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So You Want to Be a Judge!

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Series: Living Lessons From Proverbs

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So You Want to Be a Judge!

As a small child, you look up to them in awe. The very position they hold demands your respect. People rise as they enter the room, address them as “Your Honor”, call them “Sir,” or “Ma’am.”

Adults still hold them in esteem. They know that in their hands, there still rests the scales of justice. They have the power to acquit; they have the power to convict. Whether or not one accused of a crime will be sentenced to death or allowed to go free may well rest in their hands.

Theirs is the bastion of integrity, the responsibility of life and death, and the conscience of a nation responds to its honor. Theirs is the office of a judge!!!

Have you not ever, as a child, seen that stately figure clad in flowing black robe, enter his chambers, every eye upon him, and dreamed of yourself in that hallowed position? So many of us have.

Why do we so envy one possessed with authority and wisdom? One so clad with both honor and power? Surely, we know his task is not easy. Surely we know that the pressure of making decisions that determine the fate of families, nations, and human life itself, drains the emotions, and places on the mind incredible demands. We know that. But oh, that natural desire of man is to hold the office of a judge!

This lesson is about that problem. It’s about your desire and mine to wear those robes, make those determinations, and bear that responsibility. It’s about our application to be accepted in the courts of heaven to be appointed to the office of a judge.

We will examine the responsibilities and the requirements, then make application for the job. The Word of God will be the Court to act upon our request. Based upon ITS decision, our request will either be honored or denied. In other words, the Scriptures will decide if and when you and I can begin to wear the robes of a judge.

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We are studying the sins of the tongue. Our base of operations is the Book of Proverbs, but as with today's study, some of our topics addressed in Proverbs are best defined and described throughout the rest of Scripture. So while we use Proverbs as a base, the whole of the Word will be our frame of reference.

Throughout this study, we have tried to keep in mind that the underlying concept we are looking at in this stage of our perusal of Proverbs is the issue of self-control, with self-control being described as the will responding to the Word, even over the objections of the appetites and emotions.

The sins of the tongue represent the last portion of that study...a study that is designed to grant us wisdom. Do you remember the process that leads to wisdom?

First, we must gain knowledge. We must study what the Bible has to say about the subject, in this case, the tongue.

Second, we seek understanding. We seek to ask God to make application to our lives personally about the tongue.

Last of all, we ask for wisdom. Wisdom is the mind of Christ in control of the Christian. We ask for the grace to respond properly, the grace to choose to allow Christ in us to decide continually to do what we now know to be His perfect will. The end result is a transformed life, a life that demonstrates to a seeking world how Jesus Christ looks and acts in the twentieth century.

So our study of the tongue is designed not just to convict us of how devastating are the fires we set with those uncontrolled sparks that come from what we say. Our study of the tongue is designed to CHANGE us into His likeness, so that we will ONLY say what HE would say through us. In other words, we are not here for information; the word "in" implies that the flow of life is only going one way. We are here for transformation, a flow of life that goes in and, having been changed into a new form, issues forth differently. We are here to be transformed, and that must be our prayer our conviction.

Thus far we have examined the sparks of an arguing tongue, of a tongue that gives a bad report, of the tongue that boasts, a tongue that murmurs, a tongue that nags, and a tongue that complains. And if this study is being used of God, those kinds of words are ceasing...dramatically ceasing...to come from our lips. Because IF the way we speak is not changing, then we may

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be gaining knowledge, but that knowledge is simply making us more accountable. We are not simply to gain knowledge; we are here to gain Wisdom...to have the mind of Christ control our tongues.

So now we come to perhaps one of the most critical areas of verbal conflict in the Christian's life...the area of judging or criticizing others. It is an area that devastates our testimony, destroys our friendships, and negates to a large degree our claims of the way Christ's love really operates. Yet it seems that even in the arena of Christian service, even in the confines of the Body of Christ itself, judging is a sin so prevalent that Jesus had to address it in detail in the Sermon on the Mount, and Paul had to remind the young church again and again that when they donned the robes of a judge, they were holding in their hands kegs of spiritual dynamite capable of destroying lives and the fellowship of the church.

