

CALVARY CHAPEL OF PHILADELPHIA

**CHILDREN'S MINISTRY**

**3RD-5TH GRADE**

**TEACHER'S PACKET**

**SUNDAY MORNING**

Study 22

*Examples to Follow*



# Examples to Follow

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

**Objective** To teach the students to pray continually, trust in the Lord, and know that Jesus desires all children to come to Him. In short, God hears, God helps, and God saves.

## Key Verses

Luke 18:1-17—Main Teaching Passage

Matthew 21:15-16

James 5:16

1 Thessalonians 5:17

Hebrews 4:16

**Memory Verse** - Luke 18:16

"Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God."

## Hook

Review last week's memory verse, Psalm 118:1.

Ask for a volunteer (but don't say for what). After you have chosen someone, tell them that they are going to be the asker. You (or another volunteer) are going to be the keeper of the candy. Tell the child that they should ask for a piece of candy and keep asking. The one holding the candy should ignore them for a while, and eventually give in and reward them. Go!

How did it feel to keep on asking? Was it awkward? Did you want to stop? As we will see, continuously asking is one of the examples Jesus tells us to follow. Not for candy, but in prayer.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

# BOOK

Jesus told a parable to teach His disciples to keep praying and not get discouraged and lose heart. A judge, with no respect for God, was approached by a widow seeking justice. At first, the judge was not willing to help the widow, but because of her persistence, he helped her. If an unjust judge responds this way at a widow's persistence, how much more will God avenge those whom He loves?

Jesus spoke another parable, this time to those who were trusting in themselves and looking down on others. Two men went to the temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other, a tax collector. The Pharisee looked at other sinners, especially that tax collector, and thanked God that he wasn't like them. He told God about why he was good and others weren't. The tax collector also prayed, beating his chest and not even able to lift his eyes to heaven. He simply asked God to be merciful to him, knowing that he was a sinner. It was the tax collector, not the Pharisee, whose prayer God honored, for those who lift themselves up will be brought low, and those who humble themselves will be lifted up.

Then people began bringing their children to Jesus to be blessed by Him, but the disciples began to turn them away. Jesus was displeased by this and rebuked His disciples and told them to let the children come to Him and not to stop them, for anyone who does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will never enter into it.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

# LOOK

Last week, we learned about the importance of giving thanks to the Lord. This week, the first thing we are encouraged to do is to keep coming to the Lord in prayer instead of losing heart. Have you ever felt like quitting something hard, such as homework, a game you kept losing, or trying to do the right thing when no one else was? That's what Jesus means when He talks about "losing heart." Following Jesus while we wait for His return can be tough, but the answer isn't to quit. It's to pray!

The Bible is full of commands, examples, and promises that encourage us to pray and to pray often. In the first parable, the judge didn't care about anyone. He only helped the woman because she kept bothering Him. But God isn't like that at all. He loves us! He invites us to come boldly to His throne of grace in our time of need. We don't have to convince Him or wear Him down with lots of asking. He is ready and waiting to help us. Knowing that should encourage us to pray and keep praying.

## LOOK (Continued)

The second parable also mentioned prayer. Have you ever met someone who acted like they were better than everyone else? That's how the Pharisee acted when he prayed. He thought God must like him more because he was good and followed the rules. Watch out for people who brag about their church attendance, all the verses they have memorized, how much they pray to God, etc. Instead of pointing people to God, the Pharisee was pointing people to himself. Most people would have thought this Pharisee was super close to God, way closer than that tax collector! But they couldn't have been more wrong.

God doesn't want us comparing ourselves to other people. We look to Jesus as our example, and we make our boast in Him alone. We don't earn God's love by doing lots of good things. We are saved only by admitting we are sinners in need of a Savior. The tax collector is our example who said, "Lord, have mercy on me!" The apostle Paul also understood this when he wrote, "I know that in me dwells no good thing" (Romans 7:18). Those who are closest to God have the greatest understanding of their need for Him. It turns out, some of the people who do that best are kids!

Children learn a lot from adults, it's true, but Jesus also used children to teach adults important truths about His kingdom. Jesus wants children to come to Him, and says that kids have an easier time trusting God than many adults! Children come to Jesus with sincerity and simple faith. They believe what God says and take Him at His Word. Following Jesus is hard, but it's also simple! And sometimes Jesus' disciples made following Jesus more complicated than it needed to be.

