GENESIS TO REVELATION | PARABLE

Two Men Pray

Luke 18:9-14



YOUR BIBLE READING

Humble prayer asks for mercy instead of looking down on others.

Inside: two extended reading pages, a thoughtful reflection, creative activities and a grown-up guide.

AGES 6-10 WITH AN ADULT • 6 COLORFUL A4 PAGES • ENGLISH ONLY

EXTENDED ENGLISH READING • PAGE 1 OF 2

Two People in the Temple

Luke 18:9-14



Jesus told a parable to people who were sure they were righteous and looked down on others. His story involved two men who went to the temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, a person devoted to religious teaching and practice. The other was a tax collector. Their different positions might lead listeners to expect different things, but Jesus would direct attention to the prayers themselves.

The Pharisee stood and thanked God that he was unlike people who cheated, acted unjustly, or did other wrong things. He even compared himself with the tax collector nearby. Then he listed his own practices: he fasted twice a week and gave a tenth of what he received. These details were part of his speech. His prayer placed his achievements beside other people's faults and made himself the favorable comparison.

The tax collector stood at a distance. He would not lift his eyes toward heaven. In sorrow, he asked God to have mercy on him as a sinner. He did not bring a list of impressive actions, and he did not name another person who was worse. The need he expressed was his own need for mercy. His prayer did not require making someone beside him seem smaller.

Both men had come to pray, but their words moved in different directions. One spoke as if his record established his place above others. The other admitted wrongdoing and asked for compassion. Jesus did not tell the listeners to judge every Pharisee or every tax collector by these two characters. He had introduced a particular problem: trusting in one's own righteousness while despising the people who stand nearby.

Remember: I need God’s mercy, just as other people do.

EXTENDED ENGLISH READING • PAGE 2 OF 2

Read Deeper: Mercy Is Not a Contest



Luke 18:9-14

Jesus said that the tax collector went home justified before God rather than the other man. Justified is a word about being accepted as right with God. The man who had asked for mercy received it. Jesus then explained that those who raise themselves up will be humbled, while those who humble themselves will be lifted up. The ending reverses the judgment the boasting prayer had tried to make.

The issue was not that fasting or giving must be bad. The Pharisee named good religious practices but used them to place himself above another person. A useful action can be turned into a boast when it becomes a reason for contempt. Jesus challenged that contempt. God was not holding a competition in which one person's prayer became better by pointing to someone else who seemed to have done worse.

Humility is also different from saying that you have no worth. The tax collector's prayer named his wrongdoing, not a rule that he was beyond love or help. He asked for mercy because mercy was possible. A child can admit an unkind action while still knowing that they matter. Honest responsibility leaves room for repair and learning; cruel names about the whole self can make that harder to see.

Here is an ordinary example to help think about the lesson. If you finish a task carefully, you can be glad about your work without mocking someone who struggled. If you make a mistake, you can ask for help without searching for a person who made a bigger one. In each case, the next good step is clearer when comparison gives way to honesty and respect.

Pause and think: How can you be thankful for something you do well without making someone else seem less important?

THINK, NOTICE & GROW

Honest Words without Putting Someone Down



The two prayers invite you to notice the words you use about other people. Sometimes a sentence of thanks turns into a comparison: being glad about your own work becomes a way to say someone else is less worthy. You can practice expressing gratitude directly. Name what was good without adding a hurtful comment about another person's effort, ability, or mistake.

When you need to apologize, be specific. Saying that you interrupted a friend is more useful than calling yourself a terrible person. A trusted adult can help you understand the action, listen to the person affected, and choose a repair. Asking for mercy is not pretending that the action did not matter. It is making room for forgiveness and a better response.

Jesus spoke to people who looked down on others. Think of places where you can resist that habit: a game, a test, a shared chore, or a conversation about whose things are best. You do not have to make yourself smaller, and you do not have to make another person smaller either. Respect leaves room for everyone to keep learning.

A SMALL STEP FOR TODAY

Jesus welcomed an honest request for mercy and challenged prayer that looked down on others.

How can you be thankful for something you do well without making someone else seem less important?

Read, Remember & Create

Name: _____ Date: _____

1 Think about the reading

1. What did the Pharisee focus on in his prayer?

2. What did the tax collector ask God for?

2 Put the ideas in order

Write 1, 2 and 3 for the order these ideas appear in the reading.

- ☐ The humble tax collector went home accepted before God.
- ☐ Two men went to the temple to pray.
- ☐ One praised himself; the other asked for mercy.

3 Draw a meaningful picture

Draw two speech bubbles: one for honest thanks and one for asking mercy.

Tell someone how your picture connects to the reading.

Read & Grow Together

Read and learn with context

This English edition is designed for ages 6-10 with an adult. Read both extended readings together, or enjoy one each day. Pause at unfamiliar words, invite questions and use the reflection page to connect the story with everyday life. These are retellings and lessons with explanations; read the listed Bible passage for context. Poetry, parables, letters and symbolic visions are identified by type.

Remember this

I need God's mercy, just as other people do.
Original memory thought, not a direct Bible quotation. Related passage: Luke 18:13-14

A thoughtful conversation

This parable challenges contempt, not an entire religious or ethnic group. Humility means honesty about our need, not believing we have no worth.

Activity answers

1. His own achievements and comparisons with other people.
2. Mercy for his wrongdoing.
Sequence boxes, top to bottom: 3, 1, 2. Personal responses and drawings will vary.

Optional prayer

God, have mercy on us and teach us to treat others with humility. Amen.

Print and share

Each pack has 6 pages. Print on A4 at Actual Size (100%). The worksheet is page 5. You may print just that page, or use the separate 150-page activity book. The collection contains 150 packs in Bible book order, 15 volumes and one ZIP. Catalog pack IDs stay the same when new readings are added.

Sources and sharing

English retellings, lessons, reflections and activities by DigiPick (2026), based on Luke 18:9-14. Source checked with the public-domain World English Bible. Illustration © Sweet Publishing; 42_Lk_18_05_RG.jpg. CC BY-SA 3.0. Source: unfoldingWord. Resized proportionally, without cropping.
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