

be **interior**, it must be **pure**, it must be **spiritual**, it must be **personal**, it must be **private** (behind closed doors), it must be **continual**, it must be **innocent**, it must be **FULL OF LOVE!** In this parable, the best that can be said of the attitude needed for the proper elevation of the soul to God is placed before us - in bold print.

“Two men went up to the Temple to pray, the one a Pharisee and the other a publican.”

No doubt - the Pharisee was a man of God in the eyes of anyone who came into contact with him. He was surely very highly respected as being a holy man - because he did all the things holy men do. No one could question that.

The publican was the collector of revenue, and therefore considered to be a most undesirable and wretched kind of man. The publican was one to be shunned by respectable - God fearing - people.

Not only in real life, but also in this well selected parable, these two men stand out in bold relief, and while the two are sharply contrasted, there are points of likeness in them as well as points of difference. The main distinction does not lie in the fact that one was a good man and the other a bad man. The truth of the matter is that BOTH of them were evil: both were sinners. In the end, one sinner was a sinner forgiven, and the other sinner was a sinner unforgiven. At the outset, however, both equally were sinners.

At first there was nothing to determine a difference between these two men in their relation with God. The hinge on which the great difference in them turned was not the different kinds and quantities of sin which they had committed, but the opposite grounds on which they placed their trust. Both went at the same time to the same place to pray. Both adopted the same attitude in the exercise of their prayer. Both stood while they addressed themselves to God in prayer. Any onlooker present in the Temple at that moment would have seen only the great similarity between the two. But **how** they prayed - that which no onlooker could see - THAT WAS THE DIFFERENCE - and here the contrast began sharply. How they prayed - the part that only God could see - showed NO similarity between the two. As much as the proud boaster dealt with himself and **interiorly and profoundly** contemplated his own goodness, so much did the humble man **interiorly and profoundly** deal with the unworthiness in himself, and in his prayer contemplated the shameful viciousness of his sinful life. The sin of the humble man was always before him. These two men both ALIKE looked into their own hearts and lives. Both ALIKE permitted the judgment thus formed to determine the matter of their prayer. Both ALIKE addressed themselves to the work of self-scrutiny, and the prayers that resulted from their careful scrutiny were the fruits of their research.