

# You will ultimately know their heart

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**By Dave Havir**

BIG SANDY, Texas—Have you ever wondered why we as people are so quick to judge others? You would think that all of us would be more mindful of Romans 14:10-12, James 4:10-12 and Matthew 7:1-5. That's some pretty straightforward instruction from Paul, James and Christ Himself.

So how do we justify our inclination to judge others?

Let me share a scripture in the Sermon on the Mount that people often use to justify their condemning of others. The verse is Matthew 7:20. It reads: Therefore by their fruits, you shall know them.

The context is Christ's admonition to beware of false prophets (verse 15). He said that false prophets come in sheep's clothing. He said that, while they look like part of the flock, they are really something quite different. (Don't you consider a ravening wolf different from a meek sheep?)

In verses 16-20 He proceeds to give analogies about watching the outside to learn about the inside.

Therefore we accept the teaching that we shall know people by their actions.

But it is a mistake for us to place too much credibility in our ability to accurately analyze people by what we see.

## **Ultimately know**

Although the behavior of people can give us a glimpse into the deeper intricacies of a person's mind and heart, such behavior is hardly foolproof in knowing a person.

Here are three reasons we need to be careful about our analysis of other people.

The first reason is that the behavior of people does not automatically reflect what is inside them.

Have you ever had wrong impressions about alleged apostles, prophets or teachers? Have you ever had wrong impressions about acquaintances? Even close friends?

Have you ever assumed certain things about people, based upon their actions, only to find out that those actions did not reflect what they thought or what they did in the privacy of their lives?

How many years were you wrong about them?

Ultimately, you found out. You will *ultimately* know people by their fruit.

### **From our perspective**

The second reason is that we analyze the behavior we see through our own paradigm (through our own lens for viewing life). Even when we see the true behavior of someone else, we can process the events only through our life's experiences.

It is normal for us to perceive the emotional displays of other people through the perspective of our emotional makeup (heredity) and through our emotional experiences (environment).

It is so easy to misread their emotions.

The anger of other people may not be as strong as it appears, but it may stir up a memory of how you dealt with an angry situation.

### **Personal journey**

The third reason is that we are all on a journey designed for our personal growth.

People have their ups and downs. If you happen to evaluate someone in one of his down moments and forever view him in that moment of time, you may be ignoring the miracle of God that recreates him as a believer.

Job was an upright person (Job 1:1; 2:3). Yet God allowed Satan to give him trials (Job 1:11-12; 2:4-6).

What value did God see in this endeavor? Apparently God allowed Job to truly learn about himself (Job 40:3-5; 42:1-6). The righteous man Job learned about himself.

A believer should seek to focus on his own journey of life.

### **Time to avoid**

What should a believer do if he is minding his own business and thinks he has discovered significant sin in the life of another person?

Galatians 6:1-5 mentions principles for attempting to help a person overtaken in a fault. The stated goal is to help restore the person with a spirit of gentleness.

Romans 16:17 mentions that there are times to avoid the sinner. (However, Romans 16:19 shows that a believer should avoid participating in slander, sabotage or other forms of revenge toward that person.)

A believer most certainly can obey Matthew 7:1-5 and Matthew 7:15-20 at the same time.

### **Inner workings**

The Righteous Judge has some distinct advantages in doing His job.

First, He can clearly see all works of iniquity.

Christ can see works of iniquity, even when people use religious-sounding words (Matthew 7:21,23).

Personally, I don't believe that the greatest danger in the Body of Christ is false brethren using religious-sounding words to fool other people. I believe a greater danger is believers using religious-sounding words to fool themselves.

Christ can see works of iniquity, even when people exhibit impressive religious behavior (Matthew 7:22-23). He can see interior sin, even when there is exterior good behavior.

What exterior good behavior did Christ mention in Matthew 7:22? Preaching true prophecy in His name. Casting out of demons in His name. Doing many wonderful works in His name.

Again, I don't believe that the greatest danger in the Body of Christ is false brethren using religious behavior to fool other people. I believe a greater danger is believers using religious behavior to fool themselves.

Our Judge sees the true picture of the exterior and the interior.

Second, He sees the repentance.

In the case of Job, God saw the sins of Job. But He also saw the repentance of Job.

God was not pleased with Job's three friends (Job 42:7-9). Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar apparently saw outward behavior of Job that was clearly wrong.

But that recognition of Job's sin did not produce behavior that pleased God.

Recognizing bad behavior in others takes little talent or skill.

### **Shall know**

Believers will ultimately know the true ravaging wolves among the flock of God.

On the other hand, believers will ultimately know the people who are dealing with bitterness and who are temporarily displaying irrational behavior.

Life is not usually as it appears, but you will ultimately know the hearts of other people.