Life will be hard. Following Jesus will be hard. But remember, God has given us everything we need to help us to heaven. Jesus invites us to pray, not give up, stay humble, and trust Him with child-like faith. Have you ever come to Jesus? Come to Him today! You don't have to wait until you're older. He ready and waiting to listen, to help, and to save.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

## TOOK

As a class, memorize Luke 18:16.

**Pray:** Ask God to give you humility and to put others first. Thank Him for His love, and ask Him to help you show that love to others.

**Family Question:** Why did parents bring their children to Jesus?

# FURTHER STUDY

## Commentary on Luke 18:1-17 by David Guzik

### A. A parable about persistence in prayer.

#### 1. ([Luke 18:1](#)) The purpose of the parable: that we might not lose heart in prayer.

**Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart,**

a. **That men always ought to pray:** Man is created with a spiritual instinct ([Ecclesiastes 3:11](#)), so prayer often comes naturally. Yet obstacles come in the way of effective and constant prayer, so Jesus knew we needed to be both taught and encouraged **always... to pray**.

i. Jesus did not mean that we should always have our knees bent and eyes closed in prayer; but we must always be in what is sometimes called *the spirit of prayer*. Paul mentioned this idea in [1 Thessalonians 5:17](#) when he wrote, *pray without ceasing*. It's hard to measure how much good such constant prayer would do, and how much bad it would keep us from.

b. **And not lose heart:** Often we fail in praying because we **lose heart**. We become discouraged, and then no longer pray as we should.

i. It is easy to **lose heart** in prayer because prayer is hard work that we too often approach lightly. In [Colossians 4:12](#), Paul praised a man named Epaphras because he was *always laboring fervently... in prayers*. Paul knew that prayer was hard work that required fervent labor. Morrison tried to explain why prayer was difficult, because three parts of the human being are engaged in prayer: "There is the understanding, by which we work intelligently; there is the heart, but which we labour willingly, there is the will by which we labour doggedly." (Morrison)

ii. It is easy to **lose heart** in prayer because the Devil hates prayer. If prayer were powerless, it would be easy.

iii. It is easy to **lose heart** in prayer because we are not always convinced of the reality of the power of prayer. Too often, prayer becomes a last resort instead of a first resource.

iv. Remember that Jesus lived a prayerful life, and He ever lives to pray for His people ([Hebrews 7:25](#)). We must therefore not **lose heart** in prayer.

- The woman of Canaan kept praying though she was first denied.
- Jacob refused to let go even when his leg was crippled.
- Rachel said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die!"

#### 2. ([Luke 18:2-8](#)) The parable of the widow and the unjust judge.

**Saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.' And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.'" Then**

**the Lord said, “Hear what the unjust judge said. And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?”**

a. **A judge who did not fear God nor regard man:** The judge was ungodly, both as a man and a judge. Yet in the end he answered the woman’s request. The only reason he gave her what she wanted was because the woman wouldn’t stop bothering him.

i. Barclay points out that this would not have been a Jewish judge, because disputes in the Jewish world were brought to the elders. “This judge was one of the paid magistrates appointed either by Herod or the Romans. Such judges were notorious.” (Barclay)

ii. When he complained the woman would **weary me**, it really means, “*Stun me*. A metaphor taken from boxers, who *bruise* each other.” (Clarke) “Although the word *hypopiaze* literally means ‘to give a black eye’ (cf. [1 Corinthians 9:27](#)), the figurative rendering is preferable here.” (Pate)

b. **Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her:** The unjust judge only reluctantly answered the woman’s request. Jesus did not give this parable to say that God was *like* the unjust judge, but *unlike* him. God *loves* to answer our prayers, and He even helps us when we pray. God is *on your side* when you pray, not against you (as the unjust judge was against the widow).

i. The woman had to overcome the judge’s reluctance to help. We often *feel* that we must do the same when we pray — use our persistence to overcome God’s reluctance. This misses the point of the parable entirely. Jesus did not say *that men always ought to pray and not lose heart* because God is reluctant, but because He *isn’t*, and that is our encouragement to prayer.

ii. Sometimes it does seem to us that God is reluctant to answer our prayers. Yet the delays in prayer are not needed to change God, but to change us. Persistence in prayer brings a transforming element into our lives, building into us the character of God Himself. It is a way that God builds into us a heart that cares about things the same way He does. “Too many prayers are like boy’s runaway knocks, given, and then the giver is away before the door can be opened.” (Spurgeon)

iii. Both Jesus ([Mark 14:39](#)) and Paul ([2 Corinthians 12:8](#)) prayed repeatedly for the same thing. However, we must guard against a persistence of *unbelief* — repeating prayer with the attitude that God never heard us the first time.

iv. There are several contrasts between this judge and the God who hears prayer.

