

YWAC

Young Women Active for Christ

PRIDE

Katie and Lindsey go to the same high school.

Katie is popular. She's a "good girl" and hangs out with a good group of kids. The teachers and other students like her, and she is involved in lots of things at school. She has always gone to church. Her dad is a deacon and her mom sings in the choir. Katie helps teach the toddler class on Sunday nights and is very active in her youth group. She even leads a devotion group at her school once a week during break time.

Lindsey hangs out a pretty wild group of kids. She's smart, but she skips class sometimes and doesn't try very hard to make good grades. The teachers get frustrated with her bad attitude and sometimes she gets in trouble at school. She and her parents only go to church on Christmas and Easter, when they visit her grandparents, so Lindsey doesn't know much about God or the Bible.

One night, Lindsey came to a youth group meeting at Katie's church. After the youth pastor spoke, both girls prayed. Katie smiled and thanked God that she wasn't a "bad girl" like Lindsey. She told God about all the good things that she did and about how she was such a good person.

Lindsey sat in her chair with her head bowed and cried. She asked God to have mercy on her and forgive her for her sins.

With which girl do you think God was the most pleased?

Read Luke 18:9-14

In this parable, Jesus tells about two men: a Pharisee and a publican.

The Pharisees were religious leaders who believed that you had to follow the law exactly. They studied God's Word and knew the law. They were basically experts on what you could and couldn't do, and they liked to show off their religious knowledge whenever they got the chance. Pharisees often thought they were better than everyone else because they followed the law. They looked down on people who sinned and often pointed out the sins of others.

Publicans were tax collectors. These guys were despised by everyone. They worked for the government and were known for being corrupt. Basically, they were thieves. The government told them how much money they needed to collect for taxes, and everything they collected over that amount, they were allowed to keep. So tax collectors would often take more money than they needed from the people in order to fill their own pockets.

Jesus told this story to a group of people who thought they were better than everyone else. Luke 18:9 says that they "trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others." In other words, they were self-righteous and full of pride.

Pride is one of the main ways Satan tempts us. Look up the story of Jesus' temptation in Matthew 4:1-11. If Satan tried to use pride to tempt Jesus, you know he will use it against you.



When things are going good for us and we are doing the things we are supposed to do, it is easy for us to get caught up in pride. We start to think we are in control—that we are the ones making good things happen. We put ourselves up on a pedestal, and we start to look down to others and judge them.

That’s exactly what the Pharisee was doing to the publican. That’s exactly what Katie was doing to Lindsey. That’s NOT what Jesus wants us to do.

Jesus doesn’t want us to walk around like we’re better than everyone else. Remember what His word says about sin in Romans 3:23? It says that “ALL have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (emphasis added). In reality, we are all the same. We are all sinners. We have all messed up. We all deserve punishment.

Thankfully, we are also all loved by God. He offers us all forgiveness and mercy and justification through His son, Jesus. The song “Used To Do It Too” by Lecrae says, “It ain’t about what you do, it’s about what HE did” (emphasis added). That quote is great, because it helps us remember that our salvation is not about something WE do. It is all about trusting in Jesus and the sacrifice that HE made for us. We have no right to be full of pride and think that we are better than other people just because we are saved, because we didn’t do anything to be saved.

Instead of being full of pride and all wrapped up in ourselves, Jesus taught us to be *all* wrapped up in *Him*. Look up Matthew 22:37 and write it here:

According to this verse, how are you supposed to love God?

With all your _____

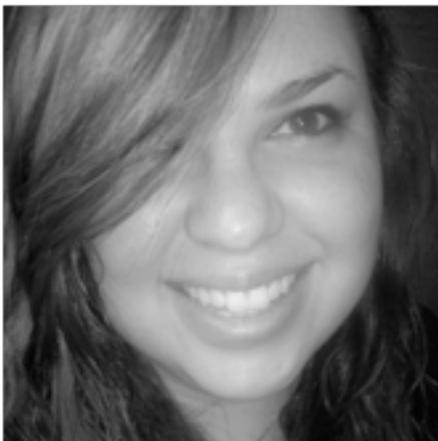
With all your _____

With all your _____

If you love God like that, there is no room for pride in your life.

Katie thought she loved God in these ways, but she allowed herself to become self-righteous. That’s what happened to the Pharisee, too. They were both good people who tried to do what was right, but they lost focus on God and His love and grace and started to focus on themselves.

Don’t get caught up and consumed with self; try to keep your focus *all* on God.



About the Author:

Christina Hopper lives in Vernon, Alabama. She is a member of Sulphur Springs Free Will Baptist Church where she teaches the Junior Youth Group and is a member of the Children’s Ministry Team. She is currently a Junior at Mississippi University for Women where she is pursuing a degree in English Education and Creative Writing.