

WEEK 3 TOUGH PARABLES DISCUSSION GUIDE

This guide is a suggestion; Adjust as needed to fit your group. Don't feel like you need to do, or ask, everything you see here. Let the students and the Holy Spirit guide the conversation, too.

THE MAIN POINT

Jesus wants us to be real with Him:
in our prayers and in our lives.

THE MAIN SCRIPTURE

[Luke 18:9-14](#)

GET THEM TALKING

- Who can share a funny story about an awkward prayer?

READ [Luke 18:9-14](#) and answer the following questions:

1. The Pharisee's prayer was weak.

- What is most surprising or unexpected to you about this parable?
- Think about a time when you made yourself look better by pointing out another person's faults. What was the end result?
- When the Pharisee listed all of his accomplishments in his prayer, was he talking to God or talking to people who could hear him? How do you know?
- How do we get caught in the trap of praying the way the Pharisee prayed?
- Why is pride so tempting, so tasty, so appealing?

2. The tax collector's prayer was powerful.

- The tax collector didn't display the same attitude as the Pharisee—he kept his distance. When do you feel like you must keep your distance from Jesus?
- Is it easier to be genuine when things are going well for you or when things are going poorly? Why?
- What's most powerful about the tax collector's prayer?
- Describe a time when you prayed like the tax collector—a simple, heart-wrenching, genuine prayer.
- When do you find it tough to be real with Jesus?

3. Jesus wants us to be real with Him: in our prayers and in our lives.

- Jesus' words in verse 14 about being humbled and being exalted—how do they challenge our culture's attitude?
- How would you feel if you humbled yourself but weren't honored the way you expected?
- Can the tax collector's prayer just be imitated, or does it only flow from something deeper? Explain your perspective.
- How does the tax collector's prayer challenge you to think differently about prayer?

NEXT STEPS

- What would it look like to regularly pray to God?
- What are some ways to respond if you find yourself feeling good or bad simply because you've compared yourself with another person?
- This week, how can you turn the attention away from you and toward other people—and how can that help you pursue Christlike humility?
- What other specific, practical habits or choices can help you pursue a path of humility?

PRAYER GUIDE

Ask your students to share any prayer requests, and close together in prayer.