

Parables of the Persistent Widow and the Publican's Prayer

Luke 18:1-14



New Testament 5
Part 1: Jesus' Ministry

SUNDAY MORNING

New Testament 5 [Class Attendance Sheet](#) provided in activity sheets (NOTE: The document is interactive, allowing the teacher to type in the Class, Teacher, and the children's names.)

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Luke 18:1-14

MEMORY WORK:

YOUNGER CHILDREN: "[M]en always ought to pray and not lose heart" (Luke 18:1b).

OLDER CHILDREN: "Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart" (Luke 18:1).

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS (SEE END OF LESSON FOR WORDS):

A [song book](#) and [audio recordings](#) of many of the curriculum songs are available on the curriculum Web site.

- ["Bow Your Head"](#)
- ["God Is Listening"](#)
- ["I Can Talk to God"](#)
- ["I Like to Pray to God"](#)
- ["Jesus Taught Us How to Pray"](#)
- ["When We Pray for Each Other"](#)
- ["Make Me A Servant"](#)
- ["Humble Yourselves in the Sight of the Lord"](#)

LESSON VISUALS AND TEACHING AIDS (NOTE ANY DISCLAIMERS):

- See [AP's Pinterest page](#) for ideas on bulletin boards, visuals, crafts, etc. [DISCLAIMER: Pins may sometimes need to be adjusted to be Scriptural.]
- [Jesus' Ministry & Last Week Bible fact cards](#) (provided under "N.T. 5 Bible Facts" on curriculum Web site)
- "Summary of the Bible" from "[Kids Prep](#)" CD by Jeff Miller
- Betty Lukens' felt pieces
- Later Ministry of Jesus A Beka picture set (DISCLAIMERS: use the cards, *not the lesson book*; skip card CD 4.3)



PERSONAL APPLICATION:

God hears His faithful, humble children when they pray to Him every day—even though we can't see Him. We shouldn't give up praying.

LESSON STARTS HERE

INTRODUCTION:

We've been learning about Jesus and what He did while He was on Earth, and especially, what He taught. What are some of the parables He told that we have learned about in other lessons? [Sower; Good Shepherd; Lost Sheep] Today we're going to learn two of Jesus' parables about prayer, that tell us how important it is to pray and to have a humble attitude.

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Near the end of Jesus' ministry, as He was slowly traveling to Jerusalem for His own crucifixion, Jesus and His followers traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee (Luke 17:11), headed towards the Jordan River and Perea. As they traveled, Jesus taught His followers. One day, Jesus told two parables about prayer.



NOTE: In *The Fourfold Gospel*, Bible scholar J.W. McGarvey discusses the events of Jesus chronologically. According to McGarvey, Jesus traveled eastward across the Jordan and into Perea in the last several days of His life. He taught in Perea as He moved southward through the territory, and then crossed the Jordan westward to go to Jericho and on to Jerusalem.

2. The first parable was about a widow who was very **persistent** with her requests to a **judge**. Someone had wronged her, and since she had no husband, nobody could stand up for her against the person. So the widow went to the judge, herself, asking for him to give her justice. Sadly, the judge didn't care about anybody else, and he didn't care about God, either.



Persistent: to continue trying to do something, no matter how difficult it might be and no matter who or what is in the way

Judge: a person who helped settle disputes between individuals (an arbiter), perhaps comparable to the role of a modern judge in a civil trial (i.e., without a jury or prosecution). See 1 Kings 3:9,16-28.

3. Over and over, the widow came to the unjust judge to beg him to give her justice, and the judge would send her away without helping her. Finally, the judge decided that he would never be rid of her if he didn't go ahead and help her. So he decided to make sure she received justice against the one who wronged her.
4. As was always the case with Jesus' parables, there was a message beneath the story that Jesus wanted His followers to understand. In this case, Jesus explained that God is also a Judge, but a Just Judge—He's fair. He explained that if, through persistence, someone can even get an unjust judge to do right—a judge who cares nothing about people or obeying God—how much more will God help His faithful followers who persistently go to Him in prayer when they want help? Read Romans 12:12.

5. As He ended the parable, Jesus said, “Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the Earth?” “Faith” here means to trust or believe God. By asking that question, Jesus is saying that many times when people pray, they don’t really believe that God will hear and answer them. Their prayer is not from faith, and since they don’t really believe God will hear them, they won’t have the attitude of the widow, who so fervently believed she could get justice that she persistently begged the judge for help. When we pray to God, we should believe that He hears us and will answer us according to His will for our good. Read 1 John 5:14-15 and James 5:15-16 and discuss what they mean. We should not doubt that God will hear us and answer us (read James 1:5-8). We should not lose heart. Read Psalm 27:13-14.
6. Jesus was an excellent Teacher. He was never afraid to boldly tell people what they needed to hear to be right with God, and He always taught people in the best, most effective and loving way. Some of the people that were following Jesus as He traveled to Jerusalem were Pharisees (Luke 17:20ff.). The next parable Jesus told would have especially been aimed at the Pharisees.

