

The Oak Grove Oracle

(Family News & Views of the Oak Grove Church of Christ)

Meeting Weekly At Our Building Located At:

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Judge Righteous Judgment (#2) - Motives

Last week we were discussing man's ability to judge and one of the Lord's most misunderstood injunctions: "Judge not, that ye be not judged..." (Mt. 7:1-2). We noted the danger of making unwarranted assumptions and the importance of making sure we have all the facts before jumping to conclusions. Sometimes the circumstantial evidence can look condemning, but as we all know, everything is not always as it appears. Thus the Lord's qualifying injunction, "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (Jn. 7:24).

Another area where great caution should be exercised is in our judgment of another's motives. In fact, we would likely be well served to abstain entirely from exercising judgment in regard to another's motives since none of us are able to read the minds of others. As the Apostle Paul by inspiration said, "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?" (1 Cor. 2:11).

According to the Holy Scriptures, at the final Judgment, God will "judge the world in righteousness" (Acts 17:31). That passage further teaches that God's righteous representative of perfect judgment will be Jesus, the ordained judge who was raised from the dead. We know Christ's judgment will be perfect because He not only knows what it's like both to live and be tempted in the flesh (Heb. 4:15), but He also can judge motives, since He can know a man's heart (Mk. 2:6-8). Thus He can properly evaluate both actions and intentions, proving what the Scriptures said about the sharpness of the Word's discernment, capable even of understanding and evaluating the thoughts and intentions of the heart (Hebrews 4:12).

Man can judge the outcomes of actions, but we can't properly judge motives. In the same sermon where Jesus said to use caution in judgment, He also warned, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits" (Mt. 7:15-16). In other words, it's OK to be a fruit inspector of others actions, but we must leave the judgment of hearts to God.

Most of all, since God knows even our motives, make sure your motives are pure. Follow the admonition of that great old song, *"Take Time to be Holy."* Practice the fourth verse: "Take time to be holy, be calm in thy soul; **each thought and each motive beneath His control**; thus led by His Spirit to fountains of love, thou soon shall be fitted for service above." Also, pray as the Psalmist David prayed, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer" (Psalm 19:14).

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