

Two Prayers

Big Idea God answered the humble man's prayer.

Bible Passage Jesus Talks about Being Sorry—Luke 18:9–14

Lesson Summary

When people pray, they reveal much about their relationship with God. Some people proudly recount to God how good they are. Others grovel before God and rarely speak of anything but their sin. Still others mechanically go through their prayers, without internalizing their words. Between those extremes are many people who express heartfelt prayers to the Lord.

Jesus told His disciples a parable that contrasted two men who came to the Temple to pray. He wanted everyone to realize that God frowns on people who approach Him in self-righteousness (portrayed by the proud Pharisee). On the other hand, God rewards those who show humility (portrayed by the penitent tax collector).

God opposes those who are proud (James 4:6). Proud people ignore, deny, or rationalize their own shortcomings, but are often quick to point out the errors of others. They see no need to ask God to be merciful to them.

God gives grace to those who are humble (James 4:6). Humble people readily acknowledge their sins. They pray for God to dispense His mercy on their behalf. God is glad to respond to their prayers.

People who are proud and who deny their sin trivialize the significance of Christ's death. 1 John 1:8 warns that if we deny our sin, the truth is not in us. On the other

hand, the next verse, 1 John 1:9 promises that if we confess our sins, God willingly forgives us and cleanses us from unrighteousness.

Preschoolers don't like seeing pride in others, but they often don't recognize times when they, themselves, are being proud. Encourage your children to realize that God forgives them when they humbly admit their faults.

Pray for Wisdom

Righteous Father, have mercy on me, a sinner. Forgive me of my many sins and faults.

Help me explain to the children that You embrace those who are humble and You oppose people who are proud. In Jesus' name, amen.



DISCIPLE TARGETS

In this lesson, children will...

KNOW (knowledge)

- God answered the prayer of a man who was sorry for his sins

FEEL (character)

- Heavy-hearted for their sins and eager to ask God to forgive them

DO (conduct)

- Tell God they are sorry for the wrong things they do

SUPPLIES

General Supplies

- Bibles, Disciple Guides (pages 29-32), Lesson stickers
- Pencils, markers, crayons, puppets (optional)
- Paper, scissors, tape, glue

Welcome & Worship Time

- **PLAY WITH CARS:** small toy cars, newsprint or butcher paper

Bible Time

- Teaching Picture—Two Prayers
- **SNACK**—contrasting foods such as sweet or sour, hard or soft, cold or warm
- **SOCK PUPPETS:** socks

Disciple Time

- Teaching Picture—When Not to Pretend
- **PRAYING HANDS MAGNET:** macaroni, beans, buttons, feathers, sequins or other items, magnetic strips, cardboard or heavy paper

Welcome & Worship Time

Teacher—Welcome each child warmly. Encourage children to bring their offerings to the Lord.

Learn By Doing—Play with Cars

Supplies: small toy cars, newsprint or butcher paper, crayons

(For alternate ideas to introduce this lesson, refer to the *Additional "Learn By Doing" Activities* on page 57.)

Before class, tape newsprint or butcher paper to one of the tables and draw roads. Allow the children to add trees, flowers, houses, etc. Encourage them to use their imagination as they move toy cars around on the table. In the event that a child crashes his car into another or does something to upset another child, take the opportunity to talk about being sorry and asking for forgiveness.

Sing With Joy

Move the children to worship with a favorite song. Select one below or use a preschool songbook or recording.

- *Oh, Be Careful Little Hands* (traditional)
- *This Is My Commandment* (traditional)
- *God Is So Good/He Answers Prayer* (traditional)
- *Jesus, Jesus* (traditional)

Rehearse the Verse

Use the suggested idea below to help your children learn the Bible words. The preschool-friendly paraphrases are based on the Bible verse. Decide which will work best for your children, or use a verse of your choice from the Bible version you prefer.

Lesson Memory Verse: Luke 18:14

"God answered the prayer of the man who was sorry for what he had done."

