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Self-righteous Christians?

“But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God” (Romans 14:10).

Christians as a whole can often be a very judgmental lot, and harsh towards one another. Why do we feel this need to pass judgment on others in self-righteousness, while at the same time taking offense when we are admonished for our behavior by our Brothers in Christ? Wouldn't you expect that we who have acknowledged our sin, depravity, and our hopeless state before God would be humble, patient, gentle, and understanding with one another? Why then do we struggle with this?

Our judgment of others is firmly rooted in the Garden, where man first rebelled against God's judgments and took the role of “judge” upon himself. A judge decides what is good and bad, what is right and wrong, who is guilty and who is innocent. Because of our sin nature, we are constantly passing judgments, whether silently in our minds, in our words, or in our actions. It is second nature to us, and we find comfort looking around us and finding people who we think are worse than we are. It makes us feel better about ourselves, secure in ourselves, and nearer to God when we think we are moving up the “righteousness” chart or forward in the “holiness” game.

But when we measure our position in God's Kingdom by measuring ourselves against our Brothers and Sisters, we're really trying to climb towards God by pushing others down, making them our “ladder.” We like to think judging others helps us know where we stand, but it is only skin deep, because God and God alone can read the motives of the heart and

judge the true nature of reality. For this reason, our judgment does not truly help us understand where we stand in His eyes.

Unfortunately for our pride, there is only one Who has authority to judge and against Whom everyone is measured – Jesus Christ. Against Jesus, you could never “measure up.” And He won't measure you by your times or the people in it. You won't be able to pull “uglier” people next to you when you are before the Judgment Seat of Christ to make yourself “look better” by comparison. It is only in the grace of His mercy that His righteousness covers our ugliness and sin—how fortunate we are in this! He is our salvation—*“not as a result of works, so that no one may boast”* (Ephesians 2:9)! How we love to boast in our judgments! But our salvation is not in reference to anyone, except Jesus Christ, for when God the Father looks at us, He does not see us in comparison to each other, but He sees the blood of His Son making us acceptable to Him.

Therefore, if you are going to be examined by Jesus in Heaven, don't you think you should seek His face to be examined while on earth? Are we too uncomfortable with the thought of His gaze on our hearts to seek His face? Maybe there is un-confessed sin in our lives. Are we quenching His Spirit, ignoring His conviction, and “compensating” by judging others? Maybe we fear losing face by admitting our failings and sin, but before Christ, we have no face—only our naked heart. He gazes now into you, regardless of whether you want Him too. For this reason Jesus advised us: *“Do not judge so that you will not be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?”* (Matthew 7:1-3) Even so, Amen.

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