We have stated that we will look at the appeal, the attributes, the appointment, and the alternative. First of all, what is the appeal of being a judge? Why is it so easy to slip into those robes of self-righteousness and gavel in hand, exalt ourselves to the bench of Christian Judgeship? IF we are to apply for the job of judge, ought we not to first examine why the job is so appealing to us?

I believe that we can conclude that we find the role of judge appealing for a variety of reasons. Those reasons will surface in detail as we are interviewed for the job a little later. Let's just list three basic ones so that we can better understand our motivations.

1- Many of us would like to be judges because we honestly believe by doing so we fulfill a need in society. Somebody has to keep the Christian Community straight, right? It is veering off in a thousand different directions. Unless we or somebody rides in on a white horse and sounds a trumpet will not the battle be lost? Good question. Next question: are we scripturally qualified for the job?

2- We would like to be judges because of the power a judge wields. A judge is an expert. A judge is an authority. A judge has the final say. We want the final say. We would like to be judges. It elevates us to an aura of importance. We like that.

3- We would like to be judges because subconsciously, judging

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is spiritually a diversionary tactic. While we are judging others, we can easily ignore or justify our own sins. So whenever the heat of conviction becomes too intense in our own experience, if we can quickly slip into our robes and find those whose need for judgment seem greater than ours, in no time the issue we were struggling with vanishes into the background. “We have more important things to do.” We convince ourselves we are needed in the courtrooms of life...so we find spiritual judgeship appealing because:

- 1- We see a need
- 2- We covet power
- 3- We enjoy being diverted from dealing with our own lives.

One of those reasons is healthy. The other two are not. In either case, the question arises, “Are we qualified?” The only way to answer that question is to ask another, the second question being this: What are the attributes of a judge? What qualifications are required to run for the office?

Well, first of all, we must define what we mean when we say “judge” or “judging.” Just what does it mean when someone says, “You are judging someone.” We’ll answer that question in four parts...because to define judging from a spiritual perspective requires, I believe, four definitions. They are as follows:

Definition 1- To criticize: to pass judgment on the behavior, performance, or attitudes of another with an eye to condemnation.

This is not the act of recognizing sin in someone else and, being overcome with grief, desiring to pray and/or confront that person with an eye to Galatians 6:1. That is a very godly characteristic, and one we are commanded in Scripture to demonstrate. That’s not criticism.

Criticism is a verbal attack on another person, either to them or about them, because of their behavior, performance, or attitude...an attack that, in essence, passes judgment upon them. The purpose is not transformation; the purpose is condemnation. The tongue that becomes adept at criticism becomes a sword that devastates the character and confidence of everyone around.

Here are four examples of criticism:

- a) “I just don’t like the look on her face.” Big deal, look in the

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mirror sometime yourself. Who said you were a good judge of faces? How do you know what her life has been like? If you had been through what she has, how would you look? Maybe she's hurting on the inside; do you pray for her? Then don't criticize.

b) "He's never home, you know." Why is it your business anyway? Have you talked to HIM about it? Do you really know WHY he's never home? How often do you pray for his family? Have you really helped him by communicating to another his absenteeism? What do you mean "never"? Where did you get your information?

c) "That's the slowest waitress I've ever seen." Oh really. Do you clock them? Don't you have anything better to do? Do you know WHY she's so slow? She could be sick. She could be working two jobs to feed her children. She could be depressed, and the last thing she needs is a bunch of pious Christians who say grace out loud and then have broiled waitress. Why not all agree to pray for her? Why not stop and encourage her? How fast are you on the job anyway? How would you do with a tray on your arm? Do you have nothing more edifying to discuss than the speed of a waitress? What a waste of time.

d) "He never smiles." Maybe he hasn't had much to smile about. Maybe he's discouraged and no one cares. Maybe inside he's crying out for help. Are you helping by criticizing? Why not pray for him, encourage him, smile AT him, and let him know someone cares. You are looking at the outward appearance; God is looking at the heart. God knows. In his shoes, you might not smile at all.

So you have criticized four innocent people. What good have you accomplished?