Monthly Memory Verse: Luke 19:10

"Jesus came to seek and to save people who need God."

Quarter Memory Verse: Mark 4:2

"Jesus the great teacher told people many stories. He said, 'Listen to Me!'"

Seek God's Blessing

Talk with God about your time together with the children today, about the Bible story, and about any special needs.

As you pray, use meaningful and simple words from your heart. The children will learn to pray by listening to you.

Bible Time

Teacher—Bring your preschoolers to Jesus. Encourage them to apply Biblical truths in practical ways.

Tell the Truth



Open your Bible to the passage and place it on your lap. Show the Teaching Picture—Two Prayers as you tell or read the story. (The Bible story is printed on page 54 and on the back of the Teaching Picture.)

The story, *Two Prayers*, is based on Luke 18:9–14. It captures the interest and attention of older preschool children. If you are teaching younger preschoolers, you may want to use the shorter *Summary/Review*.

Explain to the students that they'll pretend to pray two different ways as you tell this story. As you read about the first man, have the students stand up and pretend to be a "show-off." As you read about the second man, have them kneel and fold their hands like someone praying "from the heart."

Disciple Guide—page 29

Place the appropriate stickers (from the sticker page) on the picture as you reinforce the Bible story.

Talk and Snack

Consider serving contrasting foods such as sweet or sour, hard or soft, cold or warm. Tell the children that food like sweet honey cannot also be sour like a pickle. In the same way, the man in the story who thought he was so good could not, at the same time, be sorry for being bad.

While you eat, talk about the Bible story. These questions will help you get started.

- Show how the teacher prayed to God.
- Do you think God was happy with that kind of prayer?
- Show how the banker prayed to God.
- Was God happy with that kind of prayer?
- Did God forgive the teacher? Did He forgive the banker?

Play and Move

Sing and do actions to the tune *The Mulberry Bush*.

"This is the way we dress for church,
dress for church, dress for church.

"This is the way we dress for church, early Sunday morning"
(change day if necessary)

Other verses to use: drive to church, walk to church, pedal to church, skip to church, sit in church, or pray at church.

Disciple Guide—page 31

Look at the pictures and point to the child that is doing something bad in each scene. Ask the children to draw a line from the child doing bad to the praying hands in the center.

Learn By Doing—Sock Puppets

Supplies: two socks for each child (preferably ankle socks)

(For alternate ideas to reinforce the Bible story, refer to the Additional “Learn By Doing” Activities on page 57.)

Give each child a pair of socks and have them put them on their hands. You may choose to have the children use their own socks (be prepared to provide socks for those who are not wearing any). With sock puppets on their hands, show the children how a proud person and a humble person might look when praying. The children may not understand the words “proud” or “humble,” but showing them will help them know the difference. As you repeat the refrains from

the Bible story, the children can act out each person’s prayer with their hand puppets.

(Refrains)

*I’m good! I’m nice! And I’m never bad!
I don’t steal or hit or make people sad.
I give money away and do what I should.
I’m glad I’m so nice! I’m glad I’m so good!*

*I’m sorry, so sorry! I know I’ve been bad.
I’ve made people angry. I’ve made people sad.
Forgive me, God! I’ve not done what I should.
I haven’t been nice. And I haven’t been good.*

Pray for People

Pray that the students would be sorry for their sins and eager to ask God to forgive them.

Bible Story—Two Prayers

(based on Luke 18:9–14)

Some people think they are so very good. They like to show off in front of others. They think they are better than everyone else. And they aren’t sorry for the wrong things they do. These people are very proud.

Jesus told this story about two men. One was proud and the other was humble:

“The first man was a teacher. He was nice to people. He followed the rules and went to church every week. Everyone liked the teacher!

“The second man was a banker. He wasn’t nice at all. He took money from people. He told them lies. And he was mean to nearly everyone he met. Nobody liked him!

“One day, both men went to church to pray. People thought the nice teacher would pray from his heart. But here is the surprise—he didn’t!

