

...FOR THOSE SEEKING THE EMPOWERING PRESENCE OF THE Holy Spirit

LutheranRenewal

Number 272 • March 2010

Am I qualified to judge?

by Paul Anderson

I silently criticized a friend for sleeping too much. Then I found out that sleep apnea gave him only two good hours a night. I judged an acquaintance for being obnoxious until I met his father; then I understood what he had gone through in growing up. I judged a pastor for not getting back to me before I found out that he had not received the message. I knew just enough—to judge wrongly. The cases should have not gone to a verdict due to insufficient evidence.

I hereby resign as a superior court judge. I am neither superior nor an effective judge. Case dismissed!

The first time Jesus addresses this subject, He says simply, "Do not judge." Qualifiers are introduced in other places, but not here. So for now, let this sober command settle in: "Don't do it." I had read this scores of times. Finally, like a friend of mine says, it read me.

Here is what Jesus says:

"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 to you. 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 7:1-5).

Do not judge, or you too will be judged.

Matthew 7:1

I read this to my children and asked if they had trouble with it. Israel asked, "Is it judging to tell a friend he should not be doing drugs?" I responded, "Not if you are not looking down on him, and not if you are not holding yourself up as the standard of righteousness." We can tell someone that homosexuality is wrong without an ounce of judgment, or we can say it with poisoned hearts.

Then on the way to school one of my kids said, "Look at that van. Why did they do that? It is ugly." I reflected, "So you are the standard of ugliness. Maybe what you want to say is, 'That doesn't look good to me.' Then you're not setting yourself up as the ugliness judge."

When we judge, we are setting ourselves up as the standard. We are saying, "They must decrease, and I must increase," the opposite of a humble attitude. We are assuming that we know what another person's problem is, and we don't. Presumption, a proud sin, can easily control our lives (Ps. 19:13). We are saying that our sins are small compared to others. Superior, huh? We are playing God, who is the

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Judge of all the earth. We are pretending that things are better with us than they really are. We need to learn to hate what Jesus hates, and He hates a judgmental spirit.

A poor judge renders bad decisions, and God despises injustice. He judges with righteousness and equity; He has never made a wrong decision. *"The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether"* (Ps. 19:9). Our judgments are consistently faulty, yet we continue to pass verdicts. It is a picture of unkindness, stupidity, and pride.

Why should we not judge?

- We'll get judged in return. Jesus promised that it would be returned in the same measure that it is given out. This means that people given to judging others will walk around feeling on the defensive, which will make them all the more judgmental. Not long after I had judged my wife for being late for church, I walked into a room for a meeting a few minutes late. The judgment I had given came back to me as I felt judged by others. *"Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful"* (Js. 2:12). Criticism always backfires; those who judge get judged. Period. So give away what you want the most, because it is coming back.
- We join forces with Satan, who judges incessantly. He wanted to be God, to judge the lives of others, to sit on the highest court. He is the prime accuser. He loves pointing the finger at people, dragging them to court, telling them how bad they are, and he is especially pleased when we are willing to help him do his job.
- Judgments in court are decisions that stick, that change reality. When we judge, we often go beyond opinions to verdicts: "He'll never pass that test," or "She can't teach Sunday School." Our verdicts sometime impact the future of those we judge.
- James, the sober brother of Jesus, calls judging evil: *"Have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?"* (Js. 4:2). And judging makes us critics of the law, a dangerous position to assume (Js. 4:11).
- We are judging people God is accepting (Rom. 14:3). It is like talking about someone else's kids. It doesn't make them happy—or God, not even a little.
- Some issues are matters of conscience and faith. What is wrong for you may be right for another person. We're not all in the same place (Rom. 14:2), so one size (or judgment) doesn't fit all.
- We are called to build up, not tear down (Rom. 14:19). Life is hard enough without adding to people's problems by discouraging them. Researchers gave people an IQ test two times. They scored 25 to 30 points lower after they worked with a group that rejected them. Expect performance to be lower in an atmosphere of judging.
- Judging blinds us to our own problems. Our natural tendency is to exaggerate the problems of others and underestimate our own. Like the Pharisees, we easily externalize sins, avoid the "baddies," but we are often guilty of sins of the heart, like a critical spirit. Jesus throws the weight on the other side by telling us to deal with our plank first before we handle our brother's speck. We have a greater inclination to change others than to change ourselves. We see out of distorted glasses that make us look better. But those who have done a thorough self-examination and have dealt with their own sins are best able to be a help to others.

...give away what you
want the most, because it
is coming back.