Definition 2- To judge: Judging takes criticism one step further. While criticizing passes judgment on one's behavior or performance, judging takes the condemnation to the heart. So let's define judging.

Judging: to pass judgment on the character or motives of another.

"She should never have done that...what a mess she made." That's criticism.

"She meant to do that to make the rest of us look bad." That's judging.

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The first acknowledges her wrong behavior; the second attributes it to wrong motives. Here are some typical judgmental remarks.

“You just know she didn’t mean it.” You KNOW? You know her heart?

Be careful...that means you’re God.

Here’s another: “He just does that to be seen.” You are implying he knows he is doing it. You are insisting on judging his motives.

Who are you to judge your brother? Would you like to be judged by the same standard? You will be!

Another: “She really doesn’t care what happens to them.” You are implying that you know her inner feelings. What if you’re wrong? What if she’s just been hurt, and you’re misreading her response? Since when did you become God? If you knew one more fact, it might change your whole assessment of her. God has all the facts. Let Him be her judge.

In all these cases, you went beyond criticizing behavior; you condemned character by imputing wrong motives. Who gave you that right?

Definition 3- To accuse: to make formal complaint against another.

This is the act of confrontation that is geared to destroy rather than build. It directly accuses another of wrong behavior or motives with an eye to condemnation rather than to transformation.

It is a misuse of Matthew 18 and Galatians 6, where in the name of Christianity, we don the robes of judgeship and decimate the character or behavior of one for whom Christ died. There is a place for confrontation; the question is, is there a place for accusation?

Definition 4- Self-judgment: to evaluate one’s OWN behavior or motives with an eye to either transformation or condemnation.

This is the act of taking one’s obedience and heart attitudes before the LORD and asking for discernment to determine areas of need. Again, when done for the purpose of transformation, it becomes a healthy, necessary tool for growth. When done in

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a spirit of self-condemnation, it becomes a satanic weapon of destruction, tearing down the image of the life God is in the prospect of building up in you.

Did you notice the key word in each of these definitions? It's "condemnation"! To be a judge, you must have the authority both to acquit and to condemn. It appears that it is this act of condemnation...of sentencing the guilty...that creates for the Christian a dilemma when he begins to judge.

In other words, we are not questioning the right of a Christian to judge the behavior of another with an eye to becoming an agent in the process of transformation, either through prayer or counsel. That's not the issue. The issue is passing judgment on the behavior, performance, or motives of another for the purpose of condemning, putting down, making fun of, casting stones at, condescending to, or making unnecessary comparisons with another. IF you see a brother stumble, and you go to that person IN LOVE (considering thyself...thou couldst be next, Paul said) and offer to help that person through their problem, that's not judging; that's exhortation.

We are called on to exhort...carefully and in love. The issue is not exhortation; the issue is judging.

The question is are we qualified to be their judge? We began by comparing the Christian's desire to judge his neighbor and the role of a judge in society, and we plan to carry that analogy forward through the remainder of the lesson. With that in mind, let's ask ourselves what are the characteristics of the office of a judge? What does the office require? Hopefully, we will find some spiritual comparisons.

1- Judgeship requires authority from a higher source. To be a judge, you do not set up an independent kingdom of your own and declare yourself its judge and jury.

If you are to be a judge, there must be a judicial system. A judicial system requires a higher authority to set it in motion. To be a judge, someone must have ordained the office into existence and allowed you to be appointed or elected with certain predetermined responsibilities and authority.

2- Judgeship receives a mandate from that higher authority. The ones who placed you in those robes handed to you laws to enforce. The judge does not write the law; he applies the law.

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Before he can do so, he must receive the law and a mandate to apply it.

3- Judgeship demands that the one who is to judge must have three things.

- (a) He must have access to all the facts. (He cannot judge if information is withheld, or he is limited in his access to truth.)
- (b) He must possess objectivity. He may have to disqualify himself where his own family or friends are concerned, for a judge who is not objective is not a judge, but rather a partner in the act of condemnation or acquittal.
- (c) He must possess a knowledge of the law. If he has never studied the law, he cannot realistically enforce the law.

