

# The Pharisee and the Publican

## Introduction

**Text: Luke 18:9-14**

- 1. Humility is a quality that is greatly needed by all today.**
  - A. Humility: “a modest or low view of one's own importance; humbleness” (Oxford Dictionary)**
  - B. We are taught in scripture that God will lift up the humble.**

Romans 12:3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, **not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think**, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

James 4:6 But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "GOD RESISTS THE PROUD, BUT **GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.**"

James 4:10 **Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord**, and He will lift you up.

- C. Humbleness is especially needed in prayer.**
  - 1) We are not to demand anything of God. God knows us better than we know ourselves.**
    - a. Therefore, He does not need for us to tell Him of our good points.**
- 2. This morning we will strive to show the place of humility in prayer through this parable.**

## Two Attitudes Are Revealed

### 1. **The Pharisee** – was proud of himself.

A. “I thank you that I am not like other men...”

1) Look at what I’ve done – He’s singing his own praises.

2) God, do you know what other men do?

B. His pride caused him to turn attention outward to other men.

1) He failed to see himself as he truly was (he only stated the faults of others).

C. Jesus says that we are to “seek the lower seats to be exalted.”

**Luke 14:7-11**

### 2. **The Publican** – humbled himself before God.

#### **Publican:**

one who farmed the taxes (e.g., Zacchaeus, Luke 19:2) to be levied from a town or district, and thus undertook to pay to the supreme government a certain amount. In order to collect the taxes, the publicans employed subordinates (5:27; 15:1; 18:10), who, for their own ends, were often guilty of extortion and peculation. In New Testament times these taxes were paid to the Romans, and hence were regarded by the Jews as a very heavy burden, and hence also the collectors of taxes, who were frequently Jews, were hated, and were usually spoken of in very opprobrious terms. Jesus was accused of being a “friend of publicans and sinners” (Luke 7:34). (Easton Bible Dictionary)

- A. "God, be merciful to me a sinner."**
  - B. He would not look up to heaven – felt unworthiness; shame.**
  - C. "Beat his breast" – A sign of contriteness.**
    - 1) Contrite: - "feeling or expressing remorse or penitence; affected by guilt" (Oxford Dictionary).**
- 3. We should always be reminded of the principle:**

Luke 14:11 For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

## **Two Approaches to God**

- 1. The Pharisee.**
  - A. Aren't you proud of me!**
- 2. The Publican.**
  - A. I am not worthy!**

## **Two Outcomes in Prayer**

- 1. The Pharisee.**
  - A. Rejected by God**
- 2. The Publican**
  - A. Accepted and forgiven**

## Humbleness in Prayer

1. **Humbleness is "to be bowed down"; "lowliness of mind."**
  - A. **Humility in the Spiritual sense is an inward spirit that does not allow one to think more highly than he ought to think.**
  - B. **It requires us to feel that in God's sight we have no merit and in honor to prefer others to ourselves.**

Romans 12:10 Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;

Proverbs 15:33 The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom, And before honor is humility.

- 1) **It does not demand undue self-depreciation but rather lowliness of self-estimation and freedom from vanity.**
- 2) **It is a recognition as to who is the potter and who is the clay!**
  - a. **Consider for a moment the following verses.**

Isaiah 29:16 Surely you have things turned around! Shall the potter be esteemed as the clay; For shall the thing made say of him who made it, "He did not make me"? Or shall the thing formed say of him who formed it, "He has no understanding"?

Isaiah 64:8 But now, O LORD, You are our Father; We are the clay, and You our potter; And all we are the work of Your hand.

**Jeremiah 18:4, 6**

**Romans 9:20-21**

## 2. How does this apply to prayer?

### A. God does not need us to “sell ourselves.”

**Matthew 10:29-30**

**Matthew 6:7-8**

### B. God doesn't need us to “sell others.”

1) “I'm glad that I am not like these sinners....”

2) **We should be concerned for others but not comparing them to ourselves, or ourselves to them.**

2 Corinthians 10:12 For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

### C. God exalts those who are of contrite heart.

1) **God will certainly exalt the humble.**

James 4:10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

### D. In it we recognize that we are totally open before God.

Hebrews 4:12-13 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

3. **Don't confuse boldness with haughtiness.**
  - A. **We are to be "bold" in prayer (but not haughty).**  
**Hebrews 10:19-23**
    - 1) **This passage would include more things than just prayer, but it would certainly apply.**
  - B. **We can and should come before Him in confidence.**  
**Hebrews 4:14-16**
  - C. **Boldness is seen in the fact that we know that God will hear and answer.**  
**1 John 3:19-22**

## **Conclusion**

1. **God wants His people to come to Him!**
2. **God will listen and care for us!**
3. **Prayer is a privilege given to those who are and have become God's children.**
  - A. **If you have done already done so, you can become a child of God this very day.**
  - B. **As a child of God are you in the right relationship with your heavenly Father?**

