



Meditations on Judging and Doing

Loyal Martin—Philadelphia, NY

Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another? Ja. 4:11-12

Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? Ro.14:4

Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. Mt. 7:1-2

Our Lord and Master—the one Lawgiver—primarily calls His disciples to be first of all doers and rightfully reserves the place of lawgiving and judging for Himself. Isaiah prophesied of the Savior in Isaiah 11:2-4:

And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

Again in Isaiah 42:1-4 the prophet shows the Father speaking of the work of our Lord:

Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.

We begin to personally and corporately experience the fulfillment of these prophecies when we believe on the Lord. We further look for the time when the One who has the right to rule will return to this earth, and the kingdoms of the earth will be broken to shivers and become the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ. (Ez. 21:27, Ps. 2:9, Re. 2:27, Re. 5, Re. 11:15-17)

Begin with ourselves

1 Peter 4:17-19 (speaking of the sufferings the saints endure) tells us:

For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely [through much difficulty] be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

1 Corinthians 11:31-32 warns us that if we fail to judge our own life properly, the Lord will judge us with chastening in order that we would “not be condemned with the world,” and Hebrews 12:5 exhorts us to “despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him.” The writer further encourages us that this chastening and correction is a blessing, in that it is a form of the Father’s love for us; it affirms our sonship. And, if we respond to it properly, our spirits will become subject to the Father of spirits and we will be partakers of His holiness, having the peaceable fruit of righteousness in our lives.

These verses all emphasize the place of our Lord as a faithful Father, the one righteous Lawgiver, and a wise and discerning Judge among His people. Hebrews further exhorts us that “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (10:31), and that there is no “creature that is not manifest in His sight” and “all things (even the thoughts and intents of the heart) are naked and opened before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do” (4:13). Whether He is allowing us to reap what we have sown in blindness and ignorance, or whether He is seeking our character development, producing in us the image of His sons, we can trust that our Father is with us, that He will not give us more than we can bear, and that He is working His great work of redemption in our lives. Blessed be His name!

Every eye on Jesus

Because we are firstly responsible for our own life, and because it is impossible for us to help our brother to a place that we have not yet attained, God calls us each to

have our focus fixed on Him more than on each other. “Looking unto Jesus” we run this race. He is the Author of our faith—He is the One who first ran this race, and we are responding to His call to follow in His steps. He is also the Finisher—He has already finished the race “and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God,” and He will complete His work in us as we continue looking unto Him. Maintaining the attitude of “looking unto Jesus” and being careful to “lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us” helps us to stay in our proper place as doers, rather than usurping the place of our Lord in the lives of others. He.12:1-2

Romans 14:10-13 explains:

But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

Because we share together in a Father's love, and because we run the same race together, our Lord calls us to be helpers of one another in this race. We are called to lift up the hands which hang down, to strengthen the feeble knees, and to make straight paths for our feet, so that the lame would be healed rather than turned away. He.12:12-13

Helpers and servants

This labor of love does call us to an involvement in each other's lives—not as self-righteous judges of one another, but as fellow doers who are helpers of each other's joy. It calls us to submit one to another in the fear of God, leaving

behind our self-seeking ambitions and worldly wisdom, and becoming servants—like our Master in heaven—who seek the well-being of those around us ahead of our own interests. We participate in our Lord's work of redemption in each other's lives when we stand beside one another helping one another to follow the Lord. A professed faith which does not produce this fruit becomes hypocrisy.

Many New Testament scriptures call us as believers to discern situations in life. 1 John 4:1 tells us:

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Our Lord commended the Ephesian church because they had “tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.” Re.2:2 In 1 Corinthians 5, Paul encouraged the Corinthians to not be presumptuous, but to “judge them that are within” so there would not be known sin among them. In 1 Corinthians 14:29 he taught that the other prophets should judge a teaching that is given. 1 Thessalonians 5:21 calls us to “prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” And 1 Corinthians 1:10 lifts up an almost incredible standard:

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

According to the Scriptures, God is a God of judgment who loves clarity and sound discernment, and our lives are enriched if we are partakers of His wisdom. Proverbs 2:6-9 says:

For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly. He keepeth the paths of

Running the Race Together

When the starter's gunshot was heard, all of the contestants started toward the finish line. Granted, they were not as fast as the regular high school racers. In fact, because of their handicaps, they were so slow that they even talked to each other along the way.

About ¾ of the way to the goal, something happened. Suzie fell and skinned her knee. She began to cry because it hurt. Carl, who was beside her, stopped and spoke kindly to her. All of those who were behind her, when they caught up, stopped also to add their condolences. Some called ahead to the rest of the gang to let them know what was happening. Because the others were not too far ahead, they heard the calls of those behind them and came back to be with Suzie too.

After a while, when she was feeling better, two of her friends helped her to stand up. Then the friends standing beside her and holding her arms said, “We will help you to the finish line.” All of the others also said, “So will we!” At that point, everyone held hands and made their way slowly down the track, keeping pace with limping Suzie. Then, as one big wide chain, they all crossed the finish line together! ~Author unknown

judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints. Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.

To judge in self-righteousness is to defy the Giver of sound wisdom and to seek to operate in our own wisdom independently of His Spirit. To properly discern is to remain subject to Him receiving and applying the wisdom He alone can give. Our attitude toward those we share with is many times the indicator of which wisdom we are partakers of. James 3:13-18 tells us:

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Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual,

devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

Isaiah 5:20 pronounces woe on self-righteous independence: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" Isaiah 59:8-15 also describes the pitiful results of this mistake:

The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace. Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness. We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noonday as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men. We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves: we look for judgment, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far off from us. For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them; In transgressing and

lying against the LORD, and departing away from our God, **speaking oppression and revolt**, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood. And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment.

It is not possible to speak words of oppression toward our brothers and sisters unless we are not in our place as obedient doers in God's kingdom and have become self-righteous judges. If we speak words of revolt, it indicates we are living in the same error.

Together ...

May God grant to each of us the grace to walk together with our focus on Him, growing together in His wisdom. James 1:19-27 tells us:

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

What is true about our relationships in a local church is also true about relationships between churches as well. God calls us to exercise humility of mind and servant-heartedness one toward another in His omnipotent working as we relate with fellow congregations.

To the **only wise God** our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. Ju. 1:25 ~

The author of this article welcomes feedback.