



Appearances can be deceiving. That is, they can be deceiving to us, but not to God. For as 1 Samuel 16:7 tells us, “The Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” As we study these two parables, we see a picture of what true worshipers really look like.

THE PHARISEE AND THE TAX COLLECTOR

Read Luke 18:9–14.

1. This parable was directed at a specific audience. Who where they?
 - a. What were the two effects of trusting in themselves? (Luke 18:9)
 - b. What is the warning of Proverbs 21:2?
 - c. How does Isaiah 64:6 describe our righteousness?

d. How can self-righteousness lead to despising or thinking less of others?

2. Trusting in self may seem to be a good thing to do but what do the following verses teach us about this?

- Psalm 9:10

- Psalm 118:8

- Proverbs 3:5

- Proverbs 14:12

- Luke 16:15

3. What character trait was exposed by the Pharisee's prayer?

a. What was the Pharisee using as his measuring stick to determine how righteous he was?

b. What should his—and our—"measuring stick" be?

4. What components would you say are missing from the Pharisee's prayer?

5. Record the tax collector's seven word prayer in Luke 18:13.

- James 4:10

- 1 Peter 5:6

6. What did Jesus declare about the tax collector in Luke 18:14?

a. What reasoning did Jesus give for his statement at the close of this parable?

b. Notice, in Luke 18:14, humility is not just an attitude; it is an action. What are some examples of humbling ourselves?

ONCE *Upon a Time*

PERSONAL: Considering this parable about the Pharisee and the tax collector, which one would you say you most resemble and why? If an attitude adjustment is needed, humble yourself before God and ask for His help.

*Two went to pray; O! rather say,
 One went to brag: th'other to pray.
 One stands up close, and treads on high
 Where th'other dares not send his eye.
 One nearer to God's altar trod,
 The other to the altar's God.*

--Divine Epigrams by Richard Crashaw

Just as in the previous one, this next parable is another case of “looks can be deceiving.” It involves a Pharisee who outwardly appeared to have it all together spiritually versus a woman who was known for a sinful lifestyle but who had a major heart change. Neither of these heart conditions was discernible outwardly, but Jesus always knows the true state of the heart. Jesus used this occasion to teach an important lesson on pride, humility, forgiveness, and love.

THE TWO DEBTORS

Read Luke 7:36–50.

7. Simon, the Pharisee, invited Jesus to dinner at his house. According to verse 37, describe the uninvited guest.
 - a. According to verses 37 and 38, what did the woman do?

8. Read again Luke 7:39. Notice that Simon did not verbally express his thoughts. Rather, we are told that he spoke to himself. What was he thinking?

a. Look up the following verses. What is Jesus' attitude toward socializing with sinners?

- Isaiah 65:2, 5

- Matthew 9:11–12

9. Jesus, being so much more than a prophet, not only knew what manner of woman was touching Him, He knew the thoughts of Simon, the Pharisee. Rather than rebuke him, Jesus told him a story. Summarize what Jesus had to say to Simon in verses 40–42a.

- a. Identify the characters in the story. Who is represented by the:
- Creditor

 - Debtor who owed 500 denarii

 - Debtor who owed 50 denarii
- b. What resources did the two debtors in the story have to draw from to repay the creditor?
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- c. Many believe they can do something to repay God to make amends for their actions. What does this parable teach us about that?

d. What does Ephesians 2:8–9 teach us?

10. Neither debtor could repay their debt. What did the creditor do?

a. The creditor voluntarily and willingly forgave the debts. “Freely” is an awesome word when applied to God’s actions towards believers. What great news do these verses proclaim for us?

- Romans 3:24

- Revelation 21:6

b. Who has the power to freely give these to us?

11. To make His point, Jesus then compared the actions of the woman with the inaction of Simon. Complete the chart below to expose the contrast between the Pharisee and the woman.

Verse	Pharisee	Woman
44	<i>gave Jesus no water for His feet</i>	<i>washed Jesus' feet with her tears</i>
45		
46		
47		

12. Record Jesus' conclusion as stated in verse 47.

- a. Read Luke 5:27–32. Here, we discover the same self-righteous attitude. Record the words of Jesus in verses 31 and 32.

ONCE *Upon a Time*

PERSONAL: The problem was not that the scribes and Pharisees had no need of a physician, but that they saw no need for one. The problem was not that they were righteous and others were sinners, but that they did not see their sin. What do we miss out on when we are blind to our sin and our need for forgiveness?

13. Record the bold words of Jesus to the woman in Luke 7:48.
 - a. Jesus had proven that He was at least a prophet by being able to know Simon's thoughts. What does Jesus claim by making the statement He did in this verse? See Luke 5:21.

14. Read the words of those who sat at the table in Luke 7:49. Now read the words of Jesus to the sinful woman. What did He say to her?

- a. “Behold the proud, his soul is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith” (Habakkuk 2:4). Who was the just one in this story—the Pharisee or the woman?

In both parable accounts, we see Pharisees who were thought to be the religious elite. They themselves thought they were right with God. They believed they were the “holy” ones, but they trusted in works, so were self-deceived. Do you know the true state of your salvation? On what do you base that knowledge? If you have any doubt about whether or not you are truly saved, please talk to one of the women’s ministry leaders.