“The teacher stood up tall and proud. He bragged about himself out loud:

*I’m good! I’m nice! And I’m rarely bad!
I don’t steal or hit or make people sad.
I give away money and do what I should!
I’m glad I’m so nice! I’m glad I’m so good!’*

“Was God happy with that prayer? No way! That man was just showing off. He put himself first—instead of God!

“Next, it was the banker’s turn to pray. He knew he hadn’t been nice to people, and he felt very sorry for his sins. The banker cried and bowed his head, and this is what that banker said:

*I’m sorry, so sorry! I’ve been very bad.
I’ve made people angry. I’ve made people sad.
Forgive me, oh, God! I’ve not done what I should.
I haven’t been nice. And I haven’t been good.’*

“Was God happy with that prayer? Yes, of course! That man was very sorry for his sins. He prayed from his heart!

“The Lord likes honest, humble prayers,” Jesus told His disciples. “God listens to people who are sorry for their sins. God forgave the banker, but He didn’t hear the teacher’s prayer. God forgives people who are sorry for their sins and who decide to stop doing wrong things.”

Two Prayers (Summary/Review)

Jesus told this story about being humble:

“Two men went to church to pray. One man was a proud teacher. He bragged to God about his good deeds. God was not happy with his prayer!

“The other man bowed low and felt very sorry for his sins. He prayed from his heart for the Lord to forgive him. God was very pleased!”

Jesus told everyone, “The Lord likes honest and humble prayers. God listens to people who are sorry for their sins.”

Disciple Time



Teacher—This special application story complements the Bible story. Select either the narrative or the puppet script on the following page.

Think and Share

After the Dee-Cy-Paul story, talk with your children using these or similar questions.

- What game were Dee, Cy, and Paul playing?
- Have you ever played 'pretend' with your friends?
- When we talk to God should we pretend?
- Do you pray to God from your heart?

Review the Bible Story

Read the Bible Story *Summary/Review* or creatively revisit the Bible story with drama, flannelgraph, or one of your own ideas.

Learn By Doing—

Praying Hands Magnet

Supplies: copies of the praying hands on page 57, crayons, markers, macaroni, beans, buttons, feathers, sequins or other items, magnetic strips, glue, cardboard or heavy paper

(For alternate ideas to reinforce the Bible story, refer to the *Additional "Learn By Doing" Activities* on page 57.)

See activity description on page 57.

Encourage your students to display their praying hands magnet on the refrigerator. It will remind the whole family to pray.

Pray for Life-Change

When students pray, encourage them to tell God that they are sorry for doing bad things.

Dee-Cy-Paul Story "When Not to Pretend"

Dee and Paul were playing 'pretend'.

"Okay, Dee," said Paul. "It's your turn! You pretend to be something and I'll try to guess what you are!"

Dee knelt down on her hands and knees and started meowing. She crawled over to Paul and rubbed her head on his leg. It tickled!

"You're a cat!" shouted Paul.

"Right!" said Dee. "Now it's your turn!"

Paul thought for a moment and then smiled. He pretended to bounce something on the ground and then throw it in the air.

"Hmm...I think you're pretending to be a basketball player!" said Dee.

"Yep," said Paul. "You guessed right!"

Just then, Cy walked up. "Hey! What are you playing?" asked Cy.

"We're playing 'pretend!' they shouted.

"Wow! That's one of my favorite games! Can I play, too?" asked Cy.

Dee nodded. "Of course! And it can be your turn. Go ahead and pretend. We'll try to guess what you are!"

Cy thought of all kinds of neat things he could pretend to be. He could pretend to be a bear or a lion or an eagle. He could pretend to be a firefighter or a jet pilot or a race car driver. Finally, he decided. He lifted his arms up into the air and began growling.

"That's easy!" shouted Paul. "You're Lizardzilla, the giant man-eating iguana!"

"You're right! But how did you guess?"

