

**Luke 18:9-14 (ESV)**

**He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”**

Do you ever compare yourself to others? Do you ever compare your possessions to those of others? Do you ever wish that you could have something that a friend or a family member has, such as a new truck, bigger home, or better job? In our spiritual lives, we tend to do the same thing. We may not want to sin like someone else, but we would say that our sin isn't quite as bad as the sin we see in someone else's life. We as humans tend to rank sin by severity. In our humanness we look at sin, such as stealing or lying, and say that is not as bad as murder. That's what is happening in this passage. There is a Pharisee, a religious leader, at the temple who is comparing himself and his sin to a tax collector. The Pharisee even goes so far as to say, "I thank you that I am not like other men." That is not how God sees sin at all. Romans 6:23 tells us, "The wages of sin is death." All sin is worthy of death.

The two men in this passage respond differently. The tax collector repents and humbly asks God to forgive him, and the Pharisee reads off a list of reasons that he should be forgiven. Jesus says that only one went away justified. God cares about the heart. He wants us to be remorseful for our sin and repent, rather than coming up with excuses for why we think we are good enough or have done enough. We are not ever good enough and cannot do enough to earn His forgiveness. He wants us to turn our hearts back to Him.

**FAMILY TABLE TALK QUESTIONS**

1. What are some ways that we compare ourselves to others? How does social media create avenues for comparison?
2. What does this passage mean when it says the tax collector went down from the temple justified while the Pharisee did not?
3. Do we as humans tend to rank our sins in order of severity? What does scripture tell us about all sin?

**PRAYER FOCUS**

- Pray that God will reveal to you the sin in your own life.
- Repent and pray that God will forgive you of that sin in your life.
- Thank God that He allowed His Son to suffer and die on your behalf so that your sin could be forgiven.