

## Destroying from the Inside Out

By Maggie Moller

Let me ask you a question: how many of you can think of a time when you were hurt by another person's judgment of you? This is an easy question to answer. I am sure most of us can quickly come up with more than one example of times where we have experienced this kind of hurt in our lives. Let me ask you another question: how many times have you been guilty of being the one passing the judgment? Now, this is a harder question to answer. Most of us don't want to admit to ever having being found on this side of the equation. But now is the time to be completely honest with ourselves. Not one of us can say we have never been guilty of passing judgment, whether verbal or in our hearts, upon a fellow brother or sister in Christ. I know I can say this is an area where I have experienced hurt in my life, but I would not be truthful if I were not also to say I can think of many instances where I have unkindly judged the actions of others.

Now, before I go any further I want to clarify the type of judgment to which I am referring. The judgment I am discussing in the context of this article is judgment of actions related to non-biblical issues. For example, topics the Bible does not specifically refer to such as college education, women working outside the home, and watching TV, just to name a few. In my understanding, such things are merely matters of conscience. Who are we to say whether or not a matter of our conscience must be that of another's? Yet, we all are guilty of judging others according to our standards and convictions. As a Body of Christ, this should not be so! Paul addresses this topic in 1 Corinthians 10:29b-31 where he says, *"For why should my freedom be judged by another's conscience? If I take part...with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something I thank God for? So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God"* (NIV).

As Believers, we are called upon by God to encourage one another on a daily basis. Paul tells us this in Hebrews 3:13: *"But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called 'Today,' so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness."* When we judge one another we are not encouraging; we are in fact tearing each other down. This is in effect destroying our Christian effectiveness from right within our own members. We are charged by the Lord to love one another. How can we fully be demonstrating the love of God to each other if we are passing judgment on life callings that differ from our own? John writes in 1 John, *"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God"* (1 John 4:7).

When we take judgment into our own hands we are in fact taking on a role that God says is His. In Ecclesiastes 12:14, King Solomon writes, *"For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil."* Solomon is known to be the wisest man to ever walk this earth: I think we should take his words to heart and remember in Whose Hands judgment belongs. We cannot know the motives of fellow Believers for their actions. If we judge based on our limited knowledge, we may be guilty of judging them regarding something God has told them to do. The early Church must have also struggled with this topic since Paul addresses it in many of his letters. He says in Romans 14:13, *"Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way."*

Despite my change in style this month, God still brought a hymn to heart. One of my favorite choruses we sing is "The Servant Song." It is a simple little hymn, but each time we sing it I am greatly moved. For me, this hymn fully captures what it truly means to be the Body of Christ.

We are a family. And being a family means that although we are all different, we uphold one another despite our various life paths. God has called us each to a unique ministry. We all need to feel supported when following our path, especially by our brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ. Take a moment and reflect on the lyrics to “The Servant Song” by Richard Gillard:

Brother, let me be your servant  
Let me be as Christ to you  
Pray that I may have the grace  
To let you be my servant, too

We are pilgrims on a journey  
We are brothers on the road  
We are here to help each other  
Walk the mile and bear the load

I will hold the Christlight for you  
In the night-time of your fear  
I will hold my hand out to you  
Speak the peace you long to hear

I will weep when you are weeping  
When you laugh I'll laugh with you  
I will share your joy and sorrow  
Till we've seen this journey through

When we sing to God in heaven  
We shall find such harmony  
Born of all we've known together  
Of Christ's love and agony

Brother, let me be your servant  
Let me be as Christ to you  
Pray that I may have the grace  
To let you be my servant, too

I would like to extend a challenge to each one of us, myself included. Find at least one way each day for the next 21 days to encourage someone in our Body. It is often said that it takes 21 days to form a habit. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we cultivated habits of encouragement among our family of Believers? Think of how much more effective we could be in furthering God's Kingdom if we focused on building each other up instead of tearing down? Ask the Lord to reveal to you anyone you may have hurt by prior judgment and for the humility to approach them for forgiveness. Don't let the past define you; each day is a new opportunity to cultivate Christ-like attitudes. Choose to make today a new day!