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—BEFORE CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

- Click here for complete [Activity Book](#) and [Answer Key](#)

Ages 2-5:

- “[Persistent Widow Coloring Sheet](#)” (provided in activity sheets)
- Bring a small cardboard box and several craft sticks for each child. Glue pieces of cardboard to the craft sticks to make each stick look like a gavel. Ask the children who or what they should pray for persistently, and write their answers on the craft sticks with colorful markers. On the box, write “I can judge justly!” Let the children decorate the boxes and use their “gavels” on the boxes. Let the kids put their craft sticks in the pail.
- Bring a **small** balloon for each child. Take turns letting each child make a prideful statement (bragging about himself). After each statement, let them blow once into the balloon. After several turns, they will have bragged so much that the balloon will pop (or if popping the balloons will be too loud, talk about what would happen to the balloons if they kept bragging). Read 1 Timothy 3:6 and 1 Corinthians 13:4, and talk about how pride is a bunch of hot air that puffs us up and causes us to hurt ourselves and others.

1st-2nd Graders:

- Bring a small cardboard box and several craft sticks for each child. Glue pieces of cardboard to the craft sticks to make each stick look like a gavel. Ask the children who or what they should pray for persistently, and write their answers on the craft sticks with colorful markers. On the box, write “I can judge justly!” Let the children decorate the boxes and use their “gavels” on the boxes. Let the kids put their craft sticks in the pail.
- Bring a **small** balloon for each child. Take turns letting each child make a prideful statement (bragging about himself). After each statement, let them blow once into the balloon. After several turns, they will have bragged so much that the balloon will pop (or if popping the balloons will be too loud, talk about what would happen to the balloons if they kept bragging). Read 1 Timothy 3:6 and 1 Corinthians 13:4, and talk about how pride is a bunch of hot air that puffs us up and causes us to hurt ourselves and others.
- Write out the following verses on note cards. Divide the kids into two teams. Call out one of the verses, and let the kids discuss with each other what they can learn about pride from the passage.

Let a spokesman for each team tell the teacher what their team thinks you can learn from the passage. If the team is correct, they get a point. Call out the next verse, and so on. Passages to look up: Proverbs 21:4,24; Psalm 10:4; 18:27; 101:5b; Proverbs 6:16-17a

- [“Fill in the Blank Activity”](#) (provided in activity sheets)
- [“Persistent Widow Word Search”](#) (provided in activity sheets)
- [“Word Scramble Activity”](#) (provided in activity sheets)

3rd-4th Graders:

- Bring a **small** balloon for each child. Take turns letting each child make a prideful statement (bragging about himself). After each statement, let them blow once into the balloon. After several turns, they will have bragged so much that the balloon will pop (or if popping the balloons will be too loud, talk about what would happen to the balloons if they kept bragging). Read 1 Timothy 3:6 and 1 Corinthians 13:4, and talk about how pride is a bunch of hot air that puffs us up and causes us to hurt ourselves and others.
- Divide the kids into two teams. Call out one of the following verses, and let the kids look it up in the Bible and then discuss with each other what they can learn about pride from the passage. Let a spokesman for each team tell the teacher what their team thinks you can learn from the passage. If the team is correct, they get a point. Call out the next verse, and so on. Passages to look up: Proverbs 21:4,24; Psalm 10:4; 18:27; 101:5b; Proverbs 6:16-17a
- [“Fill in the Blank Activity”](#) (provided in activity sheets)
- [“Persistent Widow Word Search”](#) (provided in activity sheets)
- [“Word Scramble Activity”](#) (provided in activity sheets)
- Have the children read the following:
 - Luke 18
 - *Bethany Learns About Prayer*, by Vicky Billings (out of print, but available on-line used)
 - *Jesus Teaches His Disciples*, Contemporary Bible Series, Scandinavia Publishing House (DISCLAIMERS: skip pp. 26-27, 40-41; change “hell” to “Hades” on p. 50)
 - “Talking to God” article from the [August, 2013](#) issue of *Discovery Magazine*
 - *The Parable of the Woman and the Judge*, by Claire Miller, Arch Books (DISCLAIMER: skip note to parents)
 - *The Proud Prayer*, by Derek Matthews, Christian Focus Publications, Look ‘n See series (DISCLAIMER: on the last page, change “If we ask Him” to “When we’re Christians”)

SONGS:

“BOW YOUR HEAD” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Unknown*

(Tune: “Taps”)

Bow your head, close your eyes,
Send a prayer, send a prayer to the skies.
God is list’ning above.
God is love.

“GOD IS LISTENING” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Unknown*
(Tune: “Frère Jacques”)

God is listening, God is listening, (put your hand to your ear)
While we pray, while we pray, (put hands together as if to pray)
Bow your head so lightly, (bow your head)
Close your eyes so tightly, (close your eyes)
Let us pray, let us pray.

