more like Zacchaeus’ view BEFORE he met Jesus or AFTER?*

*Does your life reflect the life of someone who’s met Jesus?* If not, **PRAY** for a willingness and ability to make changes and begin living a life which reflects Jesus.

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