

# What Is Prayer?

Bible Lesson: Luke 18:9-14

## NEW WORDS

prayer  
Pharisee  
publican  
ashamed  
pleaded  
fasted  
boasted  
Roman  
taxes  
merciful  
sinner  
repent



Imagine you've been playing outside all morning. Your breakfast was only a slice of toast as you ran out the door. By mid-morning, your stomach is rumbling, and you are very hungry. You can't wait for lunch. Who would you ask for something to eat? Most likely you would ask your mother or father. They are the people who are most concerned about your needs. They would be happy to give you the food that you need.

Do you know who else is concerned about your needs? Your Heavenly Father. He is even more concerned about you than your mother and father! He wants you to come to Him with every need, and He is very happy to give you what you need.

In our lessons this year, we will be learning about *prayer*. Do you know what

prayer is? Prayer is heart-to-heart talk with our Heavenly Father. Prayer simply means to talk with God about everything that concerns us. Prayer means to call upon God in every need.

In Luke 18, two men went into the temple to pray. One of these men was a *Pharisee*. He thought he was better than other people. He *boasted* to God about the good things he had done, but that was not prayer. He bragged that he *fasted* twice a week and gave to God one-tenth of everything he earned. That was not prayer either. The Pharisee was not truly

praying. He did not come to the temple because He needed God. He came to brag about himself. Remember, to pray means to call upon God in our need.

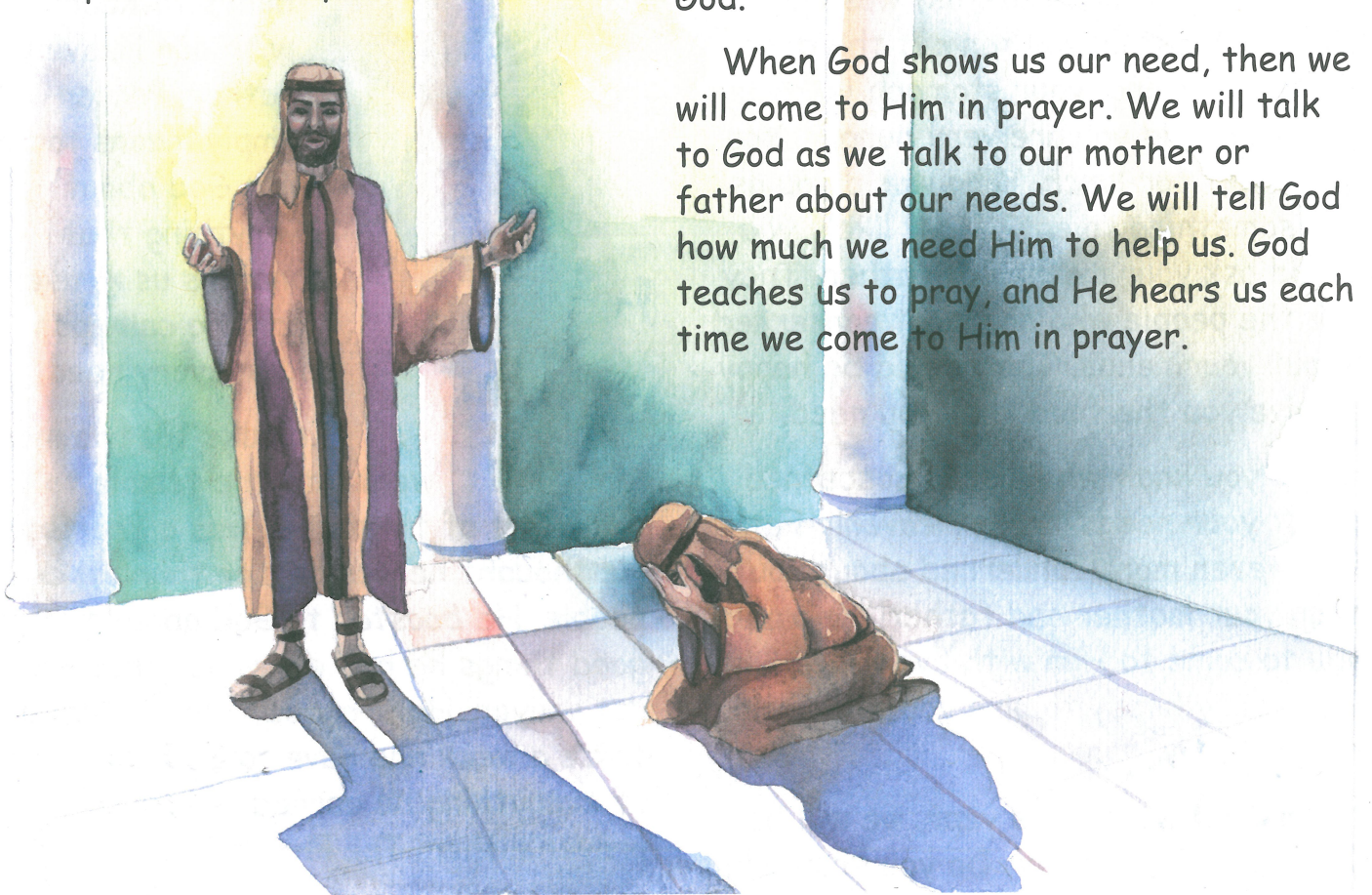
The other man in our story was a *publican* or a tax-gatherer. His job was to collect *Roman taxes*. Tax-gatherers were very greedy and took extra money from people to keep for themselves. But this publican knew he was a *sinner*. He knew he had done wrong and that he needed God to help him. He didn't brag about himself. He was so *ashamed* of his sin, he couldn't even lift up his eyes to heaven. In his great need, he *pleaded* with God to save him, "God, be *merciful* to me, the sinner!" This man truly understood what it means to pray. He went to God with his great need and called upon God to help. God heard his

