

## **A Christmas Carol: From Bah Humbug to Hope**

Week 1: The Chain We Forge in Life – Making Peace with Your Past

Luke 19:1-10

### **Love God**

Spend some time in prayer asking Jesus to open your heart and life to receive Him in a new and special way this Advent and Christmas season. Pray for the ability to see yourself as He does.

### **Grow in Grace**

1. Besides the Bible, what is one of your favorite Christmas stories? It could be a book, movie, or play. What makes it so meaningful to you?
2. *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens is an unusual type of Christmas story. Why do you think Dickens chose a ghost story to get his message across? From what you know about the story, how would you summarize the message of *A Christmas Carol* in one sentence?
3. Scrooge is “a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner! Secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster.” (p. 6) What circumstances would cause someone to be so cut off from the world? Why do you think he hates Christmas so much?
4. Jacob Marley, Scrooge’s dead partner, is condemned for eternity to wear a chain made from the idols he worshiped in life. In addition to money, what other idols can bind us and drag us down? Read Galatians 5:1. If Christ sets us free why do we willingly let ourselves “be burdened by a yoke of slavery”?
5. The Ghost of Christmas Past shows Scrooge that his life was shaped by a combination of hurtful things done to him and decisions he made. Zaccheus (Luke 19:1-10) became the hated and feared chief tax collector in Jericho probably because of his reaction to the way he was treated. Have you ever known someone who became bitter because of life? Do you know someone who was able to overcome their circumstances? What made the difference?
6. Zaccheus’ change of heart begins when Jesus calls him by name and invites him to come down. What was Zaccheus giving up by welcoming Jesus into his life? Why did other people grumble about Jesus’ visit to his house?

### **Share with Others**

1. Where do you need Jesus’ help to break some chains?
2. Who can you help to be free from their chains? What are some practical ways you can share God’s love with them?

### **Love God**

In your closing prayer, spend some time, either silently or aloud, asking God to help you break some chains. Pray for Jesus to remove the burdens of someone you know.