

The Gospel of Luke

Lesson 31

In the previous lesson from Luke 17:5-7, we considered the importance of forgiving others as God has forgiven us. Realizing how challenging it is to forgive, especially when deep wounding, loss or suffering has occurred, the disciples ask Jesus for greater faith to be able to forgive. Jesus answers that even small faith in their great God will enable them to forgive those who offend them. Since God has forgiven the overwhelming debt that we owe Him, we too are to forgive one another.

In the account of the ten lepers healed by Jesus, we considered the importance of gratitude for what God does for us. Only one leper returned to thank Jesus, who asked about the other nine neglecting to express any appreciation.

Finally, Jesus exhorts His followers to be ready for His return, which will occur at a time that is least expected. Before He returns in triumph and glory, Jesus says that He must suffer many things and be rejected by men (Luke 17:25).

As you begin your study of Luke 18, take a moment to thank God for His blessings. Then ask Him to grant you insight and understanding of His Word, that you might grow in mercy and grace toward others.

The Parable of the Persistent Widow

1. Read Luke 18:1-8.
 - A. From verse one, to whom is Jesus speaking?

 - B. In telling parables, Jesus regularly incorporates literary devices like comparisons and contrasts to make His point. From verse one, what is the point of this story?

 - C. Name all the participants (heavenly and earthly) in the parable and describe the character or attitude of each.

 - D. What is the widow's grievance? What has been denied her?

 - E. Consider the unjust judge.
 - (1) How does he initially respond?

(2) What changes his mind?

(3) Then what does he decide to do?

(4) Why?

- F. When Jesus says, "Listen to what the unjust judge says," what point is He making?
- G. From verses seven and eight, what does Jesus say to reinforce His point? What does God promise to those who cry out repeatedly to Him?
- H. In verse eight, Jesus asks this question "...when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" Why do you think He asks this question?

- I. How does Jesus employ the literary devices of comparison and contrast to enlighten, instruct and encourage His disciples to pray without giving up?

- J. From experience or observation, share an example of persistent prayer that would encourage others.

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector

- 2. Read Luke 18:9-14.
 - A. From verse nine, to whom is Jesus speaking?

 - B. What do you think it means to be “confident in one’s own righteousness and to look down on everyone else?”

 - C. Read Proverbs 8:12-13, 11:2; 16:5 and 18; 18:12 and Romans 12:16. What attitudes are displeasing to God and harmful for us? Why?

- D. List all the participants (heavenly and earthly) in the story and describe their character and attitude.
- E. Compare the prayers of the Pharisee with those of the tax collector. What stands out the most to you about them?
- F. With which character do you most identify—the Pharisee or the tax collector? Why?
- G. Who went home justified and who went home unjustified? Why?

- E. Is it childish or mature in God's sight to have childlike faith in Him?
- F. Read Psalm 22:5 and 91:14-16, Isaiah 28:16 and Romans 10:11. What promises of God are found in these verses? How might childlike faith exhibit itself in one's prayer life and walk with God?
- G. From your knowledge of the Bible, observation or experience, give an illustration of childlike confidence in God.