- The judge was unfair; God is fair.
- The judge had no personal interest in the widow; God loves and cares for those who petition Him.
- The judge answered the widow’s cry out of pure self-interest; God loves to bless His people for their good also.

c. **Shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him:** Jesus probably had in mind the prayers of persecuted believers, who long for justice and **who cry out day and night** for God to **avenge** them and deal with their persecutors.

i. Those in the fire of persecution need special grace to persevere and to not lose heart in prayer. They need to be assured that God is not like the unjust judge, so we should keep praying to the Lord who will resolve all things righteously.

ii. Our God is a righteous, wonderful Judge:

- We come to a judge of perfect, good character.
- We come to a judge who loves to care for His children.

- We come to a judge who is kind and gracious.
- We come to a judge who *knows* us.
- We come to this judge with an advocate, a friend who will plead our case before the judge.
- We come to the judge with promises to encourage us.
- We come to the judge with the right of constant access, to a judge who has a personal interest in our case.

d. **When the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?** This ties Jesus' thought to His words about His coming at the end of the previous chapter. Unless we know who God is (being *not* like the unjust judge) and unless we are people who pray without losing heart, we don't yet have the kind of faith Jesus will look for when He returns.

## B. Lessons on humility.

### 1. (Luke 18:9-14) A parable to rebuke the self-righteous.

Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men; extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise *his* eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

a. **To some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:** The connection between those who **trusted in themselves that they were righteous** and those who **despised others** is almost inevitable. If I credit myself for a supposed great and spiritual walk with God, then it is an easy thing to despise another for their supposed low and carnal walk with God.

b. **Two men went up to the temple to pray:** In this parable, both men prayed, but both men did not come to God the same way. The Pharisee went up to the temple to pray, but he did not pray. He spoke with himself, not with God.; he **prayed thus with himself**, and in his short prayer he repeated the word "**I**" **five times**.

i. It is entirely possible to address your words to God, but actually be praying to yourself, because your focus is on yourself, not on God. Your passion is for your agenda, not God's. Your attitude is *my will be done* and not *Thy will be done*. The man was full of praise, but he rejoiced "not for who God was but rather for who he was!" (Pate)

c. **God, I thank You that I am not like other men:** In his (so-called) prayer, the Pharisee praised himself, and compared himself to **other men**. It isn't hard to have such a high opinion of self when you compare yourself to other people; it often is not difficult to find someone worse.

i. **Even as this tax collector:** "The demonstrative pronoun 'this' (*houtos*) pejoratively distinguishes the Pharisee from his counterpart in the temple." (Pate)

ii. One ancient rabbi (Rabbi Simeon, the son of Jochai) was an example of this kind of Pharisaical pride when he said: "If there were only thirty righteous persons in the world, I and my son would make two of them; but if there were but twenty, I and my son would be of the number; and if there were but *ten*, I and my son would be of the number; and if there were but *five*, I and my son would be of the five; and if there were but *two*, I and my son would be those two; and if there were but *one*, myself should be that *one*." (Clarke)

iii. **I fast twice a week:** In those days many Jews fasted on the second and fifth days of each week, because they believed that Moses went up on Mount Sinai to receive the law on the fifth day of the week, and that he came down with the law on the second day of the week. "Those who wished to gain special merit fasted also on Mondays and Thursdays. It is noteworthy that these were the market days when Jerusalem was full of

country people. Those who fasted whitened their faces and appeared in disheveled clothes, and those days gave their piety the biggest possible audience.” (Barclay)

iv. “I am not as this publican, No, for thou art worse; yea for this, because thou thinkest thee better.” (Trapp)

v. “What the Pharisee said about himself was true. His trouble was not that he was not far enough along the road, but that he was on the wrong road altogether.” (Morris)

d. **The tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, “God, be merciful to me a sinner!”** The Pharisee relied on his own power and deeds before God, but the tax collector relied on the mercy and compassion of God. He recognized that he was a **sinner** who needed the mercy of God.

i. We can imagine the Pharisee praying with eloquent words and flowing, spiritual style; anyone who heard him pray would say that he was a spiritual man. In contrast, we imagine the tax collector praying awkwardly, with halting phrases and fear; but his prayer pleased God.