"Because you're always pretending to be Lizardzilla, the giant man-eating iguana!"

"Oh," said Cy. "I guess I like playing pretend so much I could do it all the time."

Dee agreed, "Me, too!"

But Paul shook his head. "There's one time when we shouldn't play pretend."

"Really?" asked Dee. "When's that?"

"Watch me and see if you can guess!" said Paul.

Paul knelt down and folded his hands together.

Dee and Cy watched him carefully. Everyone was quiet.

Finally, Cy smiled and said, "Are you pretending that you glued your hands together?"

"Oh, brother," said Paul.

Dee giggled. "I don't think that's it, Cy. I'll bet Paul is pretending to pray!" she said, jumping up and down.

"That's right!" said Paul. "Talking to God is one time we shouldn't play pretend!"

"Hmm," said Cy. "But I don't fold my hands and kneel like that when I pray. Sometimes I lift them up in the air."

Paul stood up again. "Well, how you stand or sit when you pray doesn't really matter," he said.

Dee agreed. "As long as you're not showing off or pretending!"

Cy thought about it for a minute and then smiled. "So, it must be what's in our heart that matters most! God wants us to tell Him how we really feel deep down inside—without pretending!"

Dee and Paul nodded and Paul added, "Especially when we've done something wrong and we need to tell Him that we're sorry. God doesn't like to see people showing off when they pray. He just wants them to be honest and talk with Him."

All of a sudden, Cy's tummy grumbled. "My tummy's being honest with me right now. It sounds like Lizardzilla is hungry for a snack! And I'm not pretending. Let's go!" shouted Cy.

And off they went!

Two Prayers

Jesus Talks about Being Sorry
Luke 18:9-14

Name: _____

God is happy when people are sorry for their sins

Jesus told this story about two men who prayed. The first man was a teacher. He was nice to people and everyone liked him! The second man was a banker. He wasn't very nice and didn't have many friends.

One day, both men went to church to pray. The teacher stood up tall and proud, and bragged about himself out loud. God was not happy with that prayer!

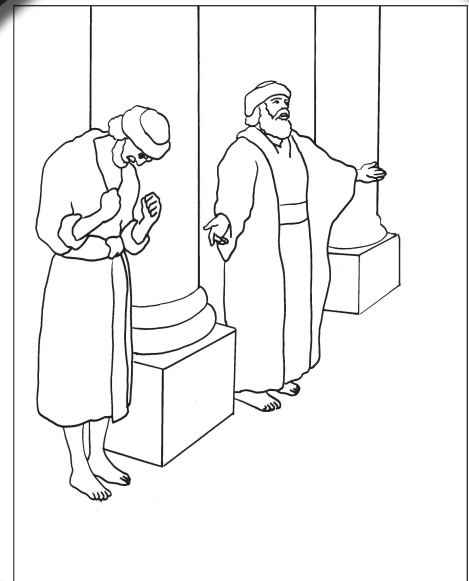
The banker felt very sorry for his sins. He cried and bowed his head and asked God to forgive him. The banker prayed from his heart. God was happy with his prayer!

On that day, God answered the prayer of the banker. He listens to people who are sorry for their sins.

Memory Verse: Jan 2016

"Jesus came to seek and to save people who need God."

Luke 19:10



Jesus Talks about Being Sorry-Luke 18:9-14



Parent Partners

Lesson Focus: God is happy when people are sorry for their sins. (Luke 18:9-14)

