

PRAYING EFFECTUAL PRAYERS-PART 4
PARABLE OF THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN
LUKE 18:9-14

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Introduction

The Lord specifically tells us why He gave us this parable of the Pharisee and the Publican in **verse 9**, *"And he spake this parable unto certain which **TRUSTED IN THEMSELVES** that they were **RIGHTEOUS**, and **DESPISED OTHERS.**"*

The things He mentioned in this parable applied to the Pharisees that fit this category which was the vast majority of them!

As we consider the topic of prayer again, we need to remember again, **there are only two kinds of prayers:**

- **EFFECTUAL PRAYERS**
- **INEFFECTUAL PRAYERS**

This parable of the Pharisee and the Publican is an ideal example from our LORD to teach us **how to pray effectual prayers!**

WHY IS IT IDEAL? Because this parable tells us of two men:

- A Pharisee who prayed a prayer that the Lord rejected!
- A Publican who prayed a prayer that the Lord received!

Our key verse in this **EFFECTUAL PRAYER SERIES** has been James 5:16, which says, *"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."*

Effectual praying takes place only when men and women have a relationship with God and are living right in the sight of God. We cannot have sin that is un-confessed and un-repented of in our life and expect our prayers to be **effectual!** God's word says in *Psalm 66:10*, *"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."*

Remember the man that was born blind that Jesus healed in **John 9**. Let's look at where that man schooled the Pharisees in **John 9:31**. This man was right! The Heavenly Father is not going to hear the prayers of the unrighteous!

Now, let's look at these two prayers. Look at **verse 10**. *"Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican."*

I. THE PHARISEE'S PRAYER THAT THE LORD REJECTED!

When we read about the Pharisees, we have to remember what the Lord said about these folks in *Matthew 23:27*—*"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto **whited sepulchres**, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness."*

WHAT IS THE LORD SAYING ABOUT THESE PEOPLE?

Illus: Tombstones were "whited" with lime so they could see them easily and keep from coming into contact with them and defiling themselves. The tombstones stood out and were beautiful being "whited", but inside these graves were still full of dead men's bones.

The Lord is saying that this is the way the Pharisees were. On the outside they looked great, but inside they were corrupt to the core.

Most Pharisees were more concerned with **APPEARING RIGHTEOUS** outwardly, than actually **BEING RIGHTEOUS** inwardly!

WHAT KIND OF PRAYER DID HE PRAY?

A. His Prayer Was Self-Centered Rather Than God Centered!
It did not honor God, it honored this Pharisee.

These Pharisees did everything to be **SEEN** and **HEARD**.

Remember what the Lord said in *Matthew 6:5*, *"And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray **STANDING IN THE SYNAGOGUES** and in the corners of the streets, **THAT THEY MAY BE SEEN OF MEN.**"*

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Notice, the Bible says the reason they STOOD while they prayed was, *"THAT THEY MAY BE SEEN OF MEN."*
By and large, the Pharisees thought a great deal of SELF!
They were FULL OF THEMSELVES!

HE PRAYED TO SHOW OFF BEFORE MEN, not to POUR
OUR HIS HEART BEFORE GOD!

Illus: D.L. Moody said, "I can always tell when a man is a long way from God for he is always talking about himself."

His prayer WAS A SELF-CENTERED PRAYER...

B. His Prayer Was A Scornful Prayer!

You can learn a lot about a person by what comes out of their mouth. The Bible says in *Matthew 12:34*, *"...For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."*

Illus: Why do the vast majority of Hollywood producers make movies filled with cursing and all kinds of ungodly and immoral behavior? They produce them because their hearts are full of evil!

Notice what is pouring from the lips of this Pharisee praying this DISHONORABLE PRAYER.

Nothing but SCORN for others!

He thought of himself as MR. WONDERFUL, but OTHERS were WORTHLESS TRASH! He said he was thankful he was not like OTHER MEN and this PUBLICAN!

Illus: He was employing a trick that many today are still using. That is, he was trying to elevate himself by putting others down.

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He forgot one of the most important teachings of the Bible,
OUR LOVE FOR GOD IS MEASURED BY OUR LOVE
FOR OTHERS.

