

Discussion Guide: September 6, 2026

Message: “Direct Line”, How should I Pray?

Angel Roman

Luke 18:9-14 ESV

⁹ He also told this parable to **some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt:**

¹⁰ **“Two men** went up into the temple to pray, one a **Pharisee** and the other a **tax collector**.

¹¹ **The Pharisee**, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.

¹² I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’

¹³ But **the tax collector**, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat 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 everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Takeaway: God will exalt those who pray with humility and reverence.

Message Outline:

The Pharisee:

- **Trusted in himself** -(Standing by himself)
- **Trusted in his own righteousness** -(I am not like other men)
- **Treated others with contempt** -(extortioner, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector)

The Tax Collector:

- Standing far off (standing at a distance can communicate **physical separation that carries a deeper spiritual, emotional, or relational meaning**. Depending on the context, it signifies humility, fear, alienation, or a perceived absence of God).
- Would not even lift up his eyes to heaven (this demonstrates **deep personal shame, unworthiness, and humility before God**).
- He beat his breast (a **physical gesture of profound sorrow, deep mourning, sincere repentance, or intense guilt**)
- **Said: “God be merciful to me a sinner” (Repentance of his condition).**

Discussion Questions

1. Reflecting has there been a time where you now know that you prayed like a Pharisee? Please share something about that experience.
2. Do you remember a time when you truly felt like the tax collector during your prayer time? Share what that was like.
3. Thinking about what God has spoken to us through this passage, what can you do to keep yourself from falling into a Pharisees-like mindset, or behavior?

4. How does Luke 18:14 speak to you personally?
5. What are practical things you can do to maintain humility as a believer?

Time of Prayer:

Heavenly Father, Creator of the world and everything in it, help me always come to You with a humble heart, acknowledging who You are and my deep need for You. Thank you for the sacrifice of Jesus, without Him I would not have the blessing of coming before You at any time and in every moment of my life. Please allow Your Holy Spirit to always work in my heart so that I may maintain a humble and reverent attitude in prayer. I ask for Your forgiveness as I am in need of your power to overcome sin each day, in Jesus name.