4- Judgeship demands a person who can execute mercy, judgment, and pardon. Should a judge be so constituted that he cannot execute mercy, then all stand condemned. Should he be unable to execute judgment, then all stand acquitted. Should he be unable to execute pardon, then all who have failed are without hope.

These then are the attributes of a judge. Perhaps you are beginning to see that the robes do not fit just anyone. Nor do the robes of spiritual judgeship fit just anyone (as we shall soon see). Nevertheless, we will apply...and let God's Spirit and God's Word make the determination.

We have defined the activity and described the attributes. Now let's make formal application to be appointed for the job. The reason we are doing this is simple. You and I are exercising on a day to day basis many of the functions available only to a judge. Either we are or we are not qualified. If we are, we must be appointed. If we're not, we must cease behaving as though we were. Are you ready? Let's get on an airplane and head for the Capitol where we will appear before the Senate and seek confirmation for the office of Judge.

As we enter the room, we can sense an atmosphere of excitement. The press is there, and a large contingent of interested bystanders. As we glance around us at the crowd, we notice, quite strangely, that a number of people in the audience look familiar to us. They are people we know...people that, strangely enough, we have been in the past quite critical of. There's that

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slow waitress, and that absentee father. You cannot help but wonder why they have such a special interest in the proceedings.

The presiding senator has in his hand a large Bible, with a number of pages marked and underlined. It is quite obvious, that this Book will be his only authority.

“Mr. Christian, would you please come forward,” the senator begins. Somewhat nervously, we comply. “I have here before me a nomination for the Office of Judge bearing your name.”

“Yes, Sir,” I respond.

“Apparently you have nominated yourself,” the Senator continues, wrinkling his brow until his glasses nearly slid off his nose. “A bit unusual, I would say. In your application you mentioned that you were fully qualified to serve in the First District, Court of Christianity as a Judge of your fellow Believers. Is that correct?”

“Yes, sir,” I answer, a little of my self-assurance gone. “That is correct.”

“Also, according to the information we have garnered through interviews, you have been acting in this capacity without having been formally appointed. Is that correct?”

“Yes, sir,” I reply, defensively, “but you see there is a great need in my church and in my neighborhood for someone who clearly sees others needs and is willing to correct them. I believe God has appointed me to the office,” I go on (now quite self-righteously). “I am simply asking you to confirm what I believe HE has already done.”

The wrinkled brow returns. “I see,” the Senator answered, quite softly now. “I see.”

“Well, Mr. Christian, state your case. What makes you qualified to wear the robes of a judge?”

“Well, for one thing, Mr. Senator,” I respond, “I spend time in the Word!” I fully expect him to be stricken with awe, but he is singularly unimpressed.

“Go on,” he answers.

“And I have the gift of prophecy, so I have great discernment. I know when people are insincere; I know when people are pretending to be someone they’re not. I am gifted in the area of

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judging...or I may have the gift of exhortation, but I usually build up by tearing down first.”

The senator had his hand in front of his mouth; either he was yawning or chuckling. We weren't sure which, but neither made me feel very secure.

“Go on,” he said. (A little cynicism seemed to be submerged in his voice.) “Go on.”

“Well, sir, God has used me in times past to really get to the heart of some serious problems in other people's lives...”

At this a murmur spread through the audience. Some of the crowd seemed offended by that statement, and some of them were the same people I had “done so much to help”. Oh, well, ingratitude is a sign of the latter days, I conclude.

“I am simply the man for the job,” I continue, now with a deep sense of pious self-righteousness. “God needs me to help keep His flock in control.”

With that, a roar breaks forth from the gallery...and my pious self-righteousness turns quickly to self-pity. Is it possible no one appreciates how gifted I really am in this area!

“Will the applicant please be seated?” the senator speaks now, quite abruptly. “Your appointment will be considered, and an answer will be forthcoming in a few minutes.”

The time while the Senate was deliberating gave me a chance to examine just who it was in the audience that seemed so familiar. Why, there is Mary Murphy. Bless her heart, she needs more discipline in her life. If I have told her that once, I've told her a thousand times. She cries too much, gets too involved. Needs more of the Word, she does. That'll do it. Her husband says she has the gift of mercy, but that's no excuse. She just needs to get on with it.

