

POOR IN SPIRIT :: : LESSON 3

BEATITUDE

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."— Matthew 5:3

POOR IN SPIRIT

Realizing our need for God in all things.

Episode 3

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector

Luke 18:9–14

MEMORY VERSE ***"For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."***
—Luke 18:14b

KEY POINT Fully rely on God for forgiveness.

LET'S TALK :: : LESSON 3

EARLY ARRIVAL (*before service*)

- ▶ Have some upbeat music playing and welcome children warmly.
- ▶ Teachers should take this time to engage the children in conversation. Ask them about their week, school, and home. Begin to establish relationships.

BEGIN CLASS (*service time*)

- ▶ Introduce yourself and your assistants.
- ▶ Before the discussion questions, PRAY that the Lord will bless your time together.

RELATE *it* :: : ask and discuss the following questions

- 1** Have you ever seen someone put down by someone else? Do you remember why?
- 2** How did the person being put down react to the insult?
- 3** Have you ever put someone down?
- 4** How do you act whenever you win a game or a competition?
- 5** How do you act whenever you receive an A at school or get a really great report card?
- 6** Whenever you do something nice for someone, how many people do you tell about it?
- 7** If someone praises you for something good you've done, do you puff up and add to the story, or are you a little embarrassed about the whole thing? (I don't mean a simple "you did a good job, or congratulations." I mean over the top, praising you and telling everyone how great you are.)

CONNECT//

CONNECT it ::: say

*Today, we are going to learn about two types of people, those who praise themselves and those whom God praises. One is a religious Pharisee and the other, a sinful tax collector. Whom will God praise and whom will He humble? Who do you resemble more? Let's watch *Virtuality* now and find out.*

WATCH it ::: Go to large group to see the **Virtuality DVD, Beatitude Series DVD (volume1, episode 3)**

BIBLE STORY

BIBLE STORY : : : The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector Luke 18:9–14

GAME RULES

- ▶ Divide your class into two teams (boys vs. girls or one half of the room against the other).
- ▶ Have everyone take out their Bibles (NIV preferred) to follow along as you read the Scriptures and so that you can help them find the answers.
- ▶ Assign a captain for each team whose job is to give the team's final answer.
- ▶ Award 10 points to the first team whose captain raises his/her hand and has the correct answer.
- ▶ Award 50 points for each of the bonus questions.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- ▶ Read and study the background information at home.
- ▶ Before you begin reading today's Bible story give children the background information your own words.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION : : : *say it in your own words*

From the beginning of Jesus' ministry, it was clear that He had a very different message than what the "experts" of the Law thought at that time. The Pharisees had lifted themselves up to a very prominent position among the people. The Law had developed into ridiculous traditions set by these leaders. By the time Jesus walked on the scene, the Pharisees had distorted the Scriptures to be something they were not intended to be. Jesus was correcting the misconceptions and teaching the people what God truly expected and wanted from them and for them. The religious leaders did not welcome Jesus' message of truth and love because it exposed their errors and faults. They said Jesus was a rebel because He was teaching against the Law of Moses, but Jesus said, **"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them"** (Matthew 5:17, emphasis mine).

The Pharisees didn't like that very much; they enjoyed their self-proclaimed power and wanted to keep it that way. They joined the crowds following Jesus, not to listen and learn from Him but to find faults and ways to make Him falter. One Sabbath day, Jesus was teaching at the synagogue. **The Pharisees and the teachers of the law were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus . . . (Luke 6:7).** They watched Him closely to see if He would heal a crippled man because, according to them, the Law was against healing on the Sabbath. Jesus, of course, healed the man, and the Pharisees were furious. **Then Jesus said to them, "I ask you, which is it right to do on the Sabbath day: to do good, or to do evil? Is it right to save a life or to destroy one?" (Luke 6:9 ICB)**

BIBLE STORY CONTINUE

But the Pharisees and experts in the law rejected God’s purpose for themselves . . . (Luke 7:30). They were not interested in learning from Jesus, but that didn’t stop Jesus from trying. We are going to read one of Jesus’ parables (a story that has a message), which was directed at them. Would they get it? Let’s go to the Bible and find out.

