



Grab On

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To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. Luke 18:9-14

Imagine you and your best friend are hiking up a huge mountain. The view is amazing, but then—you come to a super dangerous, narrow path along the edge of a cliff! You both move slowly, trying to be careful. But suddenly—one of you slips!

You’re hanging off the edge, gripping onto the rocky cliff for dear life. Your hands are getting tired. You know you can’t hold on much longer. Then, you see your friend reaching out a hand and saying, “Grab on! I’ll pull you up!”

But instead of taking the help, you think, “I can do it on my own. I’m strong enough!” You keep trying to pull yourself up, but no matter how hard you try, you just can’t do it.

Sometimes, we think we can do things all by ourselves. We might feel like we’re smarter, stronger, or better than others. And while it’s great to know our strengths, thinking we’re better than other people can lead to pride, which is a big problem.

That’s what happened in today’s Bible story. The Pharisee thought he was better than everyone else, including the tax collector. He believed he was good enough to get into heaven on his own. But here’s the truth—he wasn’t! Just like the man hanging off the cliff, he needed help.

The tax collector, on the other hand, knew he had messed up. He didn’t try to act like he was better than others. Instead, he asked God for mercy. And that’s exactly what God gave him!

The same is true for us. No matter how hard we try, we can’t save ourselves. But guess what? Jesus can! He’s reaching out his hand to us, ready to pull us up. All we have to do is trust him!

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Questions to Consider

Have you ever needed help with something? What was it?

Who is always there to help you, no matter what?

Have you ever been really sure about something, but then found out you were wrong? How did that feel?

Who is never wrong and always knows what's best?

When you feel bad about something you've done, like the tax collector did, what can you always be sure of?

Look at how the Pharisee and the tax collector prayed. What does Jesus want us to learn about how we should pray?

Proverbs 16:18 says, "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall." What do you think this means in connection to today's devotion? How can we make sure we don't become too proud?