Lessons from the Gospels: Humility and Grace



Explore humility and grace through the Gospels, focusing on the Pharisee and the Tax Collector story in Luke 18:9–14.





Table of contents

Introduction	3
Day 1: Understanding the Parable	4
Day 2: The Danger of Self-Righteousness	10
Day 3: Embracing God's Mercy	16







Introduction

The Gospels are rich narratives that reveal Jesus' teachings and His heart toward humanity. Among these teachings, the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector in **Luke 18:9–14** stands out as a powerful lesson on humility and self-righteousness. This story illustrates how God values a humble spirit and cautions against the dangers of pride and judgment towards others.

In this three-day study, we will dive deep into the meanings within this parable, examining the characteristics of these two men and their hearts before God. The Pharisee represents self-righteousness and outward religiosity, while the Tax Collector symbolizes repentance and humility. Jesus uses their contrasting attitudes to teach that it is not our religious status or good deeds that earn God's favor, but the posture of our hearts.

Humility draws God's attention, and through it, we find grace and acceptance. This study invites you to reflect on your own heart posture, to examine where pride or condemnation may be hindering your relationship with God and others. Through prayer, reflection, and Scripture, you will be encouraged to approach God with a transparent and humble heart, trusting fully in His mercy.

Join us as we explore this profound message and allow it to transform your understanding of grace, mercy, and the true path to righteousness.

















Your Verse

Luke 18:9-14 NIV - "Two men went up to the temple to pray..."

Supporting Scriptures

- Psalm 51:17 "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise."
- James 4:6 "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."







Devotional: Humility: The Key to God's Favor

Luke 18:9–14 introduces the parable by setting the scene with two very different men going to the temple to pray. The Pharisee, confident in his own righteousness, boasts about his moral achievements. In contrast, the Tax Collector stands afar, not daring to look up to heaven, aware of his sins and deeply repentant.

This parable challenges us to ask: Where do I place my trust? In my own goodness, or in God's mercy? The Pharisee represents religious pride — he trusts in his accomplishments and judges others harshly. The Tax Collector exemplifies humility, recognizing his need for God's grace and mercy.

Identifying with the Tax Collector invites us to lay down pride and approach God with honesty and humility. It reminds us that God's acceptance isn't about outward status or self-justification, but about a heart that acknowledges its need for Him.







Reflect and Apply

1.	How do I relate to the Pharisee or the Tax Collector in this parable?
2.	In what ways might pride affect my relationship with God or others?
3.	What does humility before God look like in my daily life?







Journaling Prompts

	Write about a time when you felt self-righteous and how it affected your prayers.
2.	Describe what it means for you to have a 'broken and contrite heart.'
3.	List behaviors or attitudes you need to surrender to God in humility.







Prayer for Today

Dear Lord, I come before You acknowledging my need for Your mercy. Teach me to let go of pride and to approach You with a humble heart. Help me to see others as You see them and to rely not on my own righteousness, but on Your grace. May my prayers always be sincere and my heart fully open to You. *In Jesus' name, Amen.*

















Your Verse

Luke 18:11 NIV - "God, I thank you that I am not like other people..."

Supporting Scriptures

- Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
- Proverbs 16:18 "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall."







Devotional: Beware the Trap of Self-Righteousness

The Pharisee's prayer in the parable shows the danger of self-righteousness: a heart that judges, excludes, and feels superior. His words highlight a critical spiritual pitfall — trusting in one's own virtues instead of in God's grace.

Self-righteousness blinds us to our need for forgiveness. It can create walls between us and God, as well as between us and others. The Pharisee's attitude is not only about boasting, but also about dismissing the struggles and brokenness of others.

Paul reminds us in **Romans 3:23** that all have sinned. No one is righteous by their own merit, and God's grace is for everyone. Recognizing this truth helps us overcome pride and dependence on self and instead embrace humility and compassion.

Let us examine our hearts carefully to identify any areas where selfrighteousness leads us away from God's love and forgiveness. Asking God to reveal and uproot pride will help foster a spirit that pleases Him.







Reflect and Apply

In what ways do I compare myself to others to feel spiritually superior?
How can pride prevent me from receiving God's grace fully?
What steps can I take to cultivate compassion over judgment?







Journaling Prompts

1.	Reflect on a time when you judged someone unfairly and how God might want to change that attitude.
2.	Write about how acknowledging your own flaws has impacted your faith journey.
3.	List ways you can practice humility in your interactions this week.







Prayer for Today

Father, forgive me when I fall into the trap of self-righteousness. Help me recognize my need for Your mercy each day. Teach me to extend grace to others and to walk humbly before You. May my heart be softened and my spirit open to Your transforming love. *In Jesus' name, Amen.*









Day 3: W Embracing God's Mercy









Day 3: WE Embracing God's Mercy

Your Verse

Luke 18:14 NIV – "For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

Supporting Scriptures

- Matthew 11:28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."
- Ephesians 2:8 "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God."







Day 3: WE Embracing God's Mercy

Devotional: Resting in God's Grace Through Humility

Jesus concludes the parable with a powerful reminder: exaltation comes to those who are humble. This is the heart of the Gospel — grace is not earned by works but freely given to those who acknowledge their need for it.

When we embrace humility, we open ourselves to receiving God's mercy and rest. Like the Tax Collector, we can come to God with contrite hearts, finding peace and transformation through His grace. This is not a one-time experience but a daily posture of dependence on God.

Matthew 11:28 invites all who are burdened to find rest in Jesus. Our humility is not weakness; it is strength to admit we cannot save ourselves. God responds to that humility by lifting us up, restoring us, and filling us with His peace.

As you close this study, ask God to help you live in constant humility, trusting fully in His grace and love.







Day 3: Sp Embracing God's Mercy

Reflect and Apply

1.	How can I daily embrace humility as a way of life?
2.	What does it mean to be exalted by God in His timing and way?
3.	How can resting in God's grace change my approach to challenges?







Day 3: WE Embracing God's Mercy

Journaling Prompts

1.	Write a prayer committing to trust God's grace over your own efforts.
2.	Reflect on ways you have experienced God lifting you up.
	Describe how humility can transform your relationship with God and others.







Day 3: WE Embracing God's Mercy

Prayer for Today

Lord Jesus, thank You for Your invitation to come as we are and find rest in You. Help me embrace humility, recognizing my need for Your grace daily. May my heart always turn toward You, trusting that You will lift me up according to Your perfect timing. Teach me to live in the freedom of Your mercy and to share that mercy with others. *In Your holy name, Amen.* 🎇 🙏





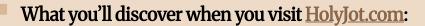




Where God's Word Meets Your Daily Life

A Personal Invitation from HolyJot

We pray this Bible Study has blessed you and drawn you closer to the heart of God. If you enjoyed this study, we'd love for you to join our growing HolyJot community online.



- 100k+ Bible Study Plans on every topic of life
- Access studies anytime on your phone, tablet, or computer
- Studies for individuals, families, small groups, and churches
- Secure online journaling or keep using print for privacy
- A place to grow your faith alongside believers worldwide

Bonus for You:

Download exclusive study bundles and resources when you create a <u>free HolyJot account</u>. No spam. No gimmicks. Just God's Word.

Visit Now:

- * www.HolyJot.com
- Scan this QR code to start your next Bible Study today:

We'd love to hear your story. Email us at info@holyjot.com.





Connect with us at:
Facebook • Instagram • YouTube • TikTok

You are welcome to share this PDF with others. ase keep it intact so the full study and credits remain.

© 2025 HolyJot LLC. All Rights Reserved.