



Teachings of the Teacher – A study in the parables of Jesus
The Pharisee and the Tax Collector

Luke 18:9-14

Lesson 16

Though the LORD is on high, yet He regards the lowly; but the proud He knows from afar (Psalm 138:6). The distance between heaven and earth does not limit God's vision. He sees both the *lowly* and the *proud*. This parable is a story describing what He saw in men 2,000 years ago – conditions of the heart that still exist today. He has pronounced His judgment on each condition. How does He see you?

OBSERVATION: Read Luke 18:9-14

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework) and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they were about?
2. Key words help us to better understand a parable. We have listed below key words of this parable. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text.

Key Words: words that refer to *Jesus, God, the Pharisee, the tax collector*
humble and exalts
3. Underline or highlight (using different colors) the statements made by the *Pharisee* and the statement made by the *tax collector*.
4. The contrasting word *but* is used once in this parable. What is being contrasted?

CONSIDER THESE THINGS:

1. How does it feel to be in the presence of someone who thinks they are better than you?
2. What feelings or attitudes do you have toward proud people?
3. How does our society regard the quality of humility?

THE AUDIENCE: Read Luke 18:9

1. Although God *knows the proud afar off*, He sees them very clearly; He notices those filled with pride and does not ignore it. This parable was directed at a specific audience. Who were they?

- a. *Trusting* in self can seem to be a good thing to do. What do the following verses teach us about this?

Psalm 9:10

Psalm 118:8

Challenge: Using a concordance, look up the word *trust* and record your favorite verses.

- b. Define the word *pride*.

1.) In what ways are *pride* and *trusting in ourselves* similar?

2. What were the two affects of *trusting in* themselves? (Luke 18:9)

- a. According to Psalm 64:10, what will those who are truly *righteous* do?

- b. What is the warning of Proverbs 21:2?

- c. How does Isaiah 64:6 describe *our righteousness*?

- d. How can *self-righteousness* lead to *despising* or thinking less of others?

THE PHARISEE: Read Luke 18:10-12

1. *Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. What action did the two men have in common?*
 - a. Read Zechariah 7:5. What is God's desire for us when we *pray* or *fast*?
 - b. Why is it sometimes easy to commend ourselves for doing the right thing, not recognizing our intentions have not been right?
2. *The Pharisee's prayer first focused on what he viewed as how he was not like others. Who was he not like?*
 - a. Who do Christians tend to judge today?
3. *Next, the Pharisee focused on his own good deeds. What were they?*
 - a. What do we learn about the way *Pharisees fasted* from Matthew 6:16-18?
 - b. What do we learn about the way *Pharisees tithed* from Matthew 23:23?
4. *What were the two components of the Pharisee's prayer?*
 - a. God was not looking for a prayer that judges others or justifies ourselves. What components were missing from this *Pharisee's* prayer?

THE TAX COLLECTOR: Read Luke 18:13

1. *Both the Pharisee and the tax collector went up to the temple to pray. However, the tax collector stood afar off. Describe his actions.*
 - a. Record Job's conclusion in Job 42:6 after God confronted him with a series of questions reminding Job of His power and wisdom.

2. Record the *tax collector's* seven word prayer in Luke 18:13.
 - a. What did he recognize about himself?
 - b. Record the glorious truths of 1 John 1:8-10.
 - 1.) Why do you think realization and confession of *sin* must come prior to God's forgiveness?
 - c. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter delivered a powerful sermon, condemning the Jews for their part in crucifying their Messiah. Record the reaction of the Jews from Acts 2:37.
 - 1.) What was Peter's answer for them? verse 38
 - 2.) Why must we move from being *cut to the heart* to *repentance*?
3. Look again at the *tax collector's* prayer. What attribute of God did he call upon?
 - a. This *tax collector's* prayer was similar to that of King David. Record David's prayer in Psalm 25:7.
 - 1.) Describe God's *mercy*.
 - b. When you confess your sins to God, what attribute of His do you depend upon? Why?

THE LESSON: Read Luke 18:14

1. Although David's prayer in Psalm 27 may have been more "flowery", we can see from Jesus' response that it is the *heart*, not the *words*, that matter. What did Jesus declare about the *tax collector* in Luke 18:14?
 - a. Use synonyms or phrases to define the word *justified*.
 - b. What is the promise of Romans 4:5?
2. What reasoning did Jesus give for His statement at the close of this parable?
 - a. This is not the first time Jesus taught this principal. Read Luke 14:7-11 and describe those to whom Jesus directed this truth.
 - b. Why do you think *pride* was such a struggle for the religious leaders?
3. God *humbles* the *prideful* and *exalts* the *humble*. Which truth surprises you more? Why?
4. Notice, in Luke 18:14, *humility* is not just an attitude, it is an action. What are some examples of *humbling ourselves*?

REVIEW: Read Luke 18:9-14

1. What does this parable teach us about:

outward appearances

trust

prayer

pride

humility

God

2. Describe how God would like to be approached when we pray.

3. What truths enable you to be confident before God?

4. Why does God honor the prayers of a humble person?

5. In what ways have you been challenged or comforted through your study of this parable?

*if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves,
and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways,
then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.*

- 2 Chronicles 7:14

Observation Worksheet

Luke 18:9-14

Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: ¹⁰Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men--extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' ¹³And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' ¹⁴I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."