1 John 3:14 "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."

1 John 4:7-8 7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. 8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

This Pharisee had nothing but scorn for OTHERS and this poor PUBLICAN. He said, in verses 11b-12, *"...God, I thank thee, that I am not AS OTHER MEN ARE, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or EVEN AS THIS PUBLICAN. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess."*

Listen, if we aren't RIGHT WITH OTHERS, we aren't RIGHT WITH GOD! Before we can get our prayers answered, we have to be RIGHT WITH GOD and MAN!

C. His Prayer Was A Deceptive Prayer!

1. His Prayer Contained No Confession Of Sin Or Repentance When It Should Have!

This man should have been praying, *"O God, please forgive me for thinking so highly of myself and scorning those around me."* But there is no repentance in his prayer! Why? Because he thought so highly of himself he could not find anything to repent about. He lived a deceived life!

HOW WAS HE DECEIVED? He was deceived about his condition because he measured himself by others.

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2 Corinthians 10:12 For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

Look at verses 11b-12 again, we read, "...God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or **EVEN AS THIS PUBLICAN**. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess."

Listen, when you want to look good, you can always find someone that is worse than you!

And this Pharisee took a look at others, and proudly said, "...God, I thank thee, that I am not as **OTHER MEN ARE**..."

The fact is, there may have been others who were worse than he was, **BUT HOW DOES THAT HELP HIM?**

*Illus: Suppose you dented the fender on your car. Then you look at someone's else car that has the whole side crushed! It is true, you are better off than that person, but how does that help your car to become better just because someone else's car is in worse shape? **IT DOESN'T!***

It was **DECEPTIVE PRAYER** because it contained **NO Confession or Repentance** When It Should Have!

2. His Prayer Contained No Request!

· He does not pray for others because he does not care about others.

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· He does not pray for lost family members because all he cares about is himself.

· He does not pray for revival because the last thing he wants is for God to do a work in his heart.

He had **NO CONFESSION AND REPENTANCE** and **NO REQUEST** in his prayer.

3. We See It Contained No Praise Of God Or Rejoicing!

· Not one time does he praise the Lord in any way!

· Not one time does he thank the Lord for any tangible blessing!

The only thing he was thankful for was that he was not like **OTHERS** or this poor Publican. **PRIDE** and **ARROGANCE** is written all over this Pharisees' prayer.

D. His Prayer Was A Dangerous Prayer!

1. He Was Self Deceived!

He was blind to his own reality!

He could see the sins of **OTHERS**, but he could not see his **OWN SINS**.

2. He Had Deceived Others!

The Pharisees were viewed as people of God!

The reality was that most of them were not!

3. He Had NOT DECEIVED GOD!

There is a real danger when we are self deceived and have others deceived to think that God doesn't know the truth about us! We can fool ourselves and everyone around us, but God always knows the reality!

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The Pharisee returned from the house of God just as he was, nothing about him changed.

*THE PHARISEE'S PRAYER THAT WAS REJECTED is a good example of praying an INEFFECTUAL PRAYER!
But let's look at-*

II. THE PUBLICAN'S PRAYER THAT WAS RECEIVED!

Notice the contrast between the PHARISEE and the PUBLICAN.

Look at verse 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."*

Notice several things about his prayer.

A. THE POSTURE OF THE PUBLICAN!

He prayed in a standing position also, the same way the Pharisees prayed.

So often people say and do things as they pray simply because they have seen others say or do those things.

Illus: One very popular preacher, who has had a lot of influence on many young preachers, always knelt in prayer before he preached on the platform. Many young preacher boys have followed his example simply because they greatly admired him.

That is OK, but we need to be careful not to concentrate more on the posture of prayer than on the prayer itself!

Our posture usually does not have anything to do with whether or not God will hear our prayers. It is possible...

- To kneel, and not pray

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- To bow our head, and not pray
- To fold our hands, and not pray
- To move our lips, and not pray
- To "pray" for a long time, and not pray
- To "pray" for a short time, and not pray

The Publican chose to stand and pray also. However, God heard his prayer.

B. THE PRAYER OF THE PUBLICAN!

While the Bible takes three verses to tell us about the Pharisee because of his much boasting, it only takes one verse to tell us about the Publican.

Look at verse 13, we read, *"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."*

What a contrast between this Publican and this Pharisee. But notice, the Jesus makes it clear, one prayed an EFFECTUAL PRAYER and the other one prayed and INEFFECTUAL PRAYER! (Vs 14)

While the Pharisee was full of pride and self-deceit, the Publican was full of humility and truth. If we are going to pray effectual prayers, we had better learn some things about praying in humility and according to the truth!