THE ATTITUDE OF PRAYER

(Why The Pharisee Was Not Heard In Prayer)
Luke 18:9-14

4 Spirits That Will Kill Our Praying
1. A “Censorship” Spirit
2. A “Critical” Spirit
3. A “Comparison” Spirit
4. A “Congratulatory” Spirit

"The Pharisee Stood And Prayed Thus With Himself, God, I Thank Thee, That I Am Not As Other Men Are... Even As This Publican” (Luke 18:11)

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"WHEN PRAYER IS WASTED"
(How A Pharisee Spirit Will Steal Our Effectiveness In Prayer)
Luke 18:9-14

"I tell you, his man went down to his house justified rather than the other, for everyone that exalts himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (v.14)

INTRODUCTION

Fact: Jesus has just finished His parable of the unjust judge (v.1-8)
Fact: #1. How we must persevere in prayer
    #2. How prevailing prayer still works today
    #3. How God is not like the unjust judge

Fact: Now we come to the attitude of prayer in (v.9-14)
    #1. How we can know when prayer is wasted
    #2. How we can detect a Pharisee spirit
    #3. How we can protect ourselves from carnal attitudes
    #4. How we can live transparent before God

What A Holy Ambition

#1. Both men went to the right place
#2. Both men went for the right purpose
#3. Both men expected an audience with God in prayer
#4. Both men seem to be similar in many ways

(But Oh What A Difference)

I. Look At The Pharisee (v. 11,12)

"The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican" (v.11)

"I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess" (v.12)

A. The Pharisee's Facts Are Recorded:

    #1. He stood (but with an uplifted chin)
    #2. He boasted (but in his own good works)
    #3. He prayed (but only with himself)
    #4. He thanked God (but for the wrong reasons)
    #5. He compared himself (but with the wrong person)

B. The Pharisee's Failure Is Recorded:

    #1. He told God about all the sins he didn't commit (thinking that God was now obligated to him on the basis of what he didn't do)
    #2. He told God about all the good he did do (thinking that God was impressed by the observance of certain rites, rituals and ceremonies)
**Question:** Why did this man's praying go no further than himself? 

**Answer:** Because it was prayed with a Pharisee Spirit.

### (4 Deadly Elements Of A Self-Righteous (Pharisee) Attitude:

#1. **A Censorship Spirit**
   
   A. He focuses on the extortioners  
   B. He focuses on the unjust  
   C. He focuses on the adulterers  

   *He is bent on looking at what everybody else is doing.

#2. **A Critical Spirit**
   
   A. "Even as this publican" reveals his corrupt heart  
   B. He is bent on pointing out faults and criticizing  
   C. He is quick to tattletale on the publican to God  

   *He disgraces his own praying by pointing out the "appeared failures" in someone else.

#3. **A Comparison Spirit**
   
   A. "I am not as other men are" is a false comparison  
   B. This pharisee is measuring himself by someone else  
   C. He compares himself and looks pretty good to the other man  

   *He is bent on appearing "better than" the publician (which smells of pride)

#4. **A Congratulatory Spirit**
   
   A. "I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all"  
   B. He loves to congratulate his own importance  
   C. He reminds God of all his accomplishments  

   *He somehow feels that God owes it to him to answer his prayer.

### II. **Look At The Publican** (v.13)

"And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner" (v. 13)

### (3 Noticeables From The Publican)

A. **He “Stood Afar Off”**

#1. The publican refused to be "familiar" in the Holy place  
#2. The publican came in with "head low" (not chin high)  
#3. The publican approached God (but not with an inflated view of his own importance)
B. He “Smote His Breast”

#1. Which reveals inward grief over his condition
#2. Which is the beginning of having God’s attention
#3. Which is an attitude of humility before God

C. He said, “God Be Merciful to Me a Sinner”

#1. The publican sensed his need of God
#2. The publican cried out for mercy
#3. The publican came clean and refused to pretend

(A Publican Spirit Is Detectable)

#1. It is conscious of its own moral depravity
#2. It knows that it needs what it does not deserve
#3. It never entertains its own self-importance
#4. It refuses to be harsh or condescending towards another
#5. It throws its accomplishments at the feet of Jesus
#6. It never feels good in comparison to others
#7. It finds an audience with God in prayer

What A Discovery Here:

#1. The closer that someone is to God, the more gracious they are with people
   (and)
#2. The farther that someone is from God, the less gracious they are with people
   (repeat)

(A Clear Illustration Of A Pharisee Spirit)
Luke 7:36-50

"Now when the pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, this man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that touches him: for she is a sinner" (v.39)

Fact: The Pharisee Lost Sight Of Some Things:
#1. He was a bankrupt sinner like the prostitute
#2. Jesus offers forgiveness to everyone
#3. There is no degree of sinners in the eyes of God
#4. He was not broken over the sin of another
#5. His heart was polluted; he wanted to put on a “good show”

(A Pharisee Spirit Is Easily Detected)

#1. It looks around rather than above
#2. It depends on works instead of grace
#3. It feels superior instead of poverty stricken
#4. It exalts its own importance in the church
#5. It cannot confess its shortcomings to another
#6. It fills with pretense and wants to impress people
#7. It fails to see the need to repent and be changed
III. **Look At The Principle** (v.14)

"I tell you, this man (the publican) went down to his house justified rather than the other, for everyone that exalts himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (v.14)

**Fact:** The publican was justified (God heard his prayer that depended upon the grace of God)

**Fact:** The pharisee left the temple with the same cold heart he brought with him (he prayed only with himself)

(Why? Because...)

#1..."Everyone that exalts himself shall be abased"
#2..."Everyone that humbles himself shall be exalted"

(In Other Words)

**To Have Power With God In Prayer:**

#1. I must learn to take the low road
#2. I must refuse to pretend or seek to impress
#3. I must die to the desire to compare with another
#4. I must confess I am a sinner, saved by grace!

**AMEN!**
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