

***“Reviewing the Week by How I Speak” (Justification)***  
***(Study 2 of “Spiritual Processing Group: Sonship B” Series)***

**Opening Question** (10 Minutes)

1. Our words have power. Take a few moments to think of an example when someone said something that deeply affected you. Who said it? What did they say? How did it make you feel?
  - If you’re having trouble, start with a strong feeling from today or this past week. Was there a social interaction that made you feel warm and encouraged or sad or angry? Tell us about it. (Who said what? What was the scene? How were you before then after?)

Let’s take a look at a story Jesus told about the power of *our* words- spoken about ourselves, spoken about others, and spoken to God...

**Scripture Study** (10-15 Minutes)

Read Luke 18:9-14 (you can ask two people to read it aloud- one in ESV, and the other in NLT)

1. Be quiet for 30 seconds. Think or write. Now what are your first impressions?
  - What’s your emotional, gut-reaction?
  - Ask a question you have (or can think of).
  - Volunteer a thought or comment- about a verse or the whole passage.
2. Imagine yourself in the place of the self-reliant Pharisee. Name a few specific things that make God like you or make your life work.
3. Imagine yourself in the place of the self-doubting Tax Collector. Name a few specific things that make you a sinner who needs God’s mercy.
4. Why do you think Jesus is telling this story?
  - In your own words, what does verse 9 tell us about Jesus’ intended audience?
    - Do you feel like you are in that intended audience? Why or why not?
  - What do you think Jesus means by “justified”?
    - How does the word “justified” (to declare just or righteous) relate to “humbled” and “exalted”?
    - Who is doing the justifying, humbling, and exalting?
    - On what basis are we justified, humbled, or exalted?

**Scripture Passage (Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector)**

Luke, Chapter 18- English Standard Version Translation (ESV): <sup>9</sup> 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, Chapter 18- New Living Translation (NLT): <sup>9</sup> Then Jesus told this story to some who had great confidence in their own righteousness and scorned everyone else: <sup>10</sup> “Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a despised tax collector. <sup>11</sup> The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer: ‘I thank you, God, that I am not like other people—cheaters, sinners,

adulterers. I'm certainly not like that tax collector! <sup>12</sup> I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income.' <sup>13</sup> "But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, 'O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.' <sup>14</sup> I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

### Group Discussion (25-30 minutes)

#### Spiritual Exercise: "The Tongue Exercise"

1. *Let's review this past week. Think of a few times (two or three moments) **when** you complained, boasted, defended yourself, accused, criticized, blame shifted (made excuses), or gossiped (spread a bad report about someone)?*

- Take 5-10 minutes to prayerfully think through *and/or* write down some examples using your phone, a journal, or the space provided in the handout.
- Would a few of you share a moment when you said the above?

2. *Choose one of the above moments that came to mind, and...*

(a) *Ask yourself (and try to answer) **why** you said that.*

(b) *Ask yourself (and try to answer): what felt weak or wrong about you in that moment?*

(c) *What rule about how you trust in yourself was threatened or broken?*

- Take 5 minutes to prayerfully think through *and/or* write down the answers to the above questions.
- Would a few different people share a motive that was operating in that moment?

3. Now speak the gospel...

(a) *To yourself: "Jesus loves **me** (insert your name) when I feel strong and right. And he is also for me when I feel wrong and weak. When I say (insert a moment) because of (insert a motive); he died for that too! We are all good! I am his, and he is mine!"*

- Let's take some time to actually fill-in-the-blanks and say this. These words can be mouthed aloud or said silently to yourself in your head.

(b) *To someone else: "Jesus loves **you** (insert his or her name) when you feel strong and right. And he is also for you when you feel wrong and weak. When you say (insert a moment) because of (insert a motive); he died for that too! You are all good with God! You are his, and he is yours!"*

- Let's take some time to practice this as a group. Would a few of you share your moment and motive? And would a few others match up individually with the other volunteers and speak the words above over that person?

### Group Prayer (15 Minutes)

Ideas for Communal & Personal Prayer. Share for yourself, pray for person to your **right**:

1. Here is a reflection questions to ask yourself and- if time permits- share about:

*What's one thing you're processing about yourself from our time together?*

- (Is there a related question or comment that is sticking with you?)
- (For instance, is there something you're feeling or thinking about the spiritual exercise?)
- Is there a praise, a confession, a word of thanks, or a request you'd like to make about what you're processing?

2. Is there something else going on that what can we pray about for you?