

1 **Time for a family chat**

...bathed in prayer

2 **A review of my week...**

- Frustration after last Sunday
- Trying travel
- Decent work week
- Lousy cold
- Almost getting to hear my grandson being born
- Meeting my grandson
- Going 28 hours without sleep
 - burdens of a pastor's heart

3 **Do you have dreams for this church?**

- I do....
 - 7 elders each with a different spiritual gift
 - Decisions the result of prayer unanimity
 - Planting new churches; growing this church; blessing more families
 - Church that ministers to every aspect of life:
 - Spiritual
 - Physical – health and nutrition
 - Financial – teach people how to make money
 - Educational – providing resources to help people get training they need to be successful
 - Emotional – ministry to hurting groups

4 **How did we get this far?**

- Getting rid of that with which God isn't pleased
 - Constitution change; people left; God blessed
 - People threatened not to participate any more if they couldn't control any longer
 - They were coming for the wrong reason
- Does God need to cleanse us again in order to bless us?
 - We need BLESSING more than BUSY-NESS
- The church is more important than any one of us.
 - If I am hindering the work of the church, then I need to get right with God and others...or leave!

5 **Questions**

- If you have several children, what are the big concerns you have as a parent?
 - Answer: That they love one another
 - How do you think God feels when His children can't get along together? It breaks His heart.
- Who is in charge of your family? Who really is the final authority in your family?
 - And who has the greatest influence on that person?

6 **The church belongs to Jesus**

- HE should run it
 - Yes, he uses human leaders who follow Him
- He opens His arms to all who will come
 - The church of Jesus Christ is not to be run by those who threaten a certain response (withdrawal of giving or participation) if things don't go their way).
 - If I am hindering the church from growing, then I need to get right with God and others or I need to leave.

7 **DEAL WITH PROBLEMS EARLY**

8 **The church at Phillipi**

- They failed to have the mind of Christ
- They failed to focus on God's glory
- Euodias and Syntyche were at odds with one another
 - Problem was spreading to other laborers
- The CURE:
 - Prayer
 - Exhortation, rebuke, reproof

9 **DISUNITY IS CAUSED BY A CRITICAL SPIRIT**

10 **Luke 9:51-53**

- And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.

11 **Luke 9:54-56**

- And when his disciples James and John saw *this*, they said, *Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?* **But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.**
- James and John thought that their judgmental spirit was serving God's purpose but the opposite was true.
 - Their Pharasaical attitude didn't help God's cause.

12 **The consequences of a critical spirit**

- Children who don't run into your arms
 - Watch how their children respond to them
- A wife who can't share her feelings and cautions with you for fear that you will react
- Destruction of friendships
- Isolating yourself from a supportive community
- Children who will rebel after they leave home

13 **The problem of a critical spirit**

- Renders punitive judgment without sufficient evidence (Proverbs 18:13 – underline it!)
- Homeschooling families are often guilty of a critical spirit toward those:
 - who send kids to public school or traditional college
 - who trust traditional medicine
 - who aren't like us
 - who don't have large families
 - whose children have rebelled and left home
 - whose lives are irreparably damaged by divorce

14 **Remember this....**

- The army of God should not shoot its wounded soldiers
- They should bind their wounds, comfort, and encourage them
 - They need our prayers
 - They need our encouragement
 - They need to be invited over for dinner
 - They need to belong to a family
 - They do NOT need to be targets of our criticism

15 **God forgives mistakes**

- So when we don't forgive mistakes and are critical of someone and speak ill of them...we are stating that our standards are higher than God's.
- What would you call that attitude?
- God is a God of grace.
- You need to understand what Christ meant when He said, "*Judge not that you be not judged.*"
 - What should we judge; whom should we judge; should we judge?

