

## Session 9

# THE PHARISEE AND THE TAX COLLECTOR (Luke 18:9–14)

### FOCUS

“I’d go to church, but the roof would fall in on me.”

“I couldn’t go there. All the people would look down on me and judge me.”

“Why should I go to church? Everyone there is a hypocrite anyway!”

Have you ever heard statements like these? They are among the reasons that people give for not going to church. Even if they are incorrect, they still represent a perception that many people have.

- a. Why do people feel like they will be judged if they come to church?
- b. How can we make it easier for them to come?

### INFORM

Read Luke 18:9–12.

- a. What was the content of the Pharisee’s prayer?
- b. Was he really different from the people he mentioned? Do you think he was ignoring any sins?
- c. About what was he really praying?

Read Luke 18:13–14.

- d. How was the tax collector’s prayer different from the Pharisee’s?

- e. Which prayer was pleasing to God? How do we know this?
- f. How were the positions of the Pharisee and the tax collector reversed in the end?

## CONNECT

- a. Luke 18:9 says that this parable was spoken to people who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on others. Does this ever describe us?
- b. Read Isaiah 64:6. Why can't we boast of our own righteousness?
- c. What does God desire our attitude toward other people and their sins to be like?
- d. What is our attitude before God?

## VISION

Sadly, many people still have the attitude of the Pharisee. They quickly condemn other people and act as if they are righteous and holy by their own actions. This is false, and it is wrong. God calls us to a humble faith like that of the tax collector—a faith that trusts in and receives God's mercy.

What can we do to have a more welcoming church?