



Immersed in God's Word

His disciples came to him, and Jesus began to teach them.

-- Matthew 5:2

Monday, October 29: Disciples Judge Other's Specks Mercifully in Light of the Log in Their Own Eyes

*"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? ⁵You hypocrite, **first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.**" ~ Jesus, Matthew 7:3-5*

Dallas Willard, a long-time disciple of Jesus, was a deep thinker of the impact of God's Word on His people. He found a great way to encapsulate the teaching Jesus shares in these words: Eliminate condemnation and then help (*The Divine Conspiracy*, p. 224).

Rather than try to describe "the log" in our eye as various sins each of us might struggle with, he saw the log as an attitude of condemnatory judging. We would do well to suspend judgment of others before we address any issues with them.



Prayer for the week: Lord Jesus Christ, show me how to remove the log from my eye that I may see others clearly like You do – or at least more clearly than I see currently. I know that I can be blind to my own faults. Let your Holy Spirit remove and blinders – but gently please. Thank you Jesus. Amen.

Micro-Meditation: Psalm 103:1-6

Read vs.1-6 2x

Mark the words or phrases that catch your attention?

Meditate: Talk with God about those words. Ask him to impress things upon your heart and mind in response.

¹ Praise the LORD, my soul;
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.
² Praise the LORD, my soul,
and forget not all his benefits—
³ who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases,
⁴ who redeems your life from the pit
and crowns you with love and compassion,
⁵ who satisfies your desires with good things
so that your youth is renewed
like the eagle's.
⁶ The LORD works righteousness
and justice for all the oppressed.



Pondering Point: While we don't want to dwell on our sin, there is a benefit to remembering where we have been and the grace God's has been pouring out to us over the years.

Tuesday, Oct. 30: God's Mission in 1 Corinthians 5:9-13

I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world.

~ Apostle Paul, 1 Corinthians 5:9-10

Rightfully or wrongfully, people in the church have been perceived as judgmental and disapproving, critical and condemnatory of those outside of the church. In terms of God's mission, Jesus clearly associated with those beyond the religious establishment – so much so he was accused of being a “glutton and drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners” (see Luke 7:34). Jesus also seemed to

engage these people without a judgmental or condemnatory attitude.

In this section of 1 Corinthians, Paul clearly teaches that we should be IN association with such people too – the immoral, the greedy, the swindlers and the idolaters. AND I would imagine in a fashion like Jesus -- without a judgmental or condemnatory approach.

There is a group of sexually immoral, greedy, slandering, drunk, swindler-types we are to avoid. We will address that group of folks in tomorrow's devotion. Today let's pray that we learn to approach people "of this world" like Jesus was known to do – being part of God's mission.



Prayer for the day: Father God, it is not your desire to condemn people, not is it the desire of your Son Jesus to do so. Teach me how to associate and love the people of Your world – of the world that I move in and around. I want to reflect your heart and attitude. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Micro-Meditation: Psalm 103:1-6

Ps 103:1 Praise the LORD, my soul;
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

Teaching or Command of God:

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. *Romans 15:7*



THE PROMISE

John 14:13

I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.



Pondering Point: Stop and praise the Lord in this moment. Praise Him for who He is and for one thing He has done.

Wednesday, October 31: Your Identity in Christ

...But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler. Do not even eat with such people. What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked person from among you."

~ Apostle Paul, 1 Corinthians 5:11-13

- **As a disciple of Christ, I am willing to be held to the standard of God's Word by my brothers and sisters in Christ.**

Yesterday we were reminded that Christians are expected to be in association with people "of this world" as Jesus was (and is!) -- without a judgmental or condemnatory approach. But as we read in the verses above, Paul (and God who inspired his words) does speak of a group of people that we are supposed to judge, condemning their sinful actions. Who are they? They are the ones who categorize themselves as followers of Jesus, yet persist in lives that identify as sexually immoral or greedy, idolaters, slanderers, drunkards and/or swindlers. Here we are told specifically to judge (and expel) this wicked-but-claiming-to-be-a-disciple-of-Jesus type.



Prayer: Father God, I am your disciple. By your Spirit, let me rise to the calling to live a holy life. You say this is possible because you have given me the faith to do so (2 Peter 1:3). When I fall, pick me up through my brothers or sisters. And when my brothers or sisters fall, use me to help pick them up. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Micro-Meditation: Psalm 103:1-6

Ps 103:2,3 Praise the LORD, my soul,
and forget not all his benefits—
who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases.