There's Jim Jasper. He came to me for counsel once...never could figure out why he didn't come back. Said something about my not caring...but I cared. I told him he wasn't sincere about following Jesus, or he would do his Bible study like everyone else. 'Course I found out later there were some extenuating circumstances, but I couldn't have known all that at the time. Anyway, he just needs to shape up, Jim does...

There's Bobby Bensen. What a spiritual loser he is. That

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guy couldn't make a decision if God sent him a telegram. I told him so, too. I get so tired of those namby-pamby Christians who always need counsel.

I never go to anyone for help and look at me. At that point, even my own reasoning seemed a bit weak, so I quickly glanced around the room to see who else was there that I could evaluate.

(I love that word evaluate. It sounds so much better than judging.)

Here comes Senator Goodbook now. Well, when I get my appointment, maybe these guys will understand just what my purpose really is in the Body of Christ. After all, not everybody has my wisdom and experience.

"Will the applicant please come forward?" The good Senator spoke with great authority now. I can just visualize myself in those robes, with that gavel, I thought.

"Yes, sir," I proudly reply. "I am here."

"Your application has been seriously considered, the Senator began, "and we have reached a unanimous conclusion." My face beamed with excitement.

"Appointment Denied!" the Senator concluded. "APPOINTMENT DENIED. You are not qualified, Mr. Christian, to be a Judge. If you will be seated, the committee has asked me to list for you the reasons for your disqualification."

I sank into my chair in disbelief, as the Senator opened up his well-worn Bible and began his explanation. You just might want to listen to what he had to say. There seemed to be some common denominators that just might apply to your application as well.

"Mr. Christian," he began, "we do hereby, on the authority of the Scriptures, find you to be unqualified to be a judge for a variety of reasons. I would like to read for you several portions of God's Law and then after reading each, explain for you the reasons found in each of those passages that apply to your case. Turn first, if you please to Matthew, chapter seven." (I was afraid he would use that passage.) He began to read,

Do not judge, or you too will be judged.

For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

(Matthew 7:1,2 NIV)

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“Mr. Christian, we submit that disqualification #1 is the most important of all.”

Reason 1- You are not to judge others because God has not called you to be a judge. Your calling is of yourself. God has specifically spoken in His Word...and said YOU ARE NOT TO DON THE ROBES OF A JUDGE. You are disqualified, Mr. Christian, because you have not been called.

Reason 2- Mr. Christian, you are disqualified because if you become a judge, you will multiply judgment on yourself. Your life will be measured by a standard it cannot meet, because you have elevated it to a position God never intended you to hold. If God were to allow you to condemn others, then you would stand condemned, for your life cannot measure up to HIS; therefore, you are disqualified to wear HIS robes.

“May I go on?”

I was hardly in a position to argue.

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?

You 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.

(Matthew 7:3-5 NIV)

“Paraphrased, that passage says this,” the senator went on.

How can you judge the small sins of others when your vision is so marred by the great sins in your own life? And how can you do surgery on your brother while blinded by your own sins? You fool! Deal continually with your own sins, and you will be able to see clearly other's needs in the right perspective and be a real help to them.

“Mr. Christian, reason 3 for your disqualification: You are disqualified because you cannot pass the physical. You fail the visual test. You cannot be an eye surgeon because you cannot see. You cannot be a judge because your vision is clouded and distorted by your own sins. No court of law would qualify a judge who is on probation for committing the same crimes for which he is judging others. You judge people for being undisciplined. Have you ever looked at your own schedule? At your own closet? At your own record of faithfulness? You are so busy picking up

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stones to throw at others, you have become so preoccupied with their problems, you have intentionally shelved dealing with your own. Jesus not only said you were not qualified to be a judge, He said you were a fool.

“May I go on?”

There was no need to argue.

“Turn please, to Romans, chapter 14. “There you remember,” the Senator began, “Paul was dealing with how we should accept those who come into our fellowship who seem to be weaker in faith and less firm in their convictions. Most of the people you tend to judge, Mr. Christian, fall into that category. Listen to what Paul says in verse 4.”

