

*we're not suppose to, but we do it anyway*

There is one phrase in the Bible that frightens the hell out of me. It's the one phrase that I think all of us would want to quickly skip by and not give very much thought to. It's probably the most powerful phrase in that if everyone actually followed it, this world would certainly be a much better place to live. Jesus said it in Matthew chapter seven, verse two:

How you judge others, so shall you be judged.

Now I'm not an expert on the Bible, but I can tell you that this one phrase puts every other teaching in the Bible on the back burner, that's for sure.

I consider myself a pretty laid-back, easy-going guy who truly deals with people on one level - eye level. I am seldom accused of being judgmental towards others and in fact have made a clear case in much of my writing that what makes this world such an exciting adventure is our diversity.

That being said, I can also assure you that I am very judgmental. We all are. We judge people way too quickly and far too often based on very little information. High profile people understand this more than others. Word gets out of one little outburst on the set of a movie and that celebrity will be frustrated dealing with a reputation of being difficult to work with throughout their career. But celebrities aren't exclusive to this. We do it at work, in social gatherings and especially at church. We are a very judgmental group of chromosomes to be sure.

I think we miss the point of what Jesus was trying to teach us though. The issue is not for us to stop judging one another. Jesus didn't say stop it, he simply told us that we will be judged the way we judge others.

I consider myself a pretty normal guy - well that may be a stretch, but for arguments sake let's go with it - and I am often frustrated in how others judge me. I always think I'm a lot better than I'm given credit for in every aspect of my life. I've heard comments from people who have never taken the time to actually get to know me well enough to make such comments. I doubt if I'm alone on that score.

So when I think of judging others, I understand that the issue is not to stop judging one another, but in taking a look at how we judge one another.

It has become clear to me that there is a very simple way to judge. Whether it's individuals, businesses, churches or governments, you can clearly measure them by how they treat those who struggle.

People who do not struggle in life get a lot of perks. That's fine. If you play by all the rules, pay your bills in a timely manner and don't cause any problems, you probably should have some rewards and benefits. Treating these people kindly doesn't impress me that much. They have earned the right to be treated as such.

But show me how they treat those who struggle and that will tell me what kind of character they truly have. I've seen it with individuals, churches, businesses and governments. They have a reputation of being very kind and positive. But when you see how they treat those who struggle, you see something quite different.

What comments does that fine individual make about someone else who may be going through some difficult times?

How does a business define customer service in dealing with those who struggle from paycheck to paycheck?

What is the atmosphere in a great church when someone comes in to service wearing jeans and a wrinkled shirt - even if that is the best they have?

How does a government treat those who are without?

Compassion does not grow from calm seas, it grows from the soil of struggles in our lives and how we live and treat them.

Judging others is a way of life for us. We all do it and none of us are perfect to be certain. But how you judge the least among you clearly defines the character of your heart.

How you judge others, so shall you be judged. Clearly the one phrase in the Bible that can do more to change the world.

Just A Thought