prayer and forgave him.

It is not natural for us to pray and admit to God that we need help. There are many things that we are able to do. Most of us can run and walk. Most of us can help Mom with the dishes. Most of us can bat a ball. We like to think that we are able to do these things all by ourselves.

But the things of God are things that we are not able to do. By ourselves, we are not able to believe in God, we are not able to *repent* of our sin, and we are not even able to pray. We may think that we are able. By nature, we are like the Pharisee and brag about what we think we are able to do. But we cannot believe, repent, or pray unless God teaches us and helps us. We are helpless and need God.

When God shows us our need, then we will come to Him in prayer. We will talk to God as we talk to our mother or father about our needs. We will tell God how much we need Him to help us. God teaches us to pray, and He hears us each time we come to Him in prayer.



## What is prayer?

Prayer is the child-like communion of our hearts with God, in which we tell Him all our needs, and earnestly seek some gift from Him.

WHO were the two characters in the story Jesus told in Luke 18?

\_\_\_\_\_

### MATCH the question with the correct answer.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. WHAT did the Pharisee think about himself? (verses 11-12) _____ | A. God, have mercy on me.                 |
| 2. WHAT did the tax-gatherer think about himself? (verse 13) _____ | B. Tax-gatherer                           |
| 3. WHAT was the tax-gatherer's petition to God? (verse 13) _____   | C. I'm better than other people.          |
| 4. WHICH man saw his need before a holy God? _____                 | D. I am a sinner.                         |
| 5. To WHOM did Jesus tell this parable? _____                      | E. People who thought they were righteous |
| 6. WHO went home justified? _____                                  |   |



**A  
P  
P  
L  
Y**

**Read Matthew 6:9-13. Jesus gives us the example of how we are to pray.**

1. Look up Romans 3:23. WHAT does the Bible say about all people? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Think again about the parable in Luke 18:9-14.**

2. WHY would Jesus tell this parable to people who trusted in themselves? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Remember the verse that says all have sinned? (Romans 3:23)**

