

## To Be Justified

### Scripture Reading — Luke 18:9-14

*This man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted. — Luke 18:14*

Jesus directed this parable to self-righteous people who looked down on others. This was a problem that needed to be exposed in the community of God's people. So he told a story about two men who went to the temple to pray.

One of these men was a Phari-see, one of the religious elite. He was a brilliant student of the law of God, and he was probably a leader and teacher among the Jewish people. He cherished the traditions and history of being a covenant child of God. He kept his nose clean by following the law precisely—and he expected all others to do the same. He thanked God that he was not like other people who did not keep the law faithfully.

The other man was a tax collector. In those days tax collectors were despised and viewed as traitors, because they gathered taxes for the Romans, and they often charged high rates so that they could keep the extra -money. But this man was repentant and asked, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

Did you notice the Pharisee didn't ask for forgiveness? He figured he was already justified. That's the point of the parable. Trying to justify our position with God without his mercy is futile. We can't work our way into God's good graces. Thankfully God's mercy is available to us today through Jesus, who paid the price for our sin.

### Prayer

*"God, have mercy on me, a sinner." I can do nothing to justify myself, but I know that you forgive my sins for Jesus' sake. Thank you, in his name. Amen.*

**Devotion topics:** [Mercy](#), [Christianity](#), [Sin](#), [Discipleship](#), [Grace](#), [Repentance](#)

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