

Judge Not?!

by Wayne Goff

“Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you” Matthew 7:1-2.

How many times has the world quoted the first seven words of this passage . . . and then stopped right there? Jesus was not condemning judging, as the world would have you and me think. On the contrary, Jesus was condemning harsh, critical judgment that ignores one’s own condition. It is quite natural for man to clearly(?) see the “speck” in his brother’s eye (v. 3). That same person cannot see the “plank” in his own eye to save his life! Did Jesus censor all judgment because of this imbalance? Absolutely not. Instead he simply warned that you and I will be judged with the kind of judgment we use upon others.

Do you want to be judged harshly, sternly, heartlessly, and prejudicially? If not, then do not act that way toward others. “Oh,” you say, “but I do not judge that way. I am fair, honest and equitable.” Great! If that’s true, then you will be loved by both God and man. Honest, kind, and loving people are hard to come by. But be sure that your own self-assessment is reality. That was exactly what Jesus was warning us about. I can judge you fairly, but I have a harder time judging myself. So we need a little help from our friends.

If a brother or sister gets into repeated arguments, fusses, and disagreements wherever he or she may go, then that one might want to take a little look in the mirror. I heard of a preacher who moved quickly from place to place. He had been at about half a dozen places in as many years. He assured his next congregation that all of those former congregations were wrong, unscriptural, and difficult. It didn’t take long for the new group to realize that there might be two sides to the story. Indeed, the new preacher soon began to have problems with them! We can all see the lesson there.

Repeatedly I have asked a simple question which all of us need to ask ourselves: “In the judgment day, do you want justice or mercy?” Every time I have received back the answer: “I want mercy!” Well then, remember the words of Jesus: “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy” (Matt. 5:7). Paul wrote, “If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men” (Rom. 12:18). Are you merciful, kind, forgiving, longsuffering? It will pay you dividends in eternity.

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