ii. **But beat his breast:** The idea behind this was that one was so aware of their sin and heart corruption that he hit at his own heart as a punishment. According to Morris, the verb tense of **beat his breast** describes a continual action; he kept on doing it. “The original does not say that he smote upon his breast once, but he smote and smote again. It was a continuous act. He seemed to say — Oh, this wicked heart! He would smite it. Again and again he expressed his intense grief by this Oriental gesture, for he did not know how else to set forth his sorrow.” (Spurgeon)

iii. The Pharisee thought he was not like other men; that he was better than them. The tax collector also thought that he was not like other men; that he was *worse* than them. “He actually prayed, ‘O God be merciful to me — *the sinner*,’ as if he was not merely *a sinner*, but *the sinner par excellence*.” (Barclay) “If there was not another sinner in the world, he was one; and in a world of sinners he was a prominent offender — the sinner of sinners. Emphatically he applies to himself the guilty name.” (Spurgeon)

iv. The ancient Greek word translated **be merciful** is *hilaskomai*; it is actually the word for an atoning sacrifice. The fullest sense of what the tax collector said was, “God, be merciful to me through Your atoning sacrifice for sins, because I am a sinner.” The only other place this word is used in the New Testament is in [Hebrews 2:17](#), where it is translated *propitiation*.

v. “In the original Greek the words are even fewer than in the English. Oh, that men would learn to pray with less of language and more of meaning! What great things are packed away in this short petition! God, mercy, sin, the propitiation, and forgiveness.” (Spurgeon)

e. **This man went down to his house justified rather than the other:** The justification of the tax collector was immediate. He humbly came to God on the basis of His atoning sacrifice and was justified. He didn’t earn his justification, and he didn’t have a probationary period; he was simply **justified**.

i. He was justified because as a sinner, he humbly prayed for *mercy*, and mercy in the sense of atoning sacrifice. He prayed, “O God, be satisfied with the atoning sacrifice, and forgive me.”

•He didn’t say, “God, be merciful to me, I’m not a Pharisee.”

•He didn’t say, “God, be merciful to me, a repentant sinner.”

•He didn’t say, “God, be merciful to me, a praying sinner.”

•He didn’t say, “God, be merciful to me — I’m only human.”

•He didn’t say, “God, be merciful to me, I’ll try to do better.”

•He simply prayed, praying body, soul, and spirit, **“God, be merciful to me a sinner!”**

f. **Everyone who exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted:** Essentially,

the Pharisee saw prayer and his spiritual life as a way to be exalted, but the tax collector approached God in humility.

- i. True humbleness is simply seeing things the way they *are*. The Pharisee saw himself as something great when he wasn't, and the tax collector saw himself as a sinner needing God's mercy, which he was.
- ii. We gain nothing by coming to God in the lie of pride. The principle *God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble* is so important God repeated it three times ([Proverbs 3:34](#), [James 4:6](#), [1 Peter 5:5](#)).

## 2. ([Luke 18:15-17](#)) Jesus uses children as examples of humility.

**Then they also brought infants to Him that He might touch them; but when the disciples saw *it*, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to *Him* and said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. "Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it."**

a. **They also brought infants to Him that He might touch them:** Children love to come to Jesus, and it says something about our Savior that children loved Him and that He loved children. Jesus was not a mean, sour man because children don't love mean, sour people.

i. "It was the custom for mothers to bring their children to some distinguished Rabbi on the first birthday that he might bless them." (Barclay)

b. **That He might touch them:** Jesus knew that these **infants**, though they did not understand speech or Jesus' eloquent teaching, could respond to a touch. Jesus knows how to communicate in the way we need.

i. [Matthew 19:13](#) says specifically *that He might put His hands on them and pray*. With this, Jesus blessed the children. The laying on of hands is used Biblically as a way to bestow blessing on another ([Acts 6:6](#), [Acts 8:17](#), [Acts 9:17](#), [1 Timothy 5:22](#), [2 Timothy 1:6](#)).

ii. "He did not baptize them, but he did bless them." (Spurgeon)

c. **Let the little children come to Me:** Because children love to come to Jesus, we should never block the way — or fail to provide them a way. We know more about Jesus than the women of Judea did; so there is no good reason for us to keep our children from Jesus.

d. **For of such is the kingdom of God:** Children receive the blessing of Jesus without trying to make themselves worthy of it, or pretending they don't need it. We need to receive God's blessings the same way.

i. "Not only did Jesus welcome these little human beings as members of the kingdom of God; He also extolled them as model citizens of the same, because of their capacity to trust and love." (Pate)