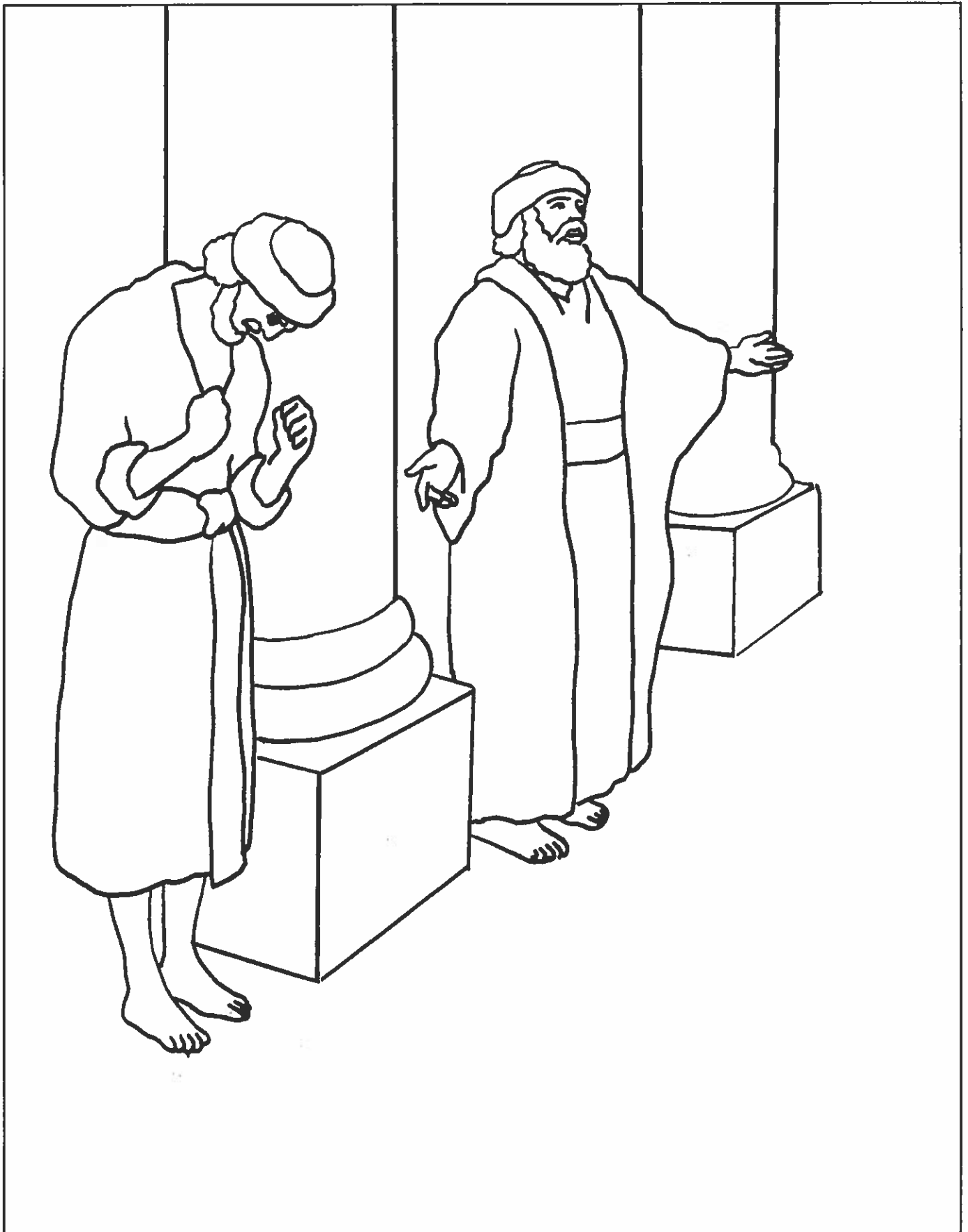
Ways to reinforce this truth with your child:

ASK:

