

A NOTE TO PARENTS

One of Jesus's favorite teaching tools was the parable. Parables are little stories that reveal God's ways with us. These stories of fathers, masters, kings, judges, shepherds, farmers, and hosts are not meant to be de-coded into simple statements of belief or morals. They are meant to introduce us to a Person ... to help us recognize him when he acts in our own lives.

In today's parable, a father asks his children for help. One says "Yes," but does nothing. The other says "No!" but then later goes and helps. Jesus asks, "Who really did the father's will?" The answer is so obvious, and the situation in the parable is so instantly recognizable and familiar (especially to parents) that we are tempted to stop right there. It's very easy to take a story like this one, and use it simply as a moral lesson, whose bottom line is "Obey your parents." We need to be reminded that the father in the story stands for God, not for ourselves as parents.

In fact, the story in its setting is a warning to fine-talking people of all kinds, to put their money where their mouth is. Jesus was terribly hard on people who knew all the right answers and were quick to judge or admonish others, but failed to make deep transformations in their own ways of doing things. Parents, like Jesus' Pharisees, are especially at risk here, since they stand as moral teachers or examples for their children.

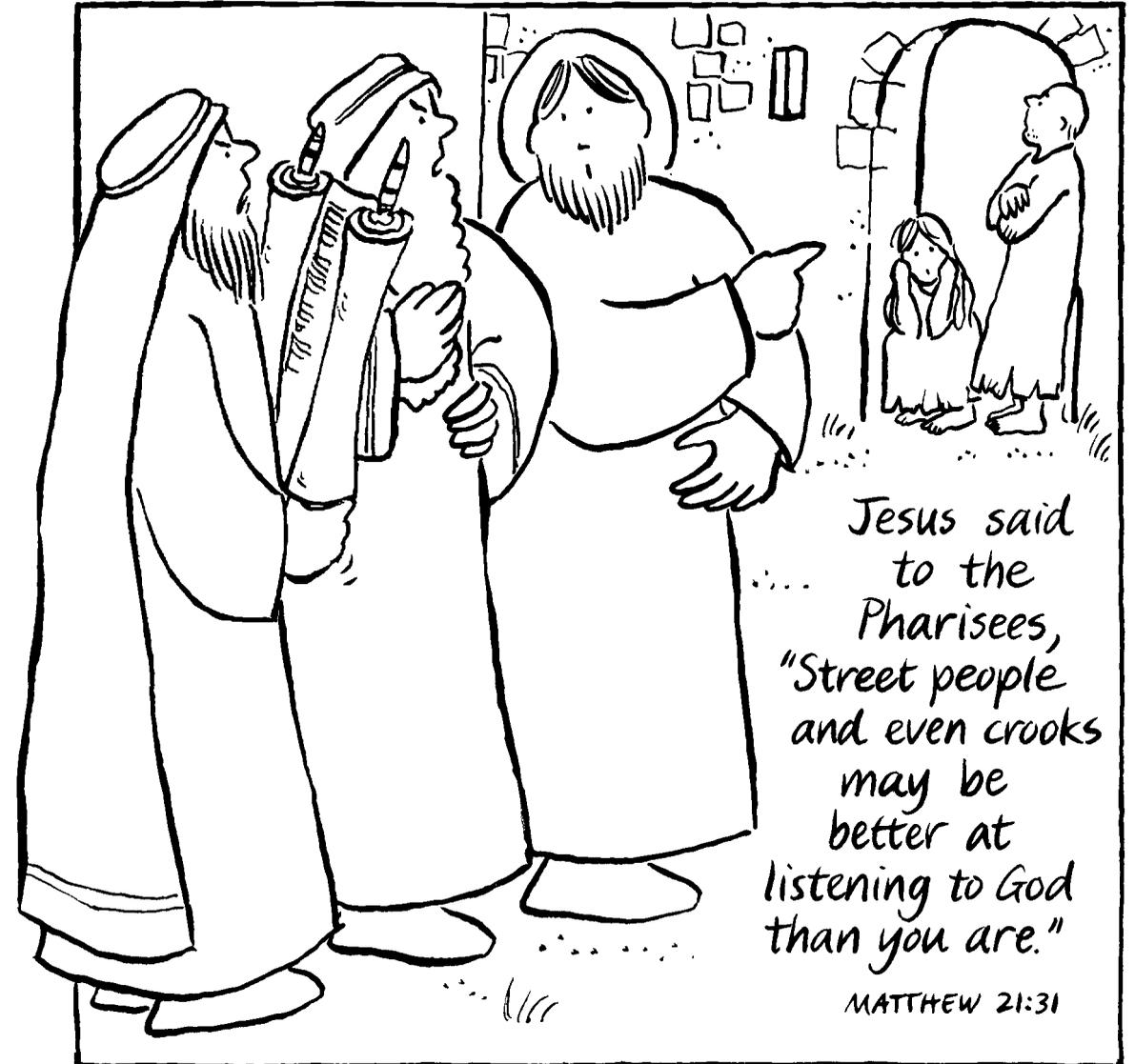
Talk with your child about *listening*. To listen for God, you need your heart as well as your ears. How do we listen for God's voice in our hearts? What does it sound like? What does it say? What can we do to answer its call? Talk about doing God's work. Jesus used the image of working in a vineyard or a field, to convey the idea of caring for a living, growing thing that is precious to its master. What is our "vineyard" to which our Father calls us? Do we say "yes" or "no"? And do we do what we say? Remind your child that you, as parents, are also children in God's eyes: sometimes you are obedient and sometimes not; sometimes willing and sometimes not. Pray together for the grace to answer God's call.

