

# From the Pastor's Desk

May the Lord expand your heart and your understanding as you set time aside to read this letter. It is always a joy to meditate on the message God has in store for us. The process of learning is never-ending as life has an abundance of wealth only achievable by acquiring knowledge. The things we learn in school prepare us for becoming good citizens while the things we learn in Church prepare us for everlasting. Giving priority to education, obtaining a decent job, and saving for retirement is good; however, it should not be the first and foremost priority in life. Our eternal existence hinges on the way we prioritize our journey while living in this world. Although, natural goals are important the first priority ought to be to God and all other things should be listed at the end of the line. Here is a valid and important question. To whom are you giving priority?

The truth is that life continues into everlasting regardless of what you believe; however, the things you believe and follow will determine your final destination in the journey towards eternal existence. In the last two letters I shared with you two important words. Please take a second look and revisit the January and February letters to take a hold of their meaning; both words are worth mentioning again. One has to do with change and the other one is giving; having a clear understanding of their meaning can enhance your spiritual relationship with God. Are you open to changes life may bring you and are you willing to set time aside to do the work of the Lord? The greatest action of giving is surrendering your life to the Lord. Keep in mind that God is well able to refocus your life, if it needs to be refocused. In a split second God can help you see the light regarding your spiritual understanding and the importance of fulfilling his divine purpose.

There was a man who raised an interesting comment. He said, "what if you do all the things the Bible says to do and at the end of life there is no God, no heaven or hell and everlasting life does not even exist?" I have a different take on that way of thinking. Have you heard of the saying "it is better to be safe than sorry." I would rather aim to please God according to the mandates of the Bible and run into the possibility that there is no heaven missing the promise entirely, than living a life under the dictates of people's humanistic ideas and the wisdom of this world to then find myself in a place of horror called by the Bible as the Lake of Fire. Benjamin Franklin once said: "*An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.*"



The message I am sharing with you today has to do with judging. For several weeks I have been thinking on this topic. The art of judging has many layers of information and different points of view, but in this letter I will be limiting myself to mention its role in Christians. Nevertheless, you can expand your knowledge on this topic by reading the Bible and other godly resources.

The Bible has a record of many stories of how the people of faith handled their situations. One that I would like to share with you provides us the initial introduction and the birth of the Judicial System. Moses, the servant of God, was the one who started judging people's disputes, as he provided ruling from God. Let us read about it as written in the Bible.

#### **Exodus 18:13-26**

The next day, Moses took his seat to hear the people's disputes against each other. They waited before him from morning till evening.

When Moses' father-in-law (Jethro) saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he asked, "What are you really accomplishing here? Why are you trying to do all this alone while everyone stands around you from morning till evening?"

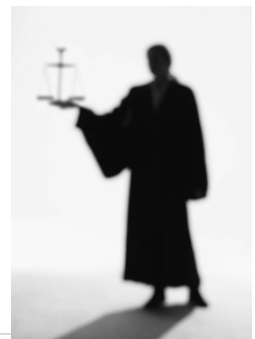
Moses replied, "Because the people come to me to get a ruling from God. When a dispute arises, they come to me, and I am the one who settles the case between the quarreling parties. I inform the people of God's decrees and give them his instructions."

"This is not good!" Moses' father-in-law exclaimed. "You're going to wear yourself out and the people, too. This job is too heavy a burden for you to handle all by yourself. Now listen to me, and let me give you a word of advice, and may God be with you. You should continue to be the people's representative before God, bringing their disputes to him. Teach them God's decrees, and give them his instructions. Show them how to conduct their lives. But select from all the people some capable, honest men who fear God and hate bribes. Appoint them as leaders over groups of one thousand, one hundred, fifty, and ten. They should always be available to solve the people's common disputes, but have them bring the major cases to you. Let the leaders decide the smaller matters themselves. They will help you carry the load, making the task easier for you. If you follow this advice, and if God commands you to do so, then you will be able to endure the pressures, and all these people will go home in peace."

Moses listened to his father-in-law's advice and followed his suggestions. He chose capable men from all over Israel and appointed them as leaders over the people. He put them in charge of groups of one thousand, one hundred, fifty, and ten. These men were always available to solve the people's common disputes. They brought the major cases to Moses, but they took care of the smaller matters themselves.

During Moses' times it is safe to say that the people were guided by their lower nature. Moses became the mediator between God and man. The fact that Moses was worn out while helping the people of God gives us a good indication that judging matters was rampant. Today is the same way. Take a trip to your local courthouse, and most likely you will see the hallways filled with people waiting to have their cases heard by a judge. How is judging viewed in the life of the believer? Should a believer judge other people? Is judging acceptable and good?

