*From the Pastor’s desk:*

**A PRAISE OR A BRAG?**

The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank you, that I am not as other men are extortionists, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. **(Luke 18:11-12 AKJV)**

A great choice! Innit? The Pharisee’s introduction was so impressive. He started by thanking God. Anyone may be envious of his choices and claims. He fasts twice a week and gives tithes of all that he possessed.

According to Leviticus 16:29-31 and 23:27, the law prescribed a fast on the Day of Atonement. All other fasts are supposed to be voluntary, such as for repentance and earnest prayer. So, the man chose to do more than the Biblical requirement.

But is this actually a praise or a brag? I think it would have been a praise, but the man deviated. The issue of fast raised by this Pharisee shows that he thought of fasting as a public exercise to display his spirituality. He thought that because he fasts and pays his tithes, he is better than other men who are extortionists, unjust, and adulterers.

Listen, when you fast, you’re not doing it for God; rather, it is to edify you. And paying your tithes and offering is an excellent choice. Your decision will be channelled towards a good course, and God will undoubtedly reward you. Howbeit, for this to be acceptable before God, your heart must be right, and your motive must not be defective.

So, on a day like this, what God wants is that you come with a heart of gratitude in humility and simplicity of praise. Thank Him for all He has done. Thank Him for all He is doing. Thank Him for all He will do. Don’t compare yourself with anyone. Focus your attention on yourself. What God did for you is for you. Just praise Him wholeheartedly, lest your praise become a brag.