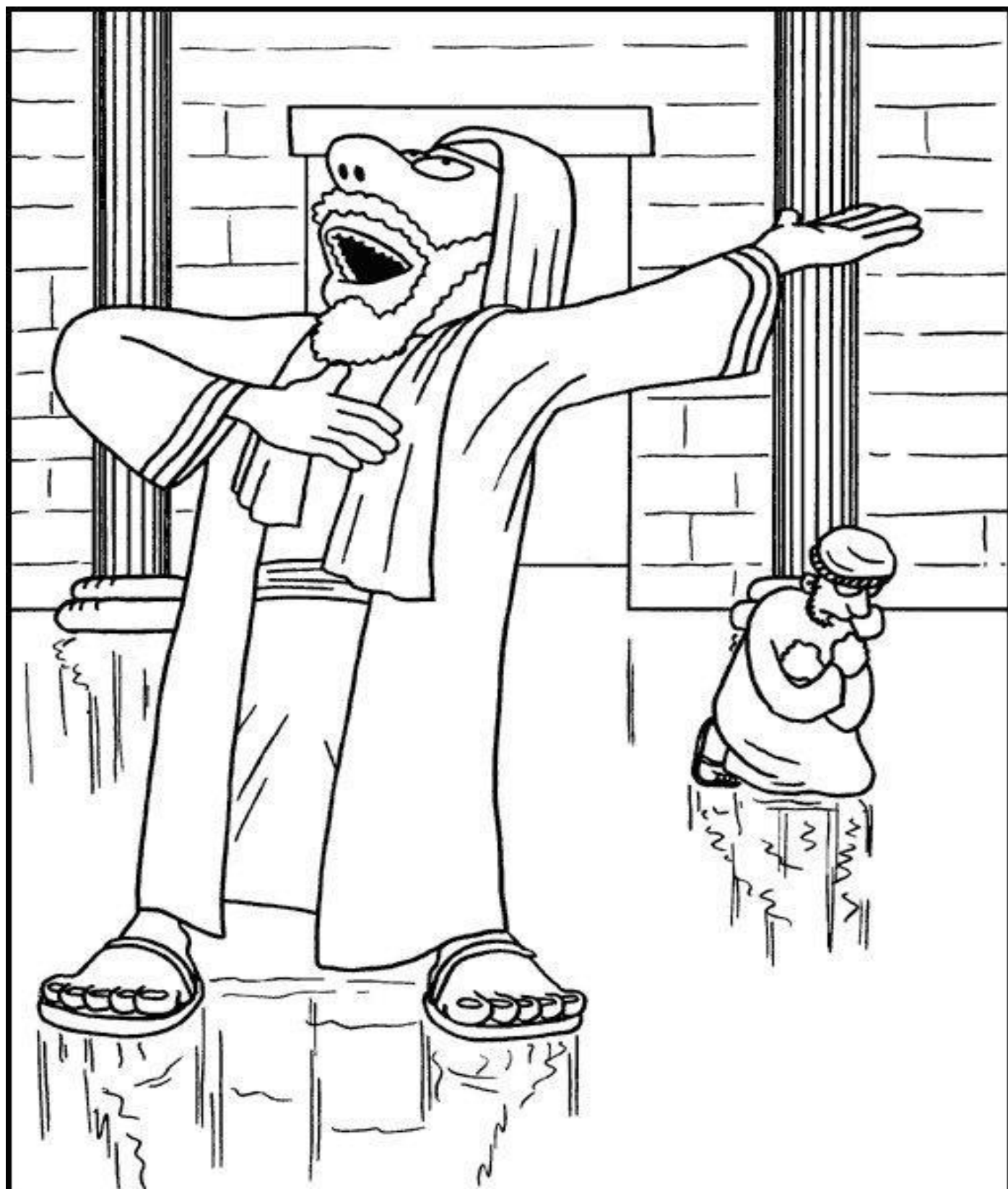
- Show or tell how the teacher and the banker prayed to God.
- Which person prayed from his heart?
- Why was God happy with the banker's prayer?
- Did God forgive the teacher? Did He forgive the banker?

ACT:

- Read the Bible story together (or read the summary on the front of this page).
- Lesson Bible Verse: **Luke 18:14**
"God answered the prayer of the man who was sorry for what he had done."
- When your child has done something wrong, teach him or her to say, "I'm sorry."



#8—Jesus Talks about Being Sorry



"I'm really glad that I'm not like that tax collector..."