While the topic of judging can be stretched to great levels, I am going to stay within the limits of a single individual point of view or self-judging. I am a strong believer that we can achieve more when we become living examples of the things we believe in. The way matters



are perceived determine the way we react; choices made are influenced in one way or another and when ideas are presented to us we have the ability to be in favor of them or against them. Nevertheless, decisions are made based on the way we perceived them. Would you agree to the fact that our actions are triggered by the venue of judging? The element of judging is here to stay. Is it good or bad? You be the judge!

You and I have witnessed this in our own lives. The moment we wake up in the morning the action of judging things or people begins to operate in what seems to be an automatic way. Quite often it happens in an unnoticed way that is so quick that we rarely have enough time to do something about it. You can call it a slip of the tongue. We have heard stories of how lives have been destroyed by rumors birthed by someone's perception. Other stories come from the free enterprise system. Have you heard of the American Idol Show? This program is a yearly production by the FOX network. The entire content of the show is directly affected by the way viewers judge contestants. The goal is to judge singers by eliminating contestants each week until crowning a winner. There are many reasons people vote the way they do. Is it the singing performance? Is it the way a singer dresses? Is it the location the singer comes from? You be the judge!

**The way to see  
by faith is to  
shut the eye of  
reason.**

Let's face it. The element of judging is active and alive. You can notice it when expressing feelings in every day conversations or impulsively giving a "piece of your mind" to someone. We see it vividly among Christians and in the secular sector as well. Friend, have you judged someone lately? This can easily be done through simple words that easily slip through the lips saying the wrong thing. Sometimes a true valid statement is uttered and delivered the wrong way, or at the wrong time, which is the ones that hurt the most in the heart of the person hearing it. The Bible is clear on the way judging must be done and that is the key that we must follow to keep us safe in the sight of God. In times when expressing judgment takes place, the final results and outcome ought to be good, and that is the Christian's benchmark. Concerning conducting judgment on others, the Bible encourages us to stay away from touting in someone else's business.

"Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged. And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own?" (Mathew 7:1-3).

There is an area in which having a strong judgment and allowing emotions to function can be beneficial. In fact, if we do a good job examining ourselves it is a possibility that we may not be so eager to judge others and others may not be so eager to judge us. In the Old Testament Era, the people of God relied on selected individuals to hear God for them. They even provided sacrifices for their sins. All these events took place as a shadow leading to something new and better. All was pointing out to a better covenant in which Jesus' sacrifice at the cross provided the best covenant to mankind. The work Jesus did at Calvary destroyed the need of man going to another man to receive forgiveness of sin. He made the Old Covenant better when the Law was fulfilled in Jesus by the New Covenant of Faith. It also removed the presence of God from a temple. In fact it transferred God's glory and presence from a building made by human hands into the hearts of those who welcome Him. The human

intellect and mind cannot understand such a great mystery. We must accept it by faith. All of this became possible by the sacrifice of one man – Jesus.

In judging ourselves, we must seek to find out if our faith is real. In other words, do we trust God according to the principles written in the Bible? Why is faith so important? It is vital because without faith it is impossible to please God. Deep within our being we have the desire to do what is right and please God. It is a yearning embedded in us that when fulfilled brings joy and satisfaction. When something good is done we know that we are pleasing God. In the journey of pleasing God the believer has the ability to be guided by the voice of God. It may not be a loud audible voice for everyone to hear, but it can be noticeable to the believer. I have said this in the past, but it is worth repeating. Nothing can be compared to hearing God’s voice.

Friend, God does speak to his people in a peculiar way. That’s the difference between other people’s gods and the God of the Bible. Our God is well able to guide us through different methods of communication. He is not a figment of our imagination or a mere hope of something. God is real and his ways are real. The number one way God guides the believer is through the written Word of God. The essence of life and the ways to live life are explained in the Bible in one way or another. The ways of God are known to man through the Scriptures, and no longer are hidden to the people of God. The second way the believer is guided is by the inner-promptings of God also known as the small-still-voice from within the heart. Sometimes people call it a HUNCH or intuition, but it is a real voice.

“Examine yourselves to see if your faith is genuine. Test yourselves. Surely you know that Jesus Christ is among you; if not, you have failed the test of genuine faith. As you test yourselves, I hope you will recognize that we have not failed the test of apostolic authority” (II Corinthians 13:5-6).



The Bible even says that if we do a good job judging our ways then the Lord will not have to judge us.

“But if we would examine ourselves, we would not be judged by God in this way. Yet when we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned along with the world (I Corinthians 11:31-32).

**A good example is the best sermon.**