

It's Not What It Looks ...

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sinned with Mary. Those folks had no idea that Joseph was trusted to be part of God's plan, prophesied hundreds of years previously. Boy, were they wrong.

✠ Jesus, when He hung on the cross. When the multitudes passed Christ hanging on the cross, I am sure many assumed He was a criminal like the other two that were punished on either side of him. Many had no idea that He had done no crime, but was paying the price for their sins. Boy, were their assumptions wrong.

✠ Apostles, when they were killed. Except for John, who died of old age, all the other apostles died by crucifixion, beheading, spearing, or stoning. Unknowing onlookers must have surely wondered what horrible crime they had committed to be punished that way. They had no idea that they were dying for the cause of Christ and had not committed any crime worthy of their punishment. Those onlookers wrong!

✠ The sick and blind that Jesus healed. Many, I am sure, wondered what sin some of the blind and sick whom Jesus healed

"He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him." Proverbs 18:13

had committed, resulting in their affliction. Little did they know that their infirmity was not punishment for their sin or the sins of their parents, but so God could get the glory in their healing. Jesus' ministry was widespread because God got the glory in the healing He did for those with infirmities. Again, other's judgments were wrong.

Today, as in the examples above, many falsely judge a situation. A wrong idea of what we suspect happened or is happening can taint a relationship permanently with a person or an idea about a person. We certainly would not want anyone to falsely think the worst of us in apparent circumstances, so with that in mind, give others a second, third, fourth, etc. chance. Please give them the benefit of the doubt in a situation, and whatever you do, get more than one side of the story. Get the details from more than your one quick, uniformed glance, then, you will be able to make wiser judgments.

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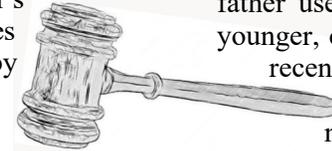


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Would You Dare?

Bill Brinkworth

One of man's natural tendencies is to judge others by his measuring stick, usually himself. Paul, in



Romans 2, strongly addresses this weakness. *"Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. 3 And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?" Romans 2:1*

Most of the time, when we judge others, we have or have had the same problem ourselves. It seems that those that have had the biggest problems, or are still having them, complain the loudest of another's weaknesses.

It is the ex-smoker that often criticizes the loudest about another's smoke he is inhaling. An older man grumbles to a son

about his child's late hours coming home, forgetting how his father used to rebuke him in his younger, cohorting days. One that recently lied on his income tax form somehow is not convicted when he judges a worker who just lied to him. On and on our hypocritical judging goes.

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Anyone Can Fall

Bill Brinkworth

Often, we can be very judgmental of others. When one sins, who was doing well spiritually, we are reluctant to show mercy and become judgmental of their behavior.

However, we should remember that no one is exempt from backsliding away from God. Any one of us could make a mistake and get involved in thievery, dishonesty, immorality, or any other sin. It is only God's grace and our character that separates us from those that get involved in iniquity. Falling into sin can happen to anyone of us.

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Would You Dare?

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God, however, knows the truth, and He remembers (Rom. 3: 3). For the born-again child of God, there is no judgment for sins. All his sins are paid for and no longer remembered (Hebrews 10:17). All Christians, however, will be judged (Mat. 12:36, Gal. 6:7, Eph. 6:8, Col. 3:24 ...) for what they did or did not do for the Lord. It is called the Judgment Seat of Christ (II Cor. 5:10), and it will involve reward or loss of rewards (Rev. 22:12).

For the unsaved person, sadly, their judgment will be at the White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15). That fearful condemnation will be at the end of Christ's 1,000-year reign on this earth. At that judgment, the lost will be judged for their works (Rev. 20:14) and sentenced to the everlasting Lake of Fire.

"And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? 4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? 5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." *Matthew 7:3-5.*

Considering our future day of judgment before an Almighty God who knows everything about us (including real intents for doing something, what we did when no one else saw us, and all our other dark secrets), our judgment of others seems so insignificant and embarrassing. We certainly want our mistakes and sins overlooked. Can we stop judging others, and leave that to the One who knows all?

Anyone Can Fall

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Peter was a prime example of unexpected, ungodly behavior. Peter boasted to Jesus that he loved Him so much that he would never turn against Him. The disciple was determined that he would lay down his life for the Saviour. However, Jesus revealed that He knew Peter would soon deny Him three times (John 13:37-38, Mat. 26:34) before the rooster crowed.

After Jesus was taken away by an angry mob, Jesus' prophecy was fulfilled. When a woman accused Peter of being one of the ones with Jesus, the disciple denied that he was even associated with Christ (John 18:17).

Another damsel later asked Peter if he was one of those with Jesus, as he warmed himself at a fire (John 18:25, Mat. 26:71). He again flatly denied any

association with Jesus.

Later, another servant asked the disciple if he was one of those with Jesus, Peter denied even knowing the Lord (John 18:26) for the third time. A rooster then crowed. Peter, I am sure, gulped. He had done what he thought he would never do.

Making a spiritual mistake can happen to anyone of us. We can at no time put down our guard and think that sin cannot control us. You think you are so spiritual that you will never fall? Be careful; there may be a rooster getting ready to crow for you any minute.

It's Not What It Looks Like

Bill Brinkworth

"He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him." Prov. 18:13

Too many of us make the wrong assessments of a situation. We look at or hear of circumstances and make a rash judgment with little knowledge of what did happen.

Almost every time I have made a hasty judgment, I have found my discernment was wrong. I found myself feeling

"Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?" John 7:51

quite foolish when I learned what had happened was not what I thought had occurred. Proverbs 18:13 reminds us that our judgments, without having full details of what transpired, will make us feel foolish: *"He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him."* We need to hear both sides of the story before "jumping the gun" in understanding an event.

Many of us have quickly learned that situations are not always what they appear. Here are several biblical instances where quick scrutiny of a situation would most likely lead to a wrong judgment:

🌿 Mary, the mother of Jesus. Joseph quite possibly assumed that Mary had relations with another man resulting in her pregnancy. I am sure that family and neighbors thought the same thing. Their assumptions, however, were all wrong. Mary was with child from a supernatural occurrence (Luke 2:35) in her life. Mary's pregnancy was not a result of fornication that many may have assumed had happened to the young woman. Those judgments were wrong.

🌿 Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus. When folks undoubtedly heard that Mary was pregnant, I am sure many assumed Joseph

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