



[Luke 7:41-50](#)

(41) "There were two debtors of a certain creditor; one owed five hundred silver coins, and the other fifty. (42) But when they did not have anything with which to pay him, he forgave them both. Tell Me then, which of them will love him most?" (43) And Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave the most." And He said to him, "You have judged rightly." (44) And after turning to the woman, He said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house, and you did not provide any water to wash My feet; but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head. (45) You did not give Me a kiss; but she, from the time I came in, has not ceased to ardently kiss My feet. (46) You did not anoint My head with oil; but she has anointed My feet with ointment. (47) For this cause, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven because she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, he loves little." (48) And He said to her, "Your sins have been forgiven." (49) Then those who were sitting with Him began to say within themselves, "Who is this, Who even forgives sins?" (50) But He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

A Faithful Version

The woman perceived a greatness in [Jesus](#) that motivated her to so abase herself. A proper sense of obligation works to produce a valuable Christian virtue—humility.

Notice her emotion, devotion, and seeming unconcern for public opinion in going far beyond the normal task of a slave. We can safely guess that Jesus had played a huge part in turning this woman from her bondage to [sin](#). She may have first simply been among the crowds who were convicted by His messages. However, she thought deeply and personally on the difference between her life and His words. When she heard He was nearby, she rushed to Simon's home, ignoring the scorn of others to express her gratitude to the One who had set her aright.

Her deed expresses her [love](#) and gratitude springing from recognition of His greatness as compared to her unworthiness. She felt obligated to respond in a way so memorable

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that [God](#) recorded it for all humanity for all time to witness. Note that the Bible shows human lips touching Jesus only twice: Here and Judas' kiss of betrayal.

Now notice the contrast with Simon the Pharisee, who was evidently a man of some substance and a measure of aggression that resulted in him inviting the celebrated Jesus to his home. He was a man so self-concerned and inhospitable that he failed to offer Jesus even the customary services a host provided visitors to his home. Simon probably felt himself at least Jesus' equal, and his conclusion that He was no prophet perhaps indicates that he styled himself as Jesus' superior. He likely considered Jesus nothing but an interesting celebrity who could gain him recognition in the community for having Him as his guest.

His evaluation of himself in relation to Jesus produced in him no sense of obligation, and thus no gratitude, humility, or act of love, let alone common courtesy. Had he a heart at all? He was scandalized by this dramatic and arresting scene taking place at his respectable table.

While God considered her act of love to be so awesome that He had it memorialized as an eternal witness, Simon's perception of it only concluded, "She is a sinner." No, Simon, she was a sinner, and therein is a major clue to the reason for their differing reactions to Jesus. In Jesus' parable, Simon and the woman held something in common—something Simon did not grasp, but the woman did. *Both* were debtors to the same Creditor, and neither could meet their obligations, but Simon did not even see his indebtedness.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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