Who are you to judge someone else’s servant? To His own master, he stands or falls. (And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand) (Romans 14:4 NIV)

“Do you understand what that passage says, Mr. Christian? It gives reason 4 for your disqualification: you are disqualified because you have no jurisdiction. You’re judging your weaker brother, Paul says, is like a Russian judge coming over and trying a case in an American court. He cannot. He has no jurisdiction. The one on trial is not one of his to judge.

Paul said that weaker brother belongs to Jesus. He is now a citizen of the Kingdom of God. Only the King can judge his own. When you pass judgment on one of the King’s Chosen, you are an affront to the Royal Priesthood. The King called you to be a servant, not a Judge. Retain your place. The King will judge His own, and He will do so in righteousness.

“I will now read verses 9-12 of Romans 14,” the Senator continued.

For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that He might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.

You, then, why do you judge your brother? For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat.

It is written ‘as surely as I live, says the Lord, every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.

So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.

(Romans 14:9-12 NIV)

“Mr. Christian, reason 5 for your disqualification: you are

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disqualified because those you are judging have already been judged. It's double-jeopardy. Christ died and returned to life not to be Judge but to be LORD. Their sins have been judged at the Cross, and so have yours.

They will one day stand at the Judgment seat, just as you will, and they will give account...not to you, but to God. You cannot try a man twice for the same crime. Either they will be tried by God or by you. God has arranged for their acquittal. You have arranged for their condemnation. God says you have condemned them based on inadequate information. How fortunate for Christendom that you, Mr. Christian, are not their judge. Now let's read verse 13."

Therefore, let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way.

IF your brother is distressed [even] by what you eat, you are no longer acting in love.

Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil.
(Romans 14:13,15,16 NIV)

Reason 6: You are disqualified because not only have you not been called to be a judge, you HAVE been called to something even more noble. You have been called to be an example!

"Your concern is not to be where your brother has sinned, and you can correct his ways. Your concern is to be, 'Have I in any way caused my brother to stumble or sin? How must I correct MY ways? You are disqualified because you do not have time. Your time is to be consumed correcting any area of your own life that might prove to cause your brother to stumble. That does not leave you the time or the position from which to judge them."

"If you will, Mr. Christian, turn now to Romans, chapter two. Let's read verse one."

You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.
(Romans 2:1 NIV)

"Mr. Christian, reason 7- You are disqualified because you have committed the same crimes as those you judge. Therefore, every time you judge them, you sentence yourself."

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Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth.

So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment?

Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance, and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance? (Romans 2:2-4 NIV)

“Reason 8- God's judgment is based on truth. He possesses all the facts. You don't. You cannot judge if you do not have access to the information. If the witnesses are not allowed to testify, the judge cannot rule. God alone has all the information. That person you so condemned for making such a crucial mistake (and then later found there were circumstances you did not know existed, circumstances under which you might have done the same thing or worse) that person is God's to judge.

God has ALL the FACTS.

With ALL the facts before Him, the one you so judge may be responding far better than you would. You do not know...so who are you to judge?

Reason 9: In the same passage, it says, When you thus judge another, you are showing contempt for the grace of God. The only reason you are even in the Kingdom is because God in His mercy and grace saw fit to reach down from heaven and save you. God's kindness, Paul said, is to lead you to repentance... not to condemnation of others. You are disqualified because by judging you hold in contempt the Grace of God.

Reason 10 is found in Galatians where Paul reminds us,

As for those who seemed to be important, whatever they were makes no difference to me. God does not judge by external appearance. (Galatians 2:6 NIV)

We judge by the outward appearance. God looks on the heart. God's mode of judgment is greatly influenced by MOTIVE. We cannot discern motives, only He can. Therefore, we who can only see the external are not qualified to judge.

Stop judging by mere appearances and make a right judgment. (John 7:24 NIV)

“Now turn to I Corinthians chapter 4. Paul says this:

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My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent.
It is the Lord who judges me.

Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time. Wait till the LORD comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness, and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time, each will receive his praise from God.

