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## “It’s Not Yours to Brag About?”

Children’s Sermon from Luke 18:9-14, the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector

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### Children’s Message: It’s Not Yours to Brag About

The Meaning of Humility

**Main Objective:** Students will gain awareness that identity and value are found in Christ alone. Although it is easy to get caught up in pride of what we do and how, it is more important to be humble and recognize God as the source of strength. Our heart’s intentions are what matter to the Lord. We can be happy in things we do, but we need to be sure we are doing them for God.

**Law/Gospel Theme:** Our lives, praying or learning or doing or otherwise, ought to be centered on God. He has given us all we have, and He cares for our heart attitudes more than anything. We should not brag or boast in our own power, but take heart that God loves us and listens to us all the time.

**Object Lesson Props:** Nicely wrapped gift box or bag, paper bag, candy/treats, balloon

**Bible Passage:** Luke 18:9-14

### Bonus Ideas:

- See our [Bible crafts for the Parable of the Pharisee and Tax Collector](#)
- Watch the [video teaching example of this children’s sermon](#). Don’t miss all our [Bible object lesson for kids](#)
- See our example [“Sinners Prayers” for children](#)



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# Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Luke 18:9-14) Children's Sermon Lesson

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**Message:** Note: As with most messages, the details of how you choose to communicate this are adaptable and should cater to your audience and student needs. These suggestions are merely one possible way to demonstrate the message.

Greet students and bring out your “packages.”

Hello, children of God!

Guess what? I have a special treat for you today. But I also have a package, and I want you to help me open it. First we have to decide which package I should open. Let's see... what do you think? I have this one (Hold up bag or package with fancy wrapping) or I have this (hold up plain box or bag that does not look appealing).

Okay, which do you think looks more fun to open? Let's see what's inside. Why don't we open this pretty one first...(You can also let students select which box to open first, but encourage the nice one).

Do you want to help open it? (Look into the box, revealing an empty inside). Oh. That's a little disappointing, isn't it? Why don't we take a peek at the other bag. It doesn't look as fun on the outside, but let's see what's in here... (Look in the bag and find the fun treat inside. You might also place a cross or Bible in it).

Oh, neat! This looks a lot more exciting than the other one, doesn't it? So even though the outside was not as fun, inside this had some great things! You'll get to have some of this candy in a minute, but first let's talk about this a little.

The Bible reminds us a lot that what matters most to God is not what we say or do on the outside, but what's on the inside, and the intentions of our hearts. We might act really cool, but we want to make sure we are living for the Lord. Jesus



told a story about two men who were praying. One of them went into the church and gave a loud boastful prayer. He thanked God for making him better than other people, and talked about the wonderful things he did.

The other man Jesus described didn't even want to go to church to pray. Instead, he stayed home and bowed low, full of sorrow and shame for the things he had done. He begged for mercy and felt unworthy of God's attention. Jesus said that the man who was humble was offering a more genuine prayer than the boastful man. Humble means you don't think too highly of yourself.

We know God always hears us and listens, of course. But if your prayers are meant to make yourself look better, they aren't really focused on God. God doesn't want us to brag about anything, even our prayer lives. It's okay to be happy about something you've done, but you don't want to go boasting about it to everyone.

When we pray, we want to make sure our hearts are devoted to God. What's on the inside needs to have a positive purpose. We want to remember that God has given us all we have, including the most important thing, Jesus! That is a beautiful blessing to celebrate.

So let's try to remember who the boss is. When we pray, we want our words to go to God, who is always present and loves us. Our heart intent and inner attitudes are much more important than what is on the outside. Why don't we pray and ask God to help us focus on Him first, shall we?



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# Children's Prayer Moment

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**Prayer:**

(Have kids repeat each line)

Dear God,

Thank you for listening to our prayers

Help us to focus on you as the most important thing

May we not boast or brag

But turn our hearts to you

Thank you for your love

We love you, God!

Thank you for Jesus

In His name, Amen!



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# Luke 18:9-14 NIV: The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector

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He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: <sup>10</sup> “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. <sup>11</sup> The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. <sup>12</sup> I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ <sup>13</sup> But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ <sup>14</sup> I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

–[Luke 18:9-14](#)



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