

Fervent in Prayer

Reflect

1. Who is a person in your life with whom you have had deep, meaningful conversations?
2. In what ways did those conversations impact your life?
3. Is your prayer life deep and meaningful?

Read Your Bible

- 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
- Luke 18:9-14

Apply God's Word to Your Life

1. What is prayer?
2. In Luke 18:9-14 there are two men who pray. Who are they? How does each one pray?
3. In what ways are their prayers different?
4. What does Jesus conclude about each of these men and their prayers?
5. When are your prayers like the Pharisee's? When are they like the tax collectors?
6. What kind of prayer does God want from us?
7. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 tells us to "pray continually." What does that look like in your life?

Conclusion

In Jesus' parable we see prayers of two different depths. The Pharisee's prayer is shallow. It is a vain cry for attention that puts all the emphasis on the actions of the Pharisee. The tax collector's prayer is deep. It is an honest reflection of his hurt and sin and plea for God's merciful action in his life. The surprise of this story is that kind of prayer that Jesus says justifies, or makes us right with God, does not come from the religious leader but from the tax collector, who would have been seen as a sinner. What God desires from us is real, honest, consistent prayer. When we are real with God and come to Him with our sin and hurt, we are met with His mercy and grace.

Pray

Heavenly Father, You hear us and You listen. You invite us to come before You again and again with our failures and hurts, with our joys and hopes. You wait for us with an open ear. Lord, teach us to pray, to trust in Your mercy, to rest in Your grace. Let our prayers be honest and true, so that in our weakness, we might find Your strength and life. In Jesus' name. Amen.