© 1987 by Gretchen Wolff Pritchard. All rights reserved.
THE SUNDAY PAPER, 19 Colony Road, New Haven, CT 06511, USA
203 - 624-2520 • www.the-sunday-paper.com



THE SUNDAY PAPER JUNIOR

Year A
PROPER 21
TRACKS 1 and 2



Jesus said
to the
Pharisees,
"Street people
and even crooks
may be
better at
listening to God
than you are."

MATTHEW 21:31

The PHARISEES talked
!!! about God a lot.

They were
sure
that
God was
very
pleased
with
them!



JESUS TOLD THEM A STORY:
A man said to his sons,

"Go and work
in the
vineyard."



One son said,
"Sure!"



But then he
didn't go and work.



The other one
said, "No!"



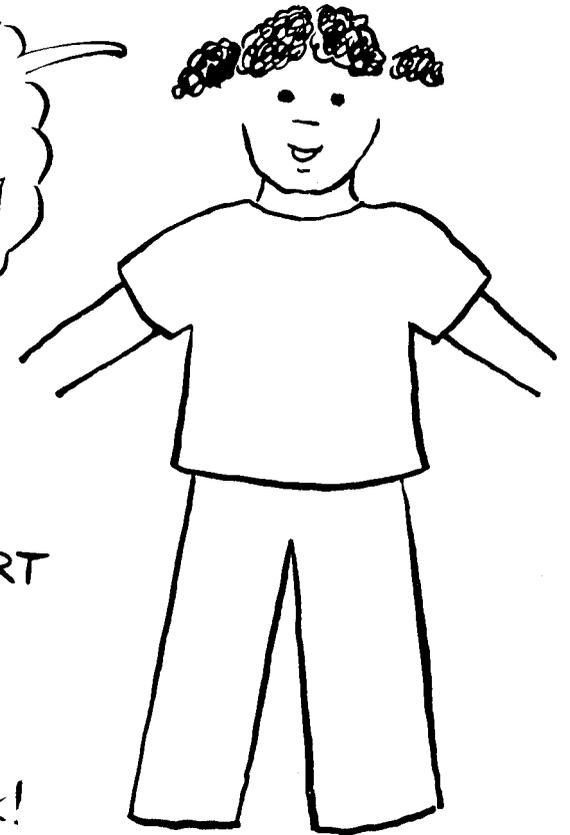
But later,
he went out
and worked!



Jesus said, "Which one really did what the
father wanted?"

Jesus said these Pharisees were HYPOCRITES.
Hypocrites are people who know what is right
but only pretend to do it.

DON'T BE
A
HYPOCRITE!



Give
this girl
EARS and a HEART
to listen with,
and HANDS
and FEET
to do God's work!