“I CAN TALK TO GOD” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Unknown*
(Tune: “The Farmer In the Dell”)

I can talk to God (point to self, to mouth, then upward), (REPEAT)
God listens when I pray to Him,
I can talk to God.

“I LIKE TO PRAY TO GOD” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Lora Laycook
(Tune: “The Farmer In the Dell”)

I like to pray to God, I like to pray to God,
With all the other boys and girls, I like to pray to God.
He’ll hear me when I pray, He’ll hear me when I pray;
With all the other boys and girls, He’ll hear me when I pray.
I’ll pray in Jesus’ name, I’ll pray in Jesus’ name.
With all the other boys and girls, I’ll pray in Jesus’ name.

“JESUS TAUGHT US HOW TO PRAY” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Unknown*
(Tune: “The Farmer In the Dell”)

Jesus taught us how to pray, to God our Father everyday;
Morning, noon, and night-time, too, we can pray and so can you.
Yes, we can pray! Yes, we can pray!
Yes, we can pray; to God through-out the day.

“WHEN WE PRAY FOR EACH OTHER” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Unknown*

(Tune: “The More We Get Together”)

When we pray for each other,
Each other, each other,
When we pray for each other,
The stronger we’ll be.

‘Cause your prayers,
And my prayers,
Together make great prayers.
When we pray for each other,
The stronger we’ll be.

The more we love each other,
Each other, each other,
The more we love each other,
The happier we’ll be.

‘Cause your love,
And my love,
Together is God’s love.
The more we love each other,
The happier we’ll be.

“MAKE ME A SERVANT” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Unknown*

(Tune: See Internet)

Make me a servant,
Lord, make me like you.
For you are a servant,
Make me one, too.

Make me a servant,
Do what you must do.
To make me a servant,
Make me like you.

“HUMBLE YOURSELVES IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD”

Author: Bob Hudson

(See Internet)

*Author Unknown: Please contact us through the feedback button for this lesson if you are aware of any copyright information for this song.

*** IF YOU HAVE SUGGESTIONS PERTAINING TO THIS LESSON, PLEASE CLICK THE “SUGGESTION” BUTTON BESIDE THE BUTTON FOR THIS LESSON ON THE CURRICULUM WEB SITE.



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Luke 18:1-14



New Testament 5
Part 1: Jesus' Ministry

WEDNESDAY EVENING

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SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

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MEMORY WORK:

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OLDER CHILDREN: "Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart" (Luke 18:1).

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PERSONAL APPLICATION:

We should not be arrogant and think we are better or more righteous than others, especially when we pray.

INTRODUCTION:

Review [N.T. 5 Bible Fact Flash Cards](#) (provided under “N.T. 5 Bible Facts” on curriculum Web site)

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Review Sunday’s lesson (see [N.T. 5 Review Questions](#) for example questions)
2. Discuss 1 Thessalonians 5:17—“Pray without ceasing,” which means to have a practice of prayer (e.g., always praying before meals and/or before bedtime, in the morning, before tests, etc.) and to keep it.
3. Discuss James 5:16b [“The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working” (ESV)] and the fact that prayer works and is powerful if it is offered by a “righteous person,” explaining what that means.
4. Jesus told His followers about two men who went to the Temple in Jerusalem to pray to God: a Pharisee, whom everyone would have thought was very religious and godly, and a tax collector (or publican), whom everybody would have thought was wicked and a thief (remember Zacchaeus?). Jesus described their prayers.
5. The Pharisee was very prideful, self-centered, and **self-righteous**. Jesus described him as praying “with himself,” as though the man was thinking more about himself, than the One to Whom he was supposed to be praying: God.



NOTE: It is possible that Jesus meant that the Pharisee was standing by himself praying (e.g., ESV translation of Luke 18:11), as though not wanting to be “contaminated” by the tax collector, but many scholars believe that the translation is better understood to be that the Pharisee was standing, praying with/to/about himself.



Self-righteous: thinking about yourself, believing that you are more righteous and superior than others

6. The Pharisee prayed that he was thankful that he was so much better and more righteous than other people: people who sin and break God’s commandments (e.g., those who blackmail others, unjust people, and adulterers, vs. 11; more relevant for kids today: kids who say bad words, don’t share, don’t go to church as much, etc.). He even thanked God that he was better than the tax collector who was also praying in the Temple. He bragged on himself because of the good things he did (e.g., fasting two times each week and tithing).
7. The tax collector’s prayer, however, was an humble one. He felt so bad about his sins that he kept his head bowed and wouldn’t even look up to the sky towards God. He begged God to be merciful to him even though he had been a sinner.

8. Again, Jesus gave the point of His parable: the humble man who sees his own sinfulness and comes to God for forgiveness will be justified, while the prideful person who thinks he's better than others will not be justified. Jesus then gave a warning about the Judgment Day: "For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." We should be very careful to not brag or think we are better than others. If we are humble, Jesus will exalt us when He comes again.

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—BEFORE CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

See Sunday morning's lesson.

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