

"But That's Different!"

by Wayne Goff

Sometimes when we are admonishing or rebuking a Christian for doing something wrong, we hear the comment: **"But that's different!"** The implication is that a *different set of rules* applies to this person. Indeed, it is pretty easy to be guilty of a double-standard. For example, I have caught myself driving around a long line of cars to look for a "opening" closer to the front of the line, and doing so without a second thought. But when somebody else does it, it makes me angry because now I'm farther behind than I was. Now, I have learned to be a bit more patient because I see in them my own past actions.

Have **you** ever done something like that, dear reader? And if you ever did catch yourself in such a situation, didn't it make you stop to wonder **where else** you might have done the same thing?

We don't have to look far in the Bible to see that same "double-standard" being practiced unknowingly. King David committed adultery with Bathsheba, made sure her husband, Uriah, was killed in battle, and then took his wife to be his own bride (2 Sam. 11). If he felt guilty about this event, we are not told about it. However, when the prophet Nathan later confronted him with a sob story about a man's poor little ewe lamb being served by his neighbor for dinner, **David was furious!** He proclaimed that the man who had done this deed would surely die (2 Sam. 12). After all, David was king and he would **not** have such heartlessness among his subjects! Suddenly, Nathan informed David, **"You are the man!"** (v. 7). Oops! He didn't see that one coming, now did he?

David saw things *differently* before God opened his eyes with the truth. And so must we examine ourselves to see if we are in the Faith (2 Cor. 13:5). If we're not careful, we will think and act with a **double standard** -- one for ourselves, and a much *more strict one* for everybody else!

"Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, ..." (Matt. 7:12). How hard is it to treat others exactly like you would want to be treated? Apparently, harder than we think. Do we *refuse* to use our God-given talent to teach a Bible class without thinking that the job will now be left to others will have to work even harder? Are you critical of a preacher's efforts while refusing to lift a hand to prepare even one sermon yourself? Do you fail to use your talent to lead singing because it makes you too nervous, while not thinking of how much the present song leaders have had to develop themselves? No, I am not saying that **everybody** should do everything because we all do not have the same talents. But I am saying that all of us should do something to help (Eph. 4:16)! Remember the saying: **"What would this church be, if everyone in it were just like me?"**

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