16 **Judge not that ye be not judged**

Command of Christ #15
Matthew 7:1-3

17 **Matthew 7:1-3**

- *Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?*

18 **Understandable confusion**

19  **What is judging?**

- *Krino* – To judge guilty and worthy of punishment; to assign punishment
 - Word used in Matthew 7:1-3
- We Judge Imperfectly
 - Based on Partial Information
 - John 7:24 -- Do not judge by appearances
 - Proverbs 18:13 – Do not judge before you hear the whole matter
 - Done in a Critical Spirit
 - Jesus to the sons of thunder: "*Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of*"
- Focus: Punishment

20  **What is discernment?**

- **Definition**
 - Seeing the needs of others which we can meet
 - Recognizing opportunities to share God's solutions
 - Distinguishing between what is good and what is evil, in order to make wise decisions
 - Spiritual sight that is not dimmed by lack of faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, or love
 - "*He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.*"—2 PETER 1:9

21  **What is discernment? (2)**22  **What is discernment? (3)**

- **Discernment Comes with Maturity**
 - "*Every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to **discern** both good and evil*" (Hebrews 5:13-14).
- **Focus: Assistance** (not condemnation)
 - "*Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted*" (Galatians 6:1).

23  **Judge vs. doctor**24  **A difference in focus**

- In judgment, we come to a conclusion of EVIL
- In discernment, we come to a solution of GOOD
- Observation becomes judgment when there is no desire to provide a loving solution
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25  **Legal background**

- **Law of Witnesses**
 - Jesus referring to Deuteronomy 19:15-21
 - 2-3 witnesses required; one is not enough
 - Punishment for false witnesses
 - Investigation made by judges
 - If witness is determined to be false, then the punishment that the accused would have received becomes the punishment for the false witness
 - Administered without pity or mercy
- **We choose our punishment in what we plan for our enemies**

26  **Legal background (2)**

- Haman hung on gallows he built for Mordecai
- Satraps killed in lion's den where God delivered Daniel
- Absalom
 - Killed Amnon for his sin against Tamar since David failed to do it
 - Fled to Gezer; brought back by David; no communication
 - Tries to take father's throne and life
 - Killed, but David lives

27  **Legal background (3)**

- David vs. Uriah
 - David justified killing Uriah because he was a Hittite
 - Deuteronomy 20:16-17—God commanded destruction of the Hittites
 - Judges 2:20-22—God decreed the Hittites would not be driven out of the Promised Land as part of Israel's judgment
 - Judges 3:5-6—Hittites intermarried with Israelites

- 2 Samuel 12:9—God was displeased because David uses the sword of the enemy to kill Uriah
- David loses Amnon, Absalom, and baby

28 Judges 2:20-22

- *And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice; I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died: That through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not.*

29 2 Samuel 12:9

- *Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.*

30 Legal background (4)

- Ahithophel vs. David
 - David's most trusted counselor
 - Spoke as if he had "inquired at the oracle of God" (2 Samuel 16:23)
 - Why did this trusted friend turn on David?
 - Genealogy—Was Bathsheba's grandfather
 - Ahithophel became bitter and purposed to kill David for defiling his granddaughter.
 - Ahithophel and Absalom were of like spirit and died for their judgments.
 - Ahithophel hanged himself when his counsel was rejected

31 Genealogy of Bathsheba

- Ahithophel was a Gilonite (2 Samuel 15:12)
- Eliam was the son of Ahithophel (2 Samuel 23:34)
- And Eliam was the father of Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11:3)

32 2 Samuel 16:23

- *And the counsel of Ahithophel, which he counseled in those days, was as if a man had enquired at the oracle of God: so was all the counsel of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom.*

33 2 Samuel 17:1-3

- *Moreover Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Let me now choose out twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue after David this night:*
- *And I will come upon him while he is weary and weak handed, and will make him afraid: and all the people that are with him shall flee; and I will smite the king only:*
- *And I will bring back all the people unto thee: the man whom thou seekest is as if all returned: so all the people shall be in peace.*

34 2 Samuel 17:23

- *And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulcher of his father.*

35 Proverbs 26:27

- *"Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him"*
 - Speaks of a person plotting ways to destroy their enemies
 - But this person destroys himself instead
 - He continues to destroy his relationships until he has no real friends. He loses the heart of his children and the intimacy of his marriage.
- We are damaged when we plot the destruction of another

36 Consequences of judging

- **We Condemn Ourselves**
 - If we had solved the problem we are judging, we would be eager to share the solution rather than condemning others
 - We direct the frustration we have with ourselves toward others in a condemning and judgmental attitude

37  **CHECK THE PLANK IN YOUR EYE!**38  **Romans 2:1-6**

- Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself for thou that judgest doest the same things. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God: Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

39  **Consequences of judging (2)**

- Judas Iscariot vs. Mary
 - Judas judged Mary for wasting the precious ointment she poured on Jesus
 - Judas had a problem regarding the proper use of money
 - "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein" (John 12:5-6).

