

MasterClass #11  
**Don't Believe the Hype**

*Word*

**Scripture Reference**

Luke 18:9-14

**Discussion Questions**

1. What kinds of things or situations are usually hyped in your circle of friends?
2. A hype is an extravagant publicity of a product (or person), exaggerating importance or benefits. Many people sadly fall into this hype trap. Even Christians are drawn to hypes: adoring a certain pastor, preacher, teacher, even to the point of thinking that these people could do or say no wrong; believing miracle products could work because “it works for others.” But hype and reality is as different as day and night. In Jesus’ time, hype was also a problem, and so He used a parable to teach us not to fall into into this trap. Read Luke 18:9-14. This passage is intended for those who believe that they are righteous and often judgmental/critical of others without looking at themselves if they are guilty of the same thing. Discuss how people demonstrate self-righteousness. How do you respond to people who act as if they could never do wrong? Are you guilty of looking down on others? In what way?
3. In this Parable of the Pharisee and Tax Collector, Jesus described two people who went up to the temple to pray (v. 10). One was a pharisee, a religious leader and expert of the Jewish law; the other one was a tax collector who worked for an oppressive Roman government and was considered by his fellow Jews as a traitor for being corrupt. By looking at both men’s “careers,” everyone is quick to consider the pharisee as more righteous than the tax collector and would assume that God would listen to

the pharisee’s prayer and not the tax collector’s. This proves that people often make assumptions about a person based on a person’s occupation, outward looks, or singular action. Discuss how it is so true even in the Christian circle. Do you believe that there are religious people (such as pastors) who could be dishonest, and that there are government employees (such as of BIR) that are honest and love the Lord? What does it tell you about the assumptions that you make about other people?

4. The common notion is to assume that the pharisee was the spiritual one and the tax collector was a crook. However, their contrasting prayers show us otherwise. We draw out from the passage three principles that give us the criteria for correctly assessing your own or someone else’s spirituality (v. 11-13).
  - a. **How does one view God?** How you see God is demonstrated in prayer and worship life, which should be pointing to God and not to yourself. Read again the prayer of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector. How did their prayers and attitude spoke of how they view God? Who do you think would God love to listen to? Examine yourself honestly. Do you identify with the pharisee or the tax collector? Why?
  - b. **How does one view grace?** God’s grace is an indication of spirituality. The pharisee really believed that he was better than others and thought that he was entitled to the good things he had. How was the tax collector’s prayer so different from the Pharisee’s prayer? What did he ask God for (v. 13)? How did they view grace differently? How do you view all the blessings that God has been bestowing on you? Are they something you deserve, or are they God’s grace granted to you? Why?
  - c. **How does one see themselves?** True spirituality is the acknowledgement of your standing as a sinner unable to reach God through good works. It is recognizing that God enables you to approach Him by faith. Read again how the prayers of these two men spoke of their inward spiritual condition. How did they view themselves? How do you see yourself? Do you believe that you are a sinner saved by grace? Why?

### Walk

*“I tell you, this man (tax collector) 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.” (Luke 18:14).*

Jesus declared the tax collector as righteous, which must have shocked His listeners. Spirituality is based on humbling oneself before God instead of exalting oneself. Assess yourself in your spirituality or others who claim to be spiritual by asking these questions:

- How do they or I view God?
- How do they or I view grace?
- How do they or I view themselves in order to cut through the hype and get to the truth yourself.

### Worship & Prayer

*Heavenly Father, thank You that through Your Word You taught me what is the real basis for spirituality. Help me Lord that my actions will come from how I view You and my prayers will point others only to You. I acknowledge that it's Your grace that has saved me from my sins through Jesus Christ. Thank you that as a sinner saved by grace, I can approach you anytime through worship and prayer. Lord God, may You help me to live in real humbleness before You and acknowledge You in all aspects of my life. In Jesus' name. Amen.*