

SCHOOL OF BIBLICAL LITERACY

LUKE 18:9-14

Summary Luke 18:9-17

Jesus tells the parable in this passage to correct the thinking of the self-righteous. The story contrasts an outwardly religious Pharisee and an outwardly sinful publican – both who go to the temple to pray. Jesus uses the contrast to show the utter necessity of true humility to be a recipient of God’s mercy and provision of righteousness.

** Prayerfully read the passage first, and then complete this study. Please read the passage again once you are complete. This study has been prepared using the **King James Version** of the Holy Bible.*

1. Read Verse 9. What form of teaching do we find Jesus using in this passage? “And He spake this _____ unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others”

***Note:** The Greek word translated parable is the word “parabole”. “Para” means “alongside” or “parallel”. “Parabole” means to place one thing alongside another for comparison. Illustrations, analogies, and word pictures used for the purpose of comparison would fit into the category of being a parable. Jesus often spoke in parables. He would use an earthly situation or circumstance to teach a spiritual truth. It is important when studying parables that you seek to identify the scope of the comparison. In the parables of Jesus, He often records the reason for the parable or the comparison that is being made. We must be certain to take note of this so we do not fall prey to drawing conclusions from the parables that were never intended.*

2. Read Verse 9. Why is Jesus teaching this spiritual lesson? “And He spake this parable unto certain which _____ in _____ that they were _____, and _____ others”

***Note:** In short, Jesus was directing this parable towards the self-righteous. A person with a self-righteousness attitude is the exact opposite of a person who understands they are desperately unrighteous. Jesus demands that all who come to Him must repent (Luke 13:3) and deny “self” (Matthew 16:24).*

3. Read Verse 14. What is the spiritual truth that Jesus desires for everyone to learn from this parable? “I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: _____ every one that _____ himself shall be _____; and he that _____ himself shall be _____.”

***Note:** When you see the word “for” it denotes a reason or cause. One went home justified “for / because” he humbled himself. So, the lesson to be learned in this passage is the necessity of genuine humility. Humility is an internal matter of the heart, rather than a matter of outward actions (Matthew 5:3). Many ministers in a desire to obtain “decisions for Christ” use this passage to promote the publican’s outward actions rather than seeking that individuals may have his transformed heart. Unfortunately, focusing on the external rather than the internal tends to produce proud “Pharisees” rather than humbled “publicans”.*

4. Read Verse 10. What does Jesus use as a word picture to teach this spiritual truth?

(a) A contrast between two men. “_____ _____ went up...”

(b) One was a Pharisee. “Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a _____....”

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Note: Pharisee's were regarded as the most righteous and religiously devout people of their time. Throughout the New Testament Jesus rebukes their outward religion without inward reality (Matthew 23).

(c) One was a publican. "Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a _____."

Note: Publicans were tax collectors. They were hated and were regarded as traitors by the Jews. Public opinion viewed the publicans as the epitome of unrighteousness.

(d) The contrast will be noted by their prayers at the temple. "Two men went up into the _____ to _____"

Note: These two men represent the two extremes of public opinion concerning perceived acceptance with God. Jesus' listeners would have considered the Pharisee the one who would be justified by God. By presenting the humbled publican as the justified one, Jesus illustrates the truth that only those who heartily perceive their own unrighteousness can receive God's righteousness through Christ (Luke 5:30-32).

5. Read Verses 11 and 12. What do we learn about the self-righteous Pharisee who exalts himself?

(a) He was not looking to God at all (Verse 11). "The Pharisee stood and _____ thus _____"

(b) He focused more on his perceived superiority over others rather than his inferiority before a Holy God (Verse 11). "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am _____ _____, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican."

(c) He was delighted in the things he did (Verse 12). "_____ twice in the week, "_____ tithes of all that I possess."

Note: The Pharisee was proud of what he had not done (Verse 11) and what he had done (Verse 12).

6. Read Verse 13. What do we learn about the publican who humbled himself?

(a) He did not see himself as being worthy. "And the publican, standing _____ off, _____ up so much as his _____ unto heaven, but _____ upon his _____...."

(b) He heartily saw himself as a sinner (unrighteous) who needed God's mercy. "And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but _____ upon his _____, saying, _____ be _____ to _____ a _____."

(c) He looked to God. "And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, _____ be merciful to me a sinner."

7. Read Verse 14. What was the result of the publican humbling himself before a Holy God? "I tell you, _____ went down to his house _____ rather than the other"

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Note: To be “justified” means to be “declared righteous”. The publican despised “self” and had nothing to boast of.

8. Read Verse 14. Why was the publican justified? “I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: _____ every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that _____ himself shall be _____.”

9. For a more thorough understanding of the Bible’s teaching on humility, read the following Verses:

(a) Proverbs 16:5 “Every one that is _____ in _____ is an _____ to the LORD: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished.”

(b) Proverbs 16:19 “Better it is to be of an _____ with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the _____.”

(c) Matthew 5:3 “Blessed are the _____ in _____: for _____ is the kingdom of _____.”

(d) James 4:6 “But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God _____ the _____, but giveth _____ unto the _____.”

(e) James 4:10 “_____ in the sight of the Lord, and _____ you up.”

(f) 1 Peter 5:5-6 “Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with _____: for God _____ the _____, and giveth _____ to the _____. _____ therefore under the mighty hand of God, that _____ may _____ you in due time”