

THE GOD WHO SEES—Discussion guide

(Luke 7:36-50)

1. When have you been in a situation in which you wished that people could see something about you that they couldn't and what did you want them to see?
2. How did it impact you to have this aspect of you go unseen?
3. Read [Luke 7:36-50](#) below and answer the questions that follow.

One of the Pharisees asked him over for a meal. He went to the Pharisee's house and sat down at the dinner table. Just then a woman of the village, the town harlot, having learned that Jesus was a guest in the home of the Pharisee, came with a bottle of very expensive perfume and stood at his feet, weeping, raining tears on his feet. Letting down her hair, she dried his feet, kissed them, and anointed them with the perfume. When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man was the prophet I thought he was, he would have known what kind of woman this is who is falling all over him."

Jesus said to him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Oh? Tell me." "Two men were in debt to a banker. One owed five hundred silver pieces, the other fifty. Neither of them could pay up, and so the banker canceled both debts. Which of the two would be more grateful?" Simon answered, "I suppose the one who was forgiven the most." "That's right," said Jesus.

Then turning to the woman, but speaking to Simon, he said, "Do you see this woman? I came to your home; you provided no water for my feet, but she rained tears on my feet and dried them with her hair. You gave me no greeting, but from the time I arrived she hasn't quit kissing my feet. You provided nothing for freshening up, but she has soothed my feet with perfume. Impressive, isn't it? She was forgiven many, many sins, and so she is very, very grateful. If the forgiveness is minimal, the gratitude is minimal."

Then he spoke to her: "I forgive your sins." That set the dinner guests talking behind his back: "Who does he think he is, forgiving sins!" He ignored them and said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

- How do you think those present at the meal—apart from Simon—reacted to the woman's and Simon's actions (or lack thereof)?
 - What are the key points you believe Jesus is trying to make through the story he tells and drawing attention to the woman?
4. Read the Philip Yancey quote below. What kind of people do you tend to be critical toward, in the way Simon was critical toward the woman and Jesus?
 5. Read the comments by Catherine Marshall in *Spiritual Classics* below. What specific things could you pray about now that would be a step toward overcoming that prejudicial, judgmental spirit?
 - A critical spirit focuses us on ourselves and makes us unhappy. We lose perspective and humor
 - A critical spirit blocks the positive creative thoughts God longs to give us
 - A critical spirit can prevent good relationships between individuals and often produces retaliatory criticalness
 - Criticalness blocks the work of the Spirit of God, love, good will, mercy
 - Whenever we see something genuinely wrong in another person's behavior, rather than criticize him or her directly, or—far worse—gripe about him behind his back, we should ask the Spirit of God to do the correction needed

In his book, *Guilt and Grace*, the Swiss doctor Paul Tournier, a man of deep personal faith, admits, "I cannot study this very serious problem of guilt with you without raising the very obvious and tragic fact that religion—my own as well as that of all believers—can crush instead of liberate." Tournier tells of patients who come to him: a man harboring guilt over an old sin, a woman who cannot put out of her mind an abortion that took place ten years before. What the patients truly seek, says Tournier, is grace. Yet in some churches they encounter shame, the threat of punishment, and a sense of judgment. In short, when they look in the church for grace, they often find ungrace.

- Philip Yancey, *What's So Amazing About Grace?*