

1. The contrast:

Pharisee

Stood up  
Prayed about himself  
Mentioned what he'd done  
Went home feeling good

Tax Collector

Stood at a distance  
Prayed about God  
Mentioned who he was  
Went home justified

2. When our comparisons go horizontally:

- a. We'll always find others better or worse than us
- b. We'll always have reason to doubt God's standard
  - i. Romans 3:10-11 - "no one" means "no one"
  - ii. Romans 3:23 - "all" means "all"
  - iii. When we compare ourselves to others, we lose the clarity of those words
- c. Ultimately, we'll set the standard based on what we're already doing
  - i. "I fast"
  - ii. "I tithe"
  - iii. People who ask you about things they know they have the answer to
- d. BOTTOM LINE: We control the timing and condition of redemption
  - i. Some
  - ii. Works based

3. When our comparisons go vertically:

- a. We'll never find others better or worse than us
- b. We'll never have reason to doubt God's standards
- c. Ultimately, God sets the standard based on who He is
  - i. 1 Peter 1:15-16
  - ii. Romans 3:24
- d. BOTTOM LINE: God controls the timing and condition of redemption
  - i. All
  - ii. Grace based

4. Some applications

- a. Be near God continually
- b. Be humble
- c. Our acceptance of everyone is based on God's sacrifice for everyone (Rom. 3:23-24)
- d. See God as more than just the One who accepts us; he is the finisher, too. (Phil. 1:6)
- e. The finished product? Like Jesus!
  - i. Romans 8:29
  - ii. John 3:30