

**“Judge not, that ye be not judged.”** (Matthew 7:1)



**ON JUDGING**

The Master provided us with some very good advice relative to our tendency to judge our brother. We are naturally inclined to think ourselves to be resident experts on the behavior of others, but at the same time, we are often unable to effectively evaluate our own actions. In Matthew 7 (verse 1-5) Jesus said: “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. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? 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? 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.”



**THE MOTE and the BEAM**

It is apparent from the parable of the mote and the beam that we are more apt to judge our brother than ourselves, and that we often exaggerate our bias in these judgments. We find fault with even minor offenses committed by our brother, while we ignore our own major infractions.

Jesus encourages us therefore to concentrate judgment on ourselves first. Paul enforces this by saying “let a man examine himself,” and “if we would judge ourselves we should not be judged.” (1 Corinthians 11: 28-31) He adds: “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.” (Romans 14:10)

**NEVER JUDGE?**

In our desire to show respect for the Master’s command not to judge, we must not become unbalanced in our applications. There are occasions when we must make judgments in the affairs of this life. There are also times when judgments are required relative to the actions of a brother.



Jesus made provision for these occasions in Matthew 18 (verses 15-20). Paul also speaks about the need to judge in 1 Corinthians 6. This part of our subject is considered further in the inside section of this issue.



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**Things Concerning**

The Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ

**“And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.”** (Matthew 5:40)

The teachings of the Master were powerful and often difficult to follow. The instruction above, from his sermon on the mount, is a typical example.

In the ways of this world, it is extremely unlikely that any man would willingly give his adversary more than he was required to. Most men would fight hard to prevent the loss of their coat, and would likely counter sue, seeking retribution for their trouble.



**Was this just a Parable?**

Was Christ speaking in parables? Was there some other meaning for his words? Whenever the instruction is difficult to apply, we look hard for a way to justify our desire to ignore it.

Many of the words of Christ were spoken as parables, and the true meaning had to be sought out. Those servants of Christ who were sincere in their effort to be his disciples would never be satisfied until they knew the meaning of the parable. They often went back to the Master, asking for further information, and he willingly answered their questions.

Jesus taught his followers by telling them stories that provided an illustration of the lesson. It is perhaps unlikely that there would be a real court case exactly like the illustrated one, but the story would convey principles that could be applied to real life situations.

**Principles for Life**

The examples that Jesus provided on this occasion were designed to teach them that they should “resist not evil.” (Matthew 5:39) The disciples were learning that the solution to their problems was not to be found in their own strength and ability. Fighting back with man’s legal or physical weapons, even if successful, would produce results that were only temporal.

Conversely, if they placed their trust in God, overcoming evil with good in the process, (Romans 12:18-21) they would have access to the only real power to save, and their hope would be in the eternal things.

**“Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?” (1 Corinthians 6:7)**

#### Going to Law

In 1st Corinthians 6, the Apostle Paul discusses a situation that was evidently causing problems between brethren in the Corinthian Ecclesia. If this type of behavior were only relative to the first century, we would have little reason to study it.

The fact is that the tendencies of the flesh are ever with us. It may seem that the servants of God in this current age would have more sense, but unfortunately, we still find too many cases of brethren going to law against one another, using the courts of this world.



#### Suffer yourselves

Jesus has instructed his followers to “resist not evil.” (Matthew 5:39) Paul’s exhortation in 1 Corinthians 6 (verse 7) is consistent with the Master’s teachings. He asks the question: : “Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?”

Our vindication and reward, is not something that we seek for in this life. Our hope is in the blessings of the coming Kingdom of God. If it is the Lord’s will that we follow the Master’s example, learning obedience by the things that we suffer, then so be it. (Hebrews 5:8)

#### Seek not your own wealth

If we have love for our brethren, we will be more concerned for their well being than our own. (1 Cor.10:24) There is no justification for taking legal action against another brother (or sister). There is no difference between a physical war and a legal one. Since we are opposed to fighting with guns and knives, then to be consistent, we must also be opposed to fighting with lawyers and words.

If we live and act in a manner that is consistent with the Word of God, it will not matter if our adversary is a brother, a man of this world, or an insurance company. The principles remain the same. We should place our trust in God, not in our own devices. Our task is to overcome evil with good. God alone has the right to exercise vengeance. (Romans 12:17-21)

#### Go to your brother

Jesus not only understood that difficulties would arise between brethren, he also provided instructions for resolving them. We should start with simple and discreet communication with our brother alone. Our objective is to gain our brother, not financial security. If necessary, we should enlist another brother or two. Presenting our case to the legal representatives of this world is not an option. (Mathew 18:15-17, 1 Corinthians 6:1-8)

**“Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?” (1 Corinthians 6:3)**

#### JUDGMENTS IN THE FAITH

In his rebuke to the Corinthians for using the legal systems of this world for conflicts with their brethren, Paul provided them with a reasonable alternative. He encouraged them to resolve their differences among themselves. His instruction was:

“If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the saints? Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life! Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, appoint as judges even men of little account in the church! I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers?” (1 Corinthians 6:1-5 NIV)

#### JUDGING THE WORLD

Paul’s argument was based on the fact that the saints will eventually judge the whole world. They will live and reign with Christ as co-rulers in the Kingdom when it is established here on this earth. If we are presently in serious preparation to be rulers over entire cities, why are we unable to judge simple disputes between brethren? (See Revelation 5:10, Luke 19:15-19)

#### JUDGING IN THIS LIFE

It is not easy to approach our brethren with our problems. Could any brother in the Ecclesia have enough wisdom to resolve our difficult issue, and would he handle the matter discreetly?

I think we need to appreciate that even one brother who places his trust in God, is worth a multitude of men who base their judgments on the philosophies of this world.

If we have problems in this life, we want judgments that are based on the Word of God. We want solutions that will not become a stumbling block for us in the road to salvation.

#### TREASURE IN HEAVEN

Our disputes are usually centered around issues that involve material things. They say that “blood is thicker than water,” but when money is involved, even the closest of families suffer from the greed.

Let us be certain that our spiritual family is held together by a love that is much more enduring than the love of money. Our objective is to lay up treasure in heaven, not on this earth.

As living sacrifices, we remain willing to be defrauded in the material things. We sincerely hope that the decisions and judgments that we make will result in edification for our brethren, and that together we will share in God’s coming kingdom on the earth.