(1 Corinthians 4:4,5 NIV)

So reason 11: You are disqualified because it is not time to judge. You cannot try a case before it comes up on the docket. It must be scheduled. God has scheduled a time to judge His children. We must not judge them before the appointed time. So far, all the facts are not in. The witnesses are not all accounted for, and the full truth cannot yet be determined.”

“Very quickly,” the senator concluded. “I will share two more causes for your disqualification. There are many more; I simply share these.”

Reason 12: God has left a more capable judge on this earth.

The Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow, it judges the thoughts and the attitudes of the heart.

(Hebrews 4:12 NIV)

“You are disqualified because God has left a LIVING JUDGE to do whatever judging must be done in this age. That judge is HIS Word. As His word goes forth, IT judges and corrects men's hearts.

Reason 13: James 4 says this:

Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it.

There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?

(James 4:11,12 NIV)

So this last reason is this: Every time you judge your brother, you pass judgment on the law itself because the very law you use to condemn them has declared you unfit to be their judge. Therefore, every time you judge your brother, you condemn the law you use to judge him. If in order to sentence someone, you must prove as invalid the very law by which you found them guilty, you have no case.

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“Therefore, ‘case dismissed’ would be an appropriate phrase for you to begin using every time you are tempted to judge or condemn your fellow Christians.”

“So you want to be a judge?” the Senator asks quietly. “So you want to be a judge?”

“I am sorry, Mr. Christian, but you simply are not qualified to be a judge. Appointment Denied.”

“But sir,” you respond, “the need is so great! IF I am not equipped to judge them, nor are my colleagues here, who then will be responsible?”

“May I just read a few words from GOD, young man, to answer that question. God has left an alternative, a beautiful alternative. Listen.”

For we know Him who said, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay,” and again, “The Lord will judge His people.”

(Hebrews 10:30 NIV)

God will judge the immoral. (from Hebrews 13:4)

It is the Lord who judges me. (I Corinthians 4:4b NIV)

which the LORD, the righteous Judge will give to me in that day. (from II Timothy 4:8)

When they hurled insults at Him, He did not retaliate, when He suffered, HE made no threats. Instead, He entrusted Himself to Him who judges righteously. (I Peter 2:23 NIV)

Don’t grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door. (James 5:9 NIV)

“God has made provisions to Judge His people,” the Senator answered. “He has HIMSELF agreed to assume the role of the Righteous Judge.” “And He has ALL the facts. He judges only in love. He is the interpreter of the Law; therefore, He cannot err in His judgments. He has provided perfect pardon for all who meet His terms. Therefore, He is capable of condemning, pardoning, or acquitting, and cannot make a mistake. He sees men’s hearts. He knows men’s secret thoughts. He has never sinned; therefore, He is free to judge. His motivations are perfect. His knowledge is complete. Therefore, His judgments are without error.”

“God has provided a perfect judge for His people; therefore the robes were custom-tailored only for HIM. When we try to

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wear them, we are dwarfed in the sheer awesomeness of their authority. WE are crushed beneath the very weight of the garments. We are not fit to wear them.

One day we will judge angels...but not yet. God has not sent us to judge; God has sent us to save, to heal, to edify, to simply, quietly call attention to the real Judge who even today stands at the door. Mr. Christian, you have a task...but it is not to judge”.

“I suggest that you go back home, Mr. Christian, and do the following.” With that, the wise senator gave Mr. Christian this list of things to do. “When you get home,” he began, “get an appointment, and do these.”

First, ask the Righteous Judge to aid you in performing surgery on your eyes. You are unfit to see the small infractions of others, because you are blinded by the large ones that so characterize your own life. Ask GOD to begin sandpapering your life, correcting your blind spots, teaching you to more perfectly reflect HIS image.

Secondly, ask forgiveness of those you have judged without the credentials of judgeship. Humble yourself before them. If you have been a stumbling block to those who are weaker, seek to be forgiven, seek to correct those self-righteous attitudes.