40  **Consequences of judging (3)**

- **Eli vs. Hannah**
 - Hannah prays at Tabernacle
 - Sees Hannah praying
 - Her lips were moving but no sound was heard
 - Eli assumes she is drunk—lacking in self-control
 - Eli lacked self-control
 - A glutton
 - His sons were gluttons, drunkards, and fornicators
- Our reticular activating system thinks it sees in others what is a problem in our own lives

41  **How can we overcome a spirit of judging?**

- Jesus answers this question for us
- When we start to judge another person on any failure in his life, this is a signal to examine our own lives to see where we have an exact or similar failure
- Matthew 7:3-5

42  **How can we overcome a spirit of judging? (2)**

- Goal: Conquer the weaknesses in our lives so we can help others with the same problem to find the victory as well.
 - *Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ* (2 Corinthians 1:4-5).

43  **Jesus as Judge**

- First came as the **Great Physician**
 - Focus was to bring healing, forgiveness, and to teach principles for righteous living
 - "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:17).
- Returning as Righteous Judge
 - Judge of the Living and the Dead
 - Jesus Christ the Righteous

44  **Lessons**

- Remember that the Judge of all the earth is scrutinizing the failures in our own lives.
 - "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" (Romans 12:3).
 - "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things" (Romans 2:1).

45  **Lessons (2)**

- An inclination to judge should invite us to examine whether we have put any stumbling block before another.

– "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way" (Romans 14:13).

- We must call on the power of God to remove the "beam" from our eyes.
 - "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.... Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:7,10).

46 **Lessons (3)**

- God wants us to acknowledge our own needs before pointing out the needs of others.
- God designed communion to give us regular time to judge ourselves.
 - Before communion, we are to thoroughly examine ourselves, and only then are we to partake of that cup and that bread.
 - 1 Corinthians 11:28-32

47 **Application**

- What do you judge in the lives of others?
- How are these failures present in your own lives?
- Whom have you criticized?
 - How do you need to change?
- In what areas of your life has God given you victory?
 - How can you share the solution?
- How has your judgment come back on you?

48 **Application**

- Judge YOURSELF and not others.
 - Discern your own spiritual condition and REPENT if you have a critical spirit
 - Ephesians 4:29 -- *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*
 - Speech must edify
 - Speech must minister grace
 - Speech must not be corrupted by our own critical spirit

49 **Application**

- Rather than judging others, you are to DISCERN their needs to determine how you can ENCOURAGE and COMFORT them.
- Remember—You CANNOT know a person's heart; you can only observe their deeds.

50 **Application**

- Leave ecclesiastical judgment (that might result in expulsion) as a matter for the elders of the church.
 - It isn't your job
 - Call problems to the attention of an elder so that investigation can be made – after you first attempt to pray for that person, love them, and encourage them.
 - Elders deal with private sins privately, and public sins publicly

51 **Application**

- Ask Christ to tame your tongue (because you can't do it)
 - Have Him set a watch at the door of your lips
- If all your conversations about other people in our church were made publicly available on the church web site, would it:
 - Drive others away from this church?
 - Draw others to this church?
 - And how would it affect others for Christ?

52 **Something to think about...**

- *People more often choose a church for its warmth rather than its light*
 - They care more about finding a loving church than one that is theologically rich
- Are we a loving church?
 - Not if we are being critical of one another and running one another down
 - Not if we are threatening to participate in the things we can't control
 - Not if we are withdrawing fellowship because we have become judge and jury without all the facts

53 **What's our cure?**

- Prayer
 - To repent of our critical spirit

- For others to repent of their critical spirit
- Seek the forgiveness of those to whom we've been critical
- Reproof and rebuke of a critical spirit
- Focus – on glorifying Christ

54 **What's our cure?**

- Compassion for those who are hurting
- Judging OURSELVES while discerning the needs of others
- Holding others accountable for edifying speech