

➤ **Read Luke 18:1–34.**

➤ **Reread Luke 18:1–8. The Parable of the Persistent Widow.**

1. What is the point of the parable Jesus is about to tell his disciples? (v. 1)

2. Describe the judge, the widow, and their relationship to each other. (vv. 2–5)

A widow seeking justice in ancient Palestinian society had three strikes against her: she was a woman, she had no husband to represent her, and she had no resources to offer a bribe in the hope that her case might be heard.¹

In contrast, describe the relationship between God and “his chosen ones” (v. 7).
Ps. 103:13–14

Ps. 145:18–19

Is. 30:18

Mt. 10:29–31

3. In his parables, Jesus uses common, everyday images to point out greater spiritual truths. What is the greater truth about God that Jesus wants his disciples to understand through this courtroom illustration? (vv. 6–8a)

4. Read Luke 17:20–37, which immediately precedes this parable. Considering Jesus’ discourse on the timing of his second coming, why do you think it is important to “always pray and not give up” (v. 1)?

5. How can the promise in verse 8 – that justice will come, “and quickly” – be a comfort and an encouragement now to the faithful (even when it doesn’t seem to come according to our timetable)? (2 Pet. 3:3–9)

“Luke was deeply interested in the theme of prayer. This was a key feature of Jesus’ own life..., and it was the intention of the evangelist, following his Lord’s peerless example and teaching, to stress the central role prayer should play in the life of every Christian disciple. Prayer, in Luke’s view, was clearly the divine solution to discouragement and giving up...”²

➤ **Read Luke 18:9–14. The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector.**

6. Contrast the prayers of the prominent Pharisee and the despised tax collector – considering their posture, their words, and the attitudes behind them. (vv. 10–13)
7. Why is the tax collector “justified before God” (v. 14a) while the Pharisee is not? (v. 14b; Ps. 51:16–17; Jas. 4:6;  Gal. 2:15–16)
8. What does it mean to be exalted by God (v. 14b)? (Eph. 2:4–7)
9. Consider these two parables in light of your own prayer habits. Do you become discouraged or tempted to give up? Do you at times find yourself praying like the Pharisee? If so, confess these things to the Lord, remembering the promise that “all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted” (v. 14b).

➤ **Read Luke 18:15–17.**

10. Take a minute to imagine the scene in these verses. Here Luke recounts Jesus’ welcome of little children: “...do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these” (v. 16), that is, those who are childlike in their faith. What do you think it means to have a childlike (not childish) faith? (Consider some of the qualities of babies and children that Jesus may have had in mind.)

11. Why is it essential to have childlike faith?

“...[Jesus] sees to the heart of what it means to receive God’s kingdom; it is like drinking in one’s mother’s milk, like learning to see – and to smile! – by looking at one’s mother’s eyes and face.”³

► **Read Luke 18:18–30. (You may wish to read parallel passages in Matthew 19:16–30 and Mark 10:17–31.)**

12. The rich young ruler is earnest in his desire to learn from Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life (v. 18). How does the ruler respond when Jesus recites some of the commandments of the Law (v. 20)?

Addressing Jesus as “*good* teacher” (v. 18) indicates that the rich young ruler holds Jesus in high regard, but not that he has any notion of Jesus’ divinity. In his response, “no one is good – except God alone” (v. 19), Jesus is not denying his own divinity, but uses this opportunity “to teach the young man that only if he regards [Jesus] as the Son of God, who is one with God, may he call Him ‘good.’”⁴

13. Jesus reveals “the fact that the ruler hasn’t kept all the commandments after all. In fact, he has broken the very first one: he has made money his god (Deut. 5:7).”⁵

a. How does Jesus reveal this to him? (v. 22)

b. Why does the ruler walk away sad? (vv. 23–25; Jonah 2:8; Mk. 10:21–24; Eph. 5:5)

You shall have no other gods before me.
Deut. 5:7

c. What does he fail to understand?
Ephesians 2:8–9

Matthew 16:24–27

14. Do you really believe that salvation through works is impossible (vv. 26–27)?

How does your life reflect your answer?

15. Reread verses 28–30. “[Jesus] does not call upon everyone to sell his belongings or to leave his family, but He calls upon all to surrender to Him unconditionally the first place in their hearts and lives.”⁶ Take an honest look to see if you can identify things in your own heart and life that you might hold as more important than Jesus. Spend some time talking with him about that.

► **Read Luke 18:31–34.**

16. This week’s passage ends on the road to Jerusalem as Jesus announces for the fourth time what will happen to him there. What does he tell his disciples? (vv. 31–33)

17. To the disciples, Jesus’ prophecy is “incomprehensible,” but Jesus “was fully aware of what was awaiting Him and voluntarily paid the full price for the sake of the redemption of man.”⁷ Review each section of this lesson and write out the promises that are ours because of what Jesus was willing to endure for our sake.

vv. 7–8

v. 14

v.16

vv. 26–27

vv. 29–30

Which of these promises is most meaningful to you today? Why?

*📖 For further study

¹ Warren W. Wiersbe. *An Exposition on the New Testament Comprising the Entire “BE” Series: The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Wheaton: SP Publications, Inc., 1989), 247-248.

² Philip W. Comfort, Gen. Ed. *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary*. Vol. 12 (The Gospel of Luke; Acts) (Carol Stream: Tyndale, 2006), 242-243.

³ N. T. Wright. *Luke for Everyone* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 216.

⁴ Norvel Geldenhuys. *The Gospel of Luke: The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951), 458.

⁵ Michael Card. *Luke: The Gospel of Amazement* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 207.

⁶ Geldenhuys, 461.

⁷ Geldenhuys, 464.