3. Pray today that God will show you your need to call on Him for His mercy.

## Memory Verse

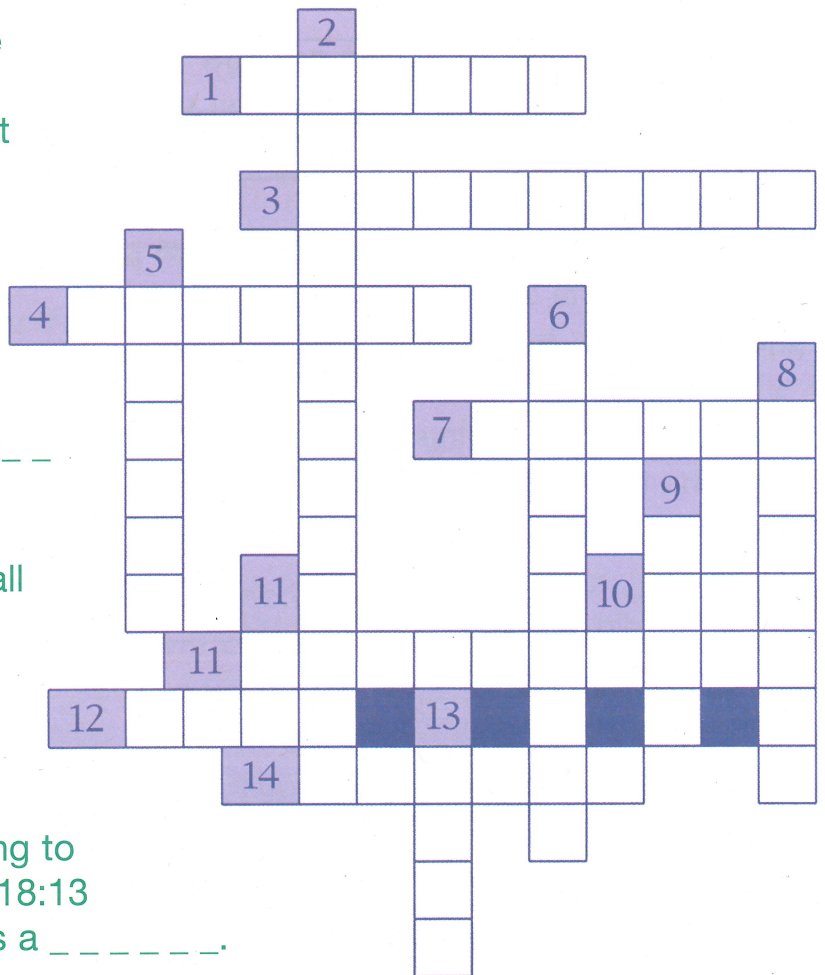
**Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.**

*I Thessalonians 5:16-18*

**Enrichment Memory Verse:** *Ephesians 6:18*

### ACROSS

1. Matthew 6:9-13 is called The Lord's \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Psalm 99:9 tells us this about God. \_\_\_\_\_
4. In Luke 18:9, Jesus told a parable to "certain ones who \_\_\_\_\_ in themselves."
7. "If my people . . . will \_\_\_\_\_ themselves and pray." II Chronicles 7:14
10. "For \_\_\_ have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23
11. The tax-gatherer prayed, "Lord, be \_\_\_\_\_ to me, the sinner." Luke 18:13
12. The tax-gatherer was unwilling to even lift up his \_\_\_\_\_. Luke 18:13
14. The tax-gatherer said he was a \_\_\_\_\_.



### DOWN

2. "And may be found in Him, not having a \_\_\_\_\_ of my own . . . but that which is through faith in Christ." Philippians 3:9
5. Unless you \_\_\_\_\_, you too will all perish. Luke 13:3
6. "Being \_\_\_\_\_ as a gift by His grace." Romans 3:24
8. "But he who humbles himself shall be \_\_\_\_\_." Luke 18:14
9. To pray is to \_\_\_\_\_ upon God in every need.
11. The tax-gatherer said, "God, be merciful to \_\_\_, the sinner." Luke 18:13
13. The tax-gatherer saw his \_\_\_\_\_ for God's mercy.