

**THE PARABLES OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST**  
**THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN**  
(LUKE 18: 9-14)

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Major Point of the Parable: “All who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted.”

Other Lessons:

Five mistakes the Pharisee made:

1. The Pharisee forgot about life’s humbling factors

- Unexpected circumstances and things over which we have no control
- Aging
- God
- Death
  
- We must not ever take where we are for granted if we are up, or as a life sentence if we are down.
- What are we doing to prepare ourselves for life’s inevitable changes?
  - Mentally
  - Physically
  - Spiritually
  - Emotionally
  - Financially

2. The Pharisee reminds us that **right actions** can emerge from **wrong motives** and attitudes.

- We must always ask God for a discerning spirit regarding right attitudes and motives **in ourselves as well as others.**
- Abraham Lincoln once said, “You may fool all of the people some of the time, you can even fool some of the all of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time.”
- Revised quote, “You may fool all of the people some of the time, you can even fool some of the all of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time.” **However, we cannot fool God at any time.**
- Appropriate prayer, “Dear God help me to be true to you whom I cannot fool at any time. Lord Jesus, help me to be true to myself whom I can fool some of the time. Holy Spirit, help me never be untrue to those whom I can fool all of the time.”
- Two of David’s prayers that every Christian should pray every day:  
**Psalm 51: 10 and Psalm 139: 23-24**

3. The Pharisee took too much Vitamin I. His prayer was thirty-three words (NRSV) but he said I four times. Too much Vitamin I indicates:
  - An overabundance of insecurity
  - A lack of true thanksgiving no matter what words come from our mouths
  - Pride that can go before a fall
  - A lack of appreciation for contributions of others. (Self-made person is a myth.)
  - Lack of appreciation of others leads to a limited vocabulary—very little or no “we”, “our”, “us”, or “Thank you”
  - A skewed perception of life and the kingdom, “It ain’t all about us.”
  - Failure to give God glory
  
4. The Pharisee fell into the comparison trap.
  - Comparing ourselves to others can make us think too much of ourselves if we have much or too little of ourselves if we have little.
  - Comparing ourselves to others often leads to jealousy and division in families, relationships, friendships, churches, social groups, institutions and even great movements.
  - Comparing ourselves to others interferes with our appreciation of the many blessings from God we are privileged to enjoy.
  - Comparing ourselves to others inclines us to forget that there is higher standard we should be reaching for, growing toward and measuring ourselves by.
  
5. The Pharisee thought that the relationship with God was based upon merit system rather than God’s grace and mercy.
  - Good works and righteous living should reflect our love for God and not desiring to hurt the God we love.
  - Good works and righteousness should reflect change God has made in our lives.
  - Good works and righteousness should reflect wisdom that living by God’s standards lead to a better quality of life than sin.
  - Good works and righteousness will never be good enough to merit God’s favor. We are always in need of God’s grace and mercy. The Pharisee missed this point and the publican got it.

#### **Conclusion: Word of caution to Publicans**

- Once we have received forgiveness of God, forgive ourselves.
- Once we have received forgiveness of God, do not allow Pharisees to break our spirit and take our joy by making us feel guilty or ashamed about our past.
- Once we have received forgiveness of God, do not turn back to the devil.
- Once we have received forgiveness of God, live fully in it and press for all the promises of God.

