

# A Proud Man Prays

## Luke 18:9-14

Jesus tells the story about two men who came to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, a church leader. The other man was a publican. That means he was a tax collector.

When the Pharisee strutted up to pray he held his head high in the air. Proudly he looked toward heaven saying, “Dear Lord, I’m so glad that I’m not as bad as other people. They are cheaters, some have many women, and some are tax collectors who actually steal. I fast twice a week. I always give some of my money to the church. Thank you for helping me to be better than other men.”

While the Pharisee prayed, the publican was also talking to God. His hands were folded on his chest. He knew he was a sinner and wanted God to forgive him. Praying, he asked, “God, be merciful to me. I am a great sinner. Please forgive me.” His prayer was very short but he had humbly asked God for something he wanted, a clean heart.

Stop and think for a moment. Which man sounded really sorry for sinning? Did one of the men brag as if he was better than others? Which man stood with bowed head and folded hands?

God heard only one of these prayers. You know now which one it was. He heard the prayer of the tax collector. He knew he was a sinner. The Pharisee prayed as if he was perfect. Not once did he mention any of his sins. He thought he was too important to have to admit to his own wickedness. After all, he was a church leader! But his proud praying was ignored by God.

### Bible Verse to Learn

I tell you this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted (Luke 18:14).