Teaching or Command of God:

Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead,
descended from David. This is my gospel, for which
I am suffering even to the point of being chained
like a criminal. But God's word is not chained.



2 Tim. 2:8-9

THE PROMISE

James 5:15

And the prayer offered in faith will make the
sick person well; the Lord will raise them up.
If they have sinned, they will be forgiven.



Pondering Point: List the sins that God has forgiven you –
then write thanks for each one being forgiven.

Thursday, November 1: Re-Center around God

“Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.” ~ Apostle Paul, Galatians 6:1

“first take the plank out of your own eye; then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.” ~ Jesus, Matthew 7:5

Yes, as people of God, we are called to judge those inside the religious establishment, BUT – and I repeat as a pre-caution – BUT we should do so GENTLY. We should also do this without a condemning spirit. If you cannot *remove the plank* of a condemning spirit *from your eye*, you are not equipped to judge your brother or sister. So let's review our own lives in light of these concepts:

Review the week. Have I been judging those outside the church? Have I been judging others inside the church with the log of a condemning spirit? Have I been hiding from judgment?

Repent if necessary: You may find a need to repent of judgmental attitudes toward either those inside or outside of the religious establishment known as the church. You may need to repent of hiding your sin in pride or fear of judgment from others.

Return as necessary: Come to God who desires to forgive in Christ. Come to Jesus, who came not to condemn but to save. Ask for help to overcome that which has been plaguing you in your life as a disciple. To not be afraid to seek support and help from a brother or sister in Christ who will deal gently with your soul.

Micro-Meditation: Psalm 103:1-6

^{103:4,5} who redeems your life from the pit
and crowns you with love and compassion,
⁵ who satisfies your desires with good things
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Teaching or Command of God:

Take delight in the LORD... *Psalm 37:4a*

THE PROMISE

... and he will give you
the desires of your heart



Psalm 37:4b



Pondering Point: What would being renewed like the eagle mean for you? Go ahead – pray to God for such a blessing.

Friday, November 2: Discipleship Point from Gal. 6:1-2

From Galatians 6:1-2 (consider reading 6:1-10 for edification)

The Apostle Paul wrote: Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. As disciples of Jesus we are to – in love – help each other deal with plaguing sins. This requires you to 'be spiritual' or you will be ill-equipped to help. It is really the Spirit of God helping through you. And often it is the Spirit of God reaching out to help you through other disciples operating in the Spirit.



Discipleship Prayer: Lord Jesus, teach me to live with a gentle spirit, with a godly spirit, that I might be a blessing to those around me, especially those who haven't caught in any sin. And restore me through those whose gentle but godly spirits can reach out to me. Amen.

Micro-Meditation: Psalm 103:1-6

Ps 103:6 The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed.

Teaching or Command of God:

Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?



Isaiah 58:6

THE PROMISE

Luke 4:18-19

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. [Jesus]



Pondering Point: Pray for this righteousness and justice to work through you – with a gentle and spiritual attitude.

Saturday, November 3: Scripture's Story for the Week

David and Nathan

2 Samuel 12:1-15



Jump into God's story

King David has sinned by committing then committing murder of her Husband Uriah to cover it up. He has seemingly got away with it – until the God who sees all reveals David's sin through the prophet Nathan. In the story we see Nathan, a disciple of God by all accounts, called to restore David from a place of sin to a place of repentance and God-given holiness in the place of that sin. It is a delicate thing to approach a king about his shortcomings and sins. Remember the lesson of the fable *The Emperor's New Clothes*? Who wants to tell the king about his problem? But God wants his man (David) restored. Read 2 Samuel 12 and find out how Nathan opens David's eyes to his sin.



Prayer prompt: Father God, sometimes I am in the position of David. May You and I always have a Nathan to help me see – and repent. Sometimes Father you want to put me in the position of a Nathan. Let me be willing, gentle and spiritual enough to help the “Davids” whom you are calling out of sin and back to lives of holiness. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Sunday, Nov 4: Call to worship God, to gather together

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!
~ Psalm 103:1-2

When worship and increased power steals its way into the heart sanctuary, an increased compassion grows in the soul. To worship is to change.
~ Richard Foster



Prayer prompt: Father God, let me judge rightly – by Your Spirit. And let me be judged rightly – by Your spirit. Amen and Amen.