

Honest Self-Evaluation

By

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The lesson today is self-examination with honesty and integrity. Sometimes it is very painful to be honest with ourselves in looking at our own failures. Ruth Knowlton told of a building across the alley only a few feet away where she could easily look into her neighbor's apartment. Ruth had never met the woman who lived there, but she could see her as she sewed and read each afternoon. After several months, she noticed that the figure by the window had become difficult to see. She could not understand why the woman didn't wash her windows. One sunny day, Ruth decided to do some housecleaning, including washing her own window. Later that day she sat down to rest by the window and to her amazement, she could clearly see and distinctly see her neighbor sitting by her window. Ruth said to herself, "Well, finally, she washed her windows!" By now you have guessed what really happened: Ruth's own windows were the ones that needed washing.

Dear friend, how clearly this illustrates to us our own failures and shortcomings as well as the sins in our own lives while all the time we are judging the flaws in others' lives. How many times what we have in our lives is far more serious and damaging to ourselves and others than what is in the lives of others. Our Lord illustrated this when he spoke on passing judgment on others. The man judging was in far greater need than the man he was judging.

Matt 7:1-5, "Judge not (without love), that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye." NKJV

Someone wisely said, "Our own faults are the ones we condemn most quickly in others." Far too many of us see ourselves as the self-appointed correctors of the wrongs in others. In recent years in a Connecticut town, a group of residents who were terribly upset about the reckless driving on their streets got a petition signed by 53 of them calling for tighter control of traffic in their neighborhoods. The sheriff responded by setting a watch a few nights later. He caught five violators in all and each of them had signed that petition. Sometimes others need admonished and corrected, out of earnest love and concern for them and the lives they touch. But this should always be done with the honest desire to be of help to them, to leave the person better than they were before. We all need that at times, because sometimes we cannot and do not see our own faults. Let us remember that the Bible commands us to judge others, but not unkindly or selfishly, without self-righteousness, hatred or envy. Let us not judge a thing by the way it looks to us, but rather by the way that it looks to God.