ROUND 1

READ IT ::: *Round 1*

Open your Bibles and follow along as I read **Luke 18:9–14** out loud.

- 1** For whom is the lesson in this parable?
Answer: Anyone who looks down on others — v. 9
- 2** Who were the two men in the story?
Answer: A Pharisee and a tax collector — v. 10
- 3** Who did the Pharisee say he was better than?
Answer: Robbers, evildoers, adulterers, and tax collectors — v. 11
- 4** What did the Pharisee say makes him better than everyone else?
Answer: He tithes twice a week. — v. 12
- 5** Where did the tax collector look as he prayed?
Answer: Down — v. 13
- 6** What did the tax collector pray for?
Answer: Mercy — v. 13
- 7** What did the tax collector admit he is?
Answer: A sinner — v. 13
- 8** Who did Jesus say will be humbled?
Answer: The Pharisee — v. 14
- 9** Why will the Pharisee be humbled?
Answer: Because he exalts himself — v. 14
- 10** Who did Jesus say will be exalted (or honored)?
Answer: The tax collector — v. 14

BIBLE STORY CONTINUE

11 Why will the tax collector be exalted?
Answer: Because he humbled himself before God — v. 14

50 POINTS

BONUS QUESTION

12 Who was the real sinner in this parable?
Answer: Both men — (Romans 3:23)

CONNECT IT

CONNECT it :: say

The Pharisees enjoyed a prestigious place of honor, and they were too arrogant to hear the truth when spoken right to them. When they prayed, they really honored themselves: "Look at what I do. Look at what I did. Look at how good I am." It was all about them.

MEMORYVERSE

The truth is, the Pharisees had no honor in the eyes of God. They puffed themselves up so much with all their accomplishments that they failed to see the sin in their lives. Their sin of pride was bigger than all the other sins they said they didn't commit. You cannot come to God without first admitting that you are a sinner and then asking God for forgiveness. All the Pharisees saw was the way they perfectly kept the Law and traditions.

On the other hand, the tax collector was aware of his sin and was so undone that he couldn't even ask God for anything except mercy. This man was ready to receive Jesus. This man was ready to

KEYPOINT

Fully rely on God for forgiveness.

As Christians, we should continue to walk humbly before the Lord. When you do something good for somebody, don't show off what you've done; keep it a secret. The Lord knows what you've done, and He's the only one who needs to know. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up (James 4:10). You may get rewards here on earth, but the greatest rewards are those waiting for you in heaven.

BIBLE STORY CONTINUE

Don't be like the Pharisee. The reasons you do something good are far more important than what you do. If you are constantly doing good deeds just so everyone sees how good you are, you are exalting yourself like a Pharisee and have already received your praise from others—that's the only reward you'll get.

MEMORYVERSE

“For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”—Luke 18:14b

Continue to do good and just things. It is perfectly OK to do well and receive awards and recognition. But do it for God because you want to honor Him. Don't forget, it is God who gave you the talents and gifts in the first place. So, you should honor Him by always doing your best, and giving the honor back to God. The way to do that is by humbly thanking Him. And if you find yourself seeking your own honor, then ask Him for forgiveness.

LET'S PRAY ::: say

PRAYER

*Dear Lord,
Lord, we come before You like the tax collector admitting our many sins. We ask for forgiveness and mercy. We thank and honor You for all our gifts and talents, and we pray that we will always honor You with them. We praise Your holy name, Jesus.
Amen.*

REVIEW FOR LESSON 3

BEATITUDE

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."— Matthew 5:3

POOR IN SPIRIT

Realizing our need for God in all things.

Today's lesson

Bible Story | **The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector**

Location | **Luke 18:9–14**

Memory Verse | **"For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."—Luke 18:14b**

Key Point | **Fully rely on God for forgiveness.**

Time fillers

- Ask if anyone would like to "play the teacher" and review today's lesson with the class.
- Play games to help children memorize today's Bible memory verse.

Take HOME

- **VIRTUE Quest** is the take-home sheet designed for children to do with their parents. The sheet contains information about today's lesson. The goal is to partner with parents to continue and to reiterate the lesson. Be sure to hand all parents a sheet as they pick up their children.