



# Divine Access Through Humility

**“And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others” (Luke 18:9).**

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The people who get the best from God are those who are prepared to lay aside their pride and humble themselves before the Almighty God. Praising the Almighty God, Mary proclaimed in Luke 1:50-53) “And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. 51 He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. 52 He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. 53 He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away”. Jesus picked up on this theme through His teachings.

“And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. 13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. 14 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 18:9-14).

- 1) The focus of Christ's teaching in this parable are the people who trust in themselves that they are righteous and despise others. Such people often manifest a 'holier than thou' attitude even when their lives and actions are not pleasing to God (Isaiah 65:5). Proverbs 30:12 describes them as “a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness”. Such people never see anything wrong with themselves, even when there are abundant evidences of bondage.
- 2) Jesus illustrated this with the manner in which two people prayed - one a Pharisee and the

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other a publican. The Pharisee looked outwardly and prayed by comparing his life and works with those of sinners with a view to praise himself. He certainly felt good about himself, but such tendencies often tend to ignore personal shortcomings and flaws that needs to be cleansed by the blood of Jesus before the person can have access to God.

- 3) The publican on the other hand, probably not feeling worthy, looked inwards into his life and heart and pleaded for God's mercy and forgiveness.
- 4) It is the results, not just the act or length of prayers that matter. The publican got answered but the Pharisee got no answer.
- 5) Jesus concluded the teaching by pointing to the importance of humility in answered prayer. Several passages of scriptures have drawn attention to this, including (a) Isaiah 66:1-2 “Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? 2 For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word”; (b) James 4:6 “But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God **resisteth the proud**, but giveth grace unto the humble”; (c) 1 Peter 5:5 “Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God **resisteth the proud**, and giveth grace to the humble”.

Prayer is not designed for showmanship. It takes humility to gain access to the throne of grace for answered prayers (Hebrews 4:16).