



GOD OF THE
OUTCAST

THE OUTCAST DISCIPLE

2



THE BIBLE LAB

YES, NO & MAYBE

1. Most of the people I hang out with have the same morals and ethics that I do.
2. I'm very careful about the types of people I associate with.
3. God wants us to avoid the appearance of sin.
4. Religious people irritate God.
5. God focuses more of His energy on sinners than on religious people.

DIG DEEPER

JESUS CALLS LEVI (MATTHEW):

• **READ Luke 5:27-32 (NLT):** 27 Later, as Jesus left the town, he saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at his tax collector's booth. "Follow me and be my disciple," Jesus said to him. 28 So Levi got up, left everything, and followed him.

29 Later, Levi held a banquet in his home with Jesus as the guest of honor. Many of Levi's fellow tax collectors and other guests also ate with them. 30 But the Pharisees and their teachers of religious law complained bitterly to Jesus' disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with such scum?"

31 Jesus answered them, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do. 32 I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners and need to repent."

› **(V. 27) A tax collector named Levi** - telōnēs (tax collector) Levi's sin was great. The tax collectors were a much-hated group of people. They worked for the Roman colonial government and were necessarily intensely disloyal to Israel. They were collaborators with the pagan rulers. They squeezed as much money out of the people as they could. The Romans worked out how much tax they wanted from a particular area and then sold the job of collecting it to the highest buyer. Anything more that the tax collector could get from the people was his to keep. Viciousness and corruption were part of the job. [Michael A. Eaton, *The Branch Exposition of the Bible* (Carlisle, Cumbria: Langham Global Library, 2020), 183.]

» Who are the much-hated, disloyal, vicious, or corrupt groups of people in our day? Do you think that Jesus would have any of them be in his select group of 12 if he had come in our day?

› **(V. 27) Follow me and be my disciple** - akoloutheō ("follow") It was customary for potential disciples to apply and be tested on their knowledge of the Torah in order to become a disciple of a rabbi. The rabbi would then select the most exceptional students to become their followers. Jesus turns everything upsidedown by 1) asking followers instead of being asked; 2) select-

ing the unqualified instead of the most qualified; and 3) selecting followers who were considered socially unfit.

» What does this tell you about God?

› **(V. 28) Levi got up, left everything, and followed him.** Levi is a classic example of how suddenly a man may be converted. Jesus leaves the house (mentioned in Luke 5:19). As he is walking along the road he sees Levi at the tax-collecting point. He is actually in the midst of his sin (5:27). In one step Jesus calls him to salvation, to discipleship, and to ministry alongside himself (5:27). Levi moves from wickedness to ministry in one step. There was no preparation, no preliminary attendance of the synagogue. Actually tax collectors were not allowed in synagogues. [Michael A. Eaton, *The Branch Exposition of the Bible* (Carlisle, Cumbria: Langham Global Library, 2020), 183.]

» How do we struggle with this conversion timeline today? What are some of the things that cause us to struggle with this?

› **(V. 29) Levi held a banquet** - The verb *katakeimai* (translated “having dinner”) means “recline (on a couch) for the purpose of dining,” suggesting a formal or festive meal 1. The term “reclining” suggests a special meal, and that Jesus was the guest of honor 2. This isn’t casual dining—reclining was the posture of honored guests at formal occasions, signaling Jesus’ elevated status.

Table fellowship in the ancient world meant mutual acceptance. So at stake in the Pharisees and scribes’ response is a worldview question. Should we really get close to the socially objectionable, to people like tax collectors and sinners? [Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*: InterVarsity Press, 1994]

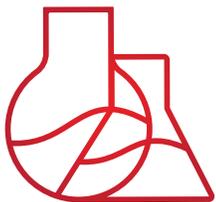
» What does it tell you about God’s character that He seems unconcerned about damaging His reputation by his association with despicable sinners?

› **(V. 30) Murmured (egogguzon).** Picturesque onomatopoeic word that sounds like its meaning. A late word used of the cooing of doves. It is like the buzzing of bees, like *tonthorruzō* of literary Greek.

The grace of God offends religious people. There is a difference between faith and what I like to call ‘religiosity’. One of the differences is this: religion does not like grace! These Pharisees get upset when they see Jesus being so gracious to men and women like Levi. ‘How can someone be saved so quickly?’ they say to themselves. ‘Why does Jesus associate with such wicked people? Surely they ought to repent first and there ought to be a long period when they clean up their lives before we should associate with such people!’ So they rebuke Jesus. [Michael A. Eaton, *The Branch Exposition of the Bible* (Carlisle, Cumbria: Langham Global Library, 2020), 183.]

» Why do you think God’s lavish grace offends religious people? What might be the antidote to religious murmuring?

› Why does Jesus associate with sinners when so many righteous people do not want to have anything to do with them? Many people think one must choose absolute separation if one is to remain pure, but for Jesus this is a false choice. Jesus views people in terms of what God could make them into, rather than pigeonholing them into who they currently are. There is no compromise with holiness in his relationships with sinners, because one of the very characteristics of God’s holiness is the way he reaches out in mercy to those in need (1:46–53). God graciously takes the sinner who is responsive to him and begins the work of transformation. [Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*: InterVarsity Press, 1994]



MY PRAYER...

1. How am I passing spiritual judgment on other groups of people?
2. What conversion do I need in my own heart, so that God can lead me away from my sin?
3. What new aspect of God’s character does He want me to know?