SMITH FOR CHRIST

TEACHING THE WORD · WATCHING THE TIMES

REFLECTION JOURNAL · FIVE DAYS

Luke

Chapter 18

Who Receives the Kingdom?

MEMORY VERSE · LUKE 18:13

“But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, the sinner!’”

THIS JOURNAL BELONGS TO _____

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

This week in Luke 18

This week Jesus introduces you to people nobody would have picked — a widow who would not quit, a tax collector who could not look up, babies in their mothers' arms, and a blind beggar who would not be quiet. Every one of them received something from God, and the rich man who had everything walked away sad. Come to Him this week with empty hands; that is exactly how He wants you.

How to use this journal

1. Each day, read the passage slowly — out loud if you can.
2. Answer the **Observe** question from the text before you write what it means.
3. Write honestly on the **Reflect** questions. No one grades this.
4. Do the **Respond** step today, not someday. Say the memory verse.
5. Bring this journal to the group. The last page is for the table.

The full Deep Dive, the O·I·A study and the slides for this chapter are on the Luke study page.

WHERE I AM AS I START THIS CHAPTER

What is going on in my life right now that I want to bring to God this week?

DAY 1 OF 5

Do Not Lose Heart

READ · LUKE 18:1–8

OBSERVE — WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Why did Jesus tell this parable, and what made the unrighteous judge finally give the widow legal protection (18:1, 4–5)?

REFLECT

Jesus told this story so that we would "pray and not … lose heart" (18:1). What have you stopped praying for because the answer seemed too slow?

REFLECT

If even an unjust judge gave in, Jesus asks, "will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night?" (18:7). How does knowing God is nothing like that judge change the way you pray?

RESPOND — TODAY

Write down one prayer you gave up on, and pray it again every day this week, morning and night.

☐ READ IT ☐ PRAYED IT ☐ SAID THE MEMORY VERSE (LUKE 18:13)

DAY 2 OF 5

Be Merciful to Me

READ · LUKE 18:9–14

OBSERVE — WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Where did each man stand, what did each one say to God, and which one went home justified (18:11–14)?

REFLECT

The Pharisee prayed, "God, I thank You that I am not like other people" (18:11). Who do you compare yourself to so that you feel better about yourself?

REFLECT

The tax collector brought nothing but his sin and said, "God, be merciful to me, the sinner!" (18:13). What would it feel like to come to God today with no excuses and no record to show — only a need for mercy?

RESPOND — TODAY

Pray the tax collector's prayer slowly, three times today, and then thank God that He sent His Son so sinners like you could go home justified (18:14).

☐ READ IT ☐ PRAYED IT ☐ SAID THE MEMORY VERSE (LUKE 18:13)

DAY 3 OF 5

Like a Child, or Like the Ruler

READ · LUKE 18:15–23

OBSERVE — WHAT DOES IT SAY?

What did the disciples do when people brought babies to Jesus, what did Jesus say, and what was the "one thing" the ruler still lacked (18:15–16, 22)?

REFLECT

Jesus said whoever does not "receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all" (18:17). A baby brings nothing and simply receives. Where are you still trying to earn what God wants to give you?

REFLECT

The ruler "became very sad, for he was extremely rich" (18:23). What is the "one thing" in your life that you would walk away from Jesus rather than let go of?

RESPOND — TODAY

Name your "one thing" honestly in prayer, and take one concrete step this week to loosen its grip — give something away, end something, or tell someone.

☐ READ IT ☐ PRAYED IT ☐ SAID THE MEMORY VERSE (LUKE 18:13)

DAY 4 OF 5

Possible with God

READ · LUKE 18:24–34

OBSERVE — WHAT DOES IT SAY?

What did the people ask after Jesus spoke of the camel and the needle, how did Jesus answer, and what did He say would happen to Him in Jerusalem (18:26–27, 31–33)?

REFLECT

“The things that are impossible with people are possible with God” (18:27). What change in your life, or in someone you love, have you decided is impossible?

REFLECT

Jesus told His men exactly what was waiting in Jerusalem — mocked, spit upon, scourged, killed — and went anyway (18:31–33). What does it mean to you that He walked toward the cross knowing all of it, for you?

RESPOND — TODAY

Thank Jesus by name for each thing He said He would suffer in verses 32–33, and then give Him the “impossible” thing you named.

☐ READ IT ☐ PRAYED IT ☐ SAID THE MEMORY VERSE (LUKE 18:13)

DAY 5 OF 5

Son of David, Have Mercy

READ · LUKE 18:35–43

OBSERVE — WHAT DOES IT SAY?

What did the blind man do when he heard Jesus was passing by, what did the crowd tell him, and what did he do after he received his sight (18:38–39, 43)?

REFLECT

When people told the blind man to be quiet, "he kept crying out all the more" (18:39). What voices — inside or around you — tell you to stop asking Jesus for help?

REFLECT

Jesus stopped and asked, "What do you want Me to do for you?" (18:41). If He asked you that today, what would you honestly say, and is that your deepest need?

RESPOND — TODAY

Answer Jesus' question in writing today — "Lord, I want..." — and then, like the man who "began following Him, glorifying God" (18:43), do one thing that shows you are following Him.

☐ READ IT ☐ PRAYED IT ☐ SAID THE MEMORY VERSE (LUKE 18:13)

WHEN THE GROUP MEETS

Questions for the table

FOR THE GROUP · 1

Both parables in 18:1–14 are about prayer. What does honest, persistent prayer look like for men like us, and how can we keep each other from losing heart?

FOR THE GROUP · 2

The disciples tried to keep the babies away from Jesus, and the crowd tried to silence the blind man (18:15, 39). Who are the people our church or group might be keeping away from Jesus without meaning to?

FOR THE GROUP · 3

Peter said, "we have left our own homes and followed You," and Jesus promised "many times as much" (18:28–30). What have men in this group given up to follow Jesus, and how have we seen God make it up to us?

MY PRAYER

God, be merciful to me, the sinner; I come with nothing in my hands, and today I ask You to…

CUT OUT · CARRY IT · LUKE 18:13

"But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'"