

The Pharisee and The Tax Collector
Personal Study Guide
Luke 18: 9-14
October 20, 2019

INTRODUCTION:

Who was the best teacher you had in school? Who was the worst? What was the difference?

LESSON:

1. Trying to Justify Yourself Leads You to Look Down on Others ([Luke 18:9](#)).

Jesus targeted people who did two things: (1) they trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and (2) they looked down on everyone else. Don't miss the connection between those two descriptions. They go together. Spiritual short-sightedness leads to a sense of a spiritual superiority. When you trust in yourself that you are righteous, you will look down on others. When you look down on others, you find you feel better about yourself. And on and on the cycle goes.

- *What are two or three signs that someone is trusting in themselves that they are righteous?*

- *What are two or three signs that someone is looking down on others?*

- *When have you found yourself falling into this trap?*

2. Self-Righteousness Can Be Disguised by Words of Gratitude ([Luke 18:10-12](#)).

The Pharisee takes his stand in the temple, probably in front of others, to be seen by them. He expresses gratitude to God, but not because God is so awesome and holy but because he sees himself as set apart from others: "I am not like other men."

- If someone had accused the Pharisee of being self-righteous in that moment, how do you think he would have responded?
- What are some ways we can be self-righteous without knowing it?
- Why is it easier to judge other people more harshly than we judge ourselves?

3. Humble Pleading for Mercy Is the Mark of Divine Grace ([Luke 18:13-14](#)).

Notice the contrast between the Pharisee and the tax collector. Take a few moments to read both descriptions and note the differences.

The Pharisee	The Tax Collector

- What do the differences between the prayer of the Pharisee and the prayer of the tax collector tell us about their attitudes?
- What are the marks of someone who knows their need for grace?
- How do these marks differ from people who trust in themselves?

Conclusion

“Pride preaches merit; humility pleads for compassion. Pride negotiates as an equal; humility approaches in need. Pride separates by putting down others; humility identifies with others, recognizing we all have the same need. Pride destroys through its alienating self-service; humility opens doors with its power to sympathize with the struggle we share. Pride turns up its nose; humility offers an open and lifted-up hand.”

- Darrell Bock

- What are some ways we can become self-aware of the stench of self-righteousness?
- Name some ways we can display humility in Christ in the presence of family members, coworkers, and others, calling attention to Christ and not ourselves.