

Once More, With Feeling

Scripture Reading — Luke 18:9-14

*The tax collector stood at a distance ... and said, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner."
Luke 18:13 —*

For the next four days we will be reflecting on the vertical habit of saying "I'm sorry" to God. We all know how important it is to apologize to people when we have offended them. If that's true about the relationships we have with other human beings, how much more is it true about our relationship with God? We ought to make a habit of confessing our sins to God. But it's something we can easily neglect. One reason for our forgetfulness may have to do with the standards we use to distinguish right from wrong. The Pharisee in today's Scripture reading felt mighty pleased when he compared himself to a scoundrel like the tax collector. It's the same kind of feeling we have when we see how people behave these days in many of the programs described as "reality TV." Programs like these will do wonders for your self-esteem. But what if we compared ourselves to God's righteousness instead of other people's unrighteousness? As the parable makes clear, there's a big difference between using the badness of others to define our own goodness, and using the goodness of God to define our own badness. Perhaps the frequency of our saying "I'm sorry" to God depends on what we spend more time with: the holiness of God or the sins of other people.

Prayer

Thank you, Lord, for showing your amazing love to us sinful people. Thank you for immersing us in your grace and forgiving us. Help us faithfully to say we're sorry. Amen.

Devotion topics: [Christianity](#), [Discipleship](#), [Disciplines](#)

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