Thirdly, acknowledge that you do not have all the facts. You cannot see men’s hearts, so you do not know their motives. You do not know their past, so you cannot assess their progress. You do not know their hurts, so you cannot assess their grief. Without the facts, you cannot be a judge...and YOU DO NOT HAVE THE FACTS.

Fourthly, redesign your prayer list so that if you see a brother with what you consider to be a shortcoming, you will begin immediately to pray for him, knowing that you too are capable of whatever sin they seem to be guilty of, and but for the grace of God, you would be in their shoes. God did not expose their weakness so you could condemn or judge them; you are not qualified to judge. But you ARE qualified to pray.

Lastly, find a Spiritual Secondhand store so you can trade in your robes of self-righteousness for the garments of a servant. The man or woman who is consumed by serving, as Jesus was, has little time to condemn or to judge.

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The slave does not think to criticize His Master, nor would he dare to condemn His Master's other servants. That is the Master's business. His job is to serve, and servanthood and judgeship are not compatible professions.

I do not mean that you and I do not have some responsibilities. We are to measure and discipline the behavior of those God has placed under us, so long as that judgment:

- a) is from the Word of God,
- b) is in a sphere governed by our authority,
- c) does not attempt to assess heart motives.

We **MUST** judge the obedience of our children; we **MUST** judge the progress of our students; we must judge the effectiveness of our employees.

BUT, remember, even in those cases, our judgment is always for the purpose of **TRANSFORMATION**...**NEVER** for the purpose of **CONDEMNATION**. We are correcting to encourage and not to destroy. We are disciplining to rebuild patterns; not to destroy confidence.

Our sole reason for judging, if and when we are called to, is to help another grow. And even then, we are to remember...we do the same things, therefore we must not be harsh.

“And yes, there are times when correction is necessary in the church, but it is for sins that affect the Body, and correction is to follow the Biblical pattern and be carried to the Biblical conclusion, if necessary...that is, to be brought before the whole church. If the sin does not warrant that, then be careful before you begin the process. And even then your purpose, remember, is **RESTORATION**. It is not **CONDEMNATION**. You are equipped to restore; you are not equipped to judge.”

So Beloved, let's stop our petty complaining and criticizing. Let's stop focusing the attention of our lives on what she says that's wrong, or what he wears, or what she does, or how they live...God has accepted them. If we are accountable to rebuke them, let us do it in love for the sake of restoration. If we are not (and usually we are not), then let us rather love them, encourage them, and pray for them. They have a Judge...and what a Judge they have. Psalm 96 describes Him:

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Say among the nations, The LORD reigns; Indeed, the world also is firmly established, it will not be moved; He will judge the peoples with equity.

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; Let the sea roar, and all it contains;

Let the field exult, and all that is in it. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy

Before the LORD, for He is coming; For He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness, and the peoples in His faithfulness [truth]

(Psalm 96:10-13 NAS)

Abraham asked the question, “Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?” God has answered it for us in this lesson: Of course He will. Then does He need our help in judging? I believe He has answered that for us as well, for we have applied in the Courts of Heaven to wear the robes of a judge.

And our application has been denied.

May we this day, then, begin to seek more perfectly rather to fulfill the role of a servant...the role to which we have been called.

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APPOINTMENT DENIED!

We appear before thee, Sir, this day
With grave, intense, concern,
To ask that you appoint us
To the role for which we yearn.

We in good conscience, Sir,
Have looked into the task,
And find ourselves quite qualified
To do the job we ask.

We're seeking the appointment
And claim o'er all the others,
That we're equipped to be a Judge
And thus condemn our brothers.

We've looked at all our talents
Compared to all the rest,
We've come to the conclusion
That we can pass the test.

What's that you say? Disqualified?
But, Sir, I disagree.
Who on earth could fill the role
Of judge as well as we?

I see; forgive me, Lord.
At last I realize,
The robes belong to Jesus,
They simply aren't my size.

Dear Lord, instead I ask Thee,
Be this my honest prayer:
Clothe me instead in servant's garb,
Clothes meant for me to wear.

And Lord, each time I start to judge,
Just say, "Appointment Denied."
Remind me, Lord, I'm not a Judge;
I'm just not qualified!

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