

Jesus' Parables in Chronological Order

Parable #35 — Luke 18:1-17 — The Persistent Widow

¹ Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. ² He said: “In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. ³ And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, ‘Grant me justice against my adversary.’

⁴ “For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, ‘Even though I don’t fear God or care about men, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won’t eventually wear me out with her coming!’ ”

⁶ And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷ And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? ⁸ I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”

Parable #36 — Luke 18:9-14 — Praying: Pharisee and Tax Collector

⁹ To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: ¹⁰ “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

¹³ “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’

¹⁴ “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Parable #35 — Luke 18:1-8 — The Persistent Widow

1. When was a time when your persistence paid off?
2. Does persistence in prayer mean: a) endless repetition, b) long sessions of prayer, c) attending daily [or weekly] prayer meetings, d) keeping our requests constantly before God, e) something else (what?) Just what does it mean to be persistent in our prayers?
3. Why did the judge eventually give in to the woman's requests? (18:4-5)
4. How are God's actions the same—and how are they different—from the unjust judge?
5. Why do people (you) stop praying? How should we respond when we do not see our prayers answered? How can you guard against the temptation to give up praying when you do not get the results you expect?
6. How can we be sure we are praying for things that are within the will of God? What phrase should we add to each of our prayers?

Parable #36 — Luke 18:9-14 — Praying: Pharisee and Tax Collector

1. How does it feel to be in the presence of someone markedly better than you at what you do best?
2. What motivated the Pharisee to pray? How did he pray? (18:11-12)
3. What would be examples of "Pharisees" and "tax collectors" today? How important are outward appearances in our culture today? How do we judge people according to their outward appearance? Does outward appearance matter?
4. We all pray differently. Do you ever feel intimidated by someone who prays really well or has memorized great portions of scripture?
4. How do you approach God in your prayers? What enables us to be confident in our prayers to God? (Romans 8:26-27, John 15:7, Philippians 4:6-7)
5. Why does God honor the prayers of a humble person?