

Luke 18

Parables on Prayer and Wealth

Study Summary and Learning Objectives

In this study, we will be highlighting parts of Luke 18 to discuss trust: how prayer transforms it, to what degree we are called to give it and ultimately how Jesus is worthy of it.

Objectives

- To see how persistent prayer transforms our trust in God
- To hear the call to trust God like a child does, and to put our trust exclusive in Him, even if it requires all that we have
- To see how trust God is trustworthy and faithful, even to the point of death

Steps to Prepare (For Leaders)

- Familiarize yourself with all of Luke 18, but let your group know we will only be doing an overview, for the sake of time (feel free to use the study summary as an intro to the study if you so choose).

Questions for Discussion

Pray for your group to open your time together.

? Have you ever had a situation in your life where you needed to completely (or maybe blindly) trust someone? What was the outcome?

Read Out Loud: Luke 18:1-8 (NIV)

¹ Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. ² He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. ³ And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' ⁴ "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care what people think, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually come and attack me!" ⁶ And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷ And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? ⁸ I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

? What is the point of the parable according to verse 1?

- Why is persistent prayer important?

Possible Answer: The point is about persistently praying for things and trusting in God to bring about justice. Persistence in prayer displays our faithfulness to God and submits our will to Him and shows our trust in Him.

? What are the similarities and differences between the judge and God? Do they have different motives for bringing about justice?

Possible Answers: Similarities: God and the judge both answer the pleas of the people, Differences: God is just and cares for His people; He answers out of care and compassion; The judge answers out of annoyance and relents due to the woman's persistence

? Jesus reveals an important point in verse 8, that prayer and faith are connected. Why do you think he makes this connection?

Possible Answer: By prayer and petition, you are putting your faith in God to act. We are putting out trust and confidence in God alone, coming before Him like we would a powerful judge.

? Knowing that God is just and that He hears our prayers, how does this influence and affect the way you pray? Does that change your level of trust in Him?

Read Out Loud: Luke 18:15-17 (NIV)

¹⁵ People were also bringing babies to Jesus for him to place his hands on them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. ¹⁶ But Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." ¹⁷ Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

? What ways are children different from adults?

Possible Answer: They are more trusting, they do not question people so much, they are less skeptical, they receive joy more easily, they have genuine faith.

? What does it mean to receive the kingdom of heaven like a child?

Possible answer: to trust God more fully, to be dependent upon Him for our needs, to believe what he says

? When we look to God to fulfill our needs like a child looks to a parent, how does this change our trust in God?

Possible Answer: The degree to which a child must trust his or her parent is astronomical. A child is entirely dependent on his or her parent. Young children can't survive without them. When we become fully dependent on God, this brings about peace. The degree to which we trust God should be like our moment-by-moment survival depended solely on Him!

Read Out Loud: Luke 18:18-29 (NIV)

¹⁸ A certain ruler asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ¹⁹ "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone." ²⁰ You know the commandments: 'You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.'" ²¹ "All these I have kept since I was a boy," he said. ²² When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." ²³ When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was very wealthy. ²⁴ Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." ²⁶ Those who heard this asked, "Who then can be saved?"

²⁷ Jesus replied, "What is impossible with man is possible with God." ²⁸ Peter said to him, "We have left all we had to follow you!" ²⁹ "Truly I tell you," Jesus said to them, "no one who has left home or wife or brothers or sisters or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God ³⁰ will fail to receive many times as much in this age, and in the age to come eternal life."

? Beginning in verse 19, Jesus is talking with a ruler. The ruler had kept every commandment but Jesus says he was still lacking something and must sell all of his possessions. What was it that the ruler was lacking, and how would selling his possessions change this status?

Possible Answer: The ruler was lacking full trust in Jesus and he found security in wealth instead; he couldn't be "all-in" and trust Jesus without leaving everything behind to follow Him.

? Why is the ruler saddened by what Jesus is asking him to do? Would you find it hard to sell all of your possessions, why or why not?

Possible Answers: He was sad to sell his possessions because he trusted more in them than in God. Selling his possessions puts him in a place of vulnerability he isn't willing to go to.

? Trusting in God fully requires maximum vulnerability. Why is it often easier to trust in tangible things, such as wealth, instead of God?

Possible Answers: Sin blinds us into believing that tangible things, such as wealth, are worthier of our trust than God. Tangible things don't require as deep a level of vulnerability and don't ask for anything from us.

Read Out Loud: Luke 18:31-33 (NIV)

³¹ Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, “We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. ³² He will be delivered over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him and spit on him; ³³ they will flog him and kill him. On the third day he will rise again.”

Read Out Loud: Jesus came with a mission, which had always been to end in Jerusalem, where he says he will die and rise again. Here we see how God is faithful towards our trust: in the cross and in the resurrection!

? How does Jesus’ death and resurrection show His trustworthiness?

Possible Answers: Jesus is fully just, to the point of becoming our sacrifice; He trusts God with everything He has, even His life. In His death and resurrection we see that He is true to His word and does what He says He will do!

? What kind of example did Jesus set for our level of trust in God? How can we follow His example more fully?

Possible Answers: Jesus trusted God to the point of death. He gave up everything and was totally poured out and vulnerable to God. He trusted God and was willing to follow Him no matter the circumstances.

For Discussion and Accountability

? What things hold you back from completely and vulnerably trusting God?

? In what ways would your life change if you fully trusted God the way Jesus did?