- God has not delegated that responsibility to us (Rom. 14:4). Jesus has been appointed the judge. He is qualified, by reason of His omniscience, omnipresence, wisdom, and righteousness; we are not (Rom. 14:10; Jn. 4:12). At the judgment we will give an account of ourselves (Rom. 14:12). To judge those we are not responsible for (as we are our own children) assumes a relationship that we do not have.

Love... always protects, trusts, hopes, perseveres.

1 Corinthians 13:7



- When we judge, we easily become the model of righteousness. When we criticize another person's clothes or worship style or parenting skills, we are likely saying in our heart, "Look at me for your example."
- *"Love is patient, love is kind...It is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered...It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."* Any judgment that does not reflect love is wrong. I didn't feel love flowing between the seminary I attended and another one when they disagreed publicly about eschatology. Pride points out differences to show that we are better than others, while love overlooks differences. Critics see a need and judge others. Jesus saw a need—and died.

People who have a problem with judging tend to be reactionary. They are known for what they are against more than what they are for. They are insecure and need to rise above others. They really do think they are better or at least want to think that they are. They see things in black and white, not gray. They tend toward self-

righteousness, because they have not sufficiently experienced the grace of God. Maybe they were judged when growing up and learned how.

Children of parents who are perfectionists sometimes learn how to keep score early in life. As adults, if they are not healed, they keep score on themselves, their spouses, their children, their fellow workers. Joyce told me that she could never do it right as a child. If she vacuumed, she missed behind the chair. If she cut her hair, it was too short. Now as an adult and a pastor's wife, she was miserable, judging the other pastor, the members, and herself. She needed healing from childhood patterns to overcome her judgmental ways.

People who have learned not to judge have had the fire of suffering burn out the chaff of judgment. They know the reality of God's mercy and want others to experience it. They have, at least in part, been detoxed of Pharisaism, and they know the difference between the root and the fruit.

Part of our problem with judging is that we only see what is before us. People have a reason for doing what they do, even if their reason cannot be validated. Knowing a person's past helps us to interpret the present. Understanding diffuses the temptation to attach a quick label. As one radio teacher said, "See the need behind the deed." People of grace are sensitive to a person's history, which may enable them to look past their faults.

So when is judging right? There's a difference between discernment and judgment. Discernment evaluates a situation without shaming a person. People are quick to say, "You're not supposed to judge," as if we lay our brains on the table and surrender critical analysis of a matter. Tolerance is prized in a culture in which anything goes—and it is going.

The Greek word for judging is "krino." The compound word "diakrino" means "to judge through or thoroughly." Scripture makes it clear that we are called to "judge through" in certain matters. Paul asks the Corinthians, "Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers?" (1 Cor. 6:5). And he says in the same letter: *"But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment"* (11:31). *"Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh*

carefully what is said" (14:29). "Judge for yourselves what I say" (10:15). "Judge for yourselves; Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?" (11:13). "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 man from among you'" (5:12,13). "The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment" (2:15). "And I have already passed judgment on the one who did this..." (5:3). "Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life" (6:3). And Jesus said, "Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment" (Jn. 7:24).

Where the Word of God speaks, all the evidence is in. We can say without any judgment, for instance, that adultery is wrong. We want the young adults we are working with to be "critical" without being critical, to evaluate content without that transferring to the person.

It is not judging others...

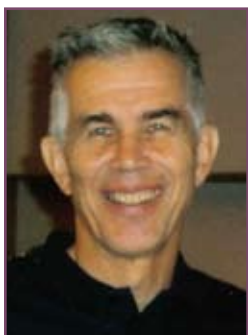
- to say something is wrong if we don't elevate ourselves above others in doing so.
- to speak the truth, if it is done in love. We cannot back down from truth, but we need to administer it with tenderness. A friend told me to "carry a sword with velvet gloves."
- if what we say about something doesn't impact how we feel about someone.
- to discern between what is good and what is evil and to make choices based upon the discernment.

Judgment is often a spirit or a thought. We can give cruel judgment even when unexpressed. There are individuals, families, churches, and institutions in the constant habit of judging, like it is part of their DNA. They have for some reason set themselves up as a standard of behavior or excellence. That is a dangerous position to occupy. A clever bumper sticker said, "Do not believe everything you think." We need to question our own heart and motives rather than others.

When you are close to making a judgment, ask yourself:

1. Is this my responsibility? Is this person in relationship to me? Am I accountable for him/her?
2. Am I doing this in a loving way, or am I trying to show that I am right or better?
3. Have I built a relationship so that I can carry this freight over the bridge?
4. Am I seeing my own need in a realistic way? Am I amplifying their need and diminishing mine?

Do you want to pray this way? "Dear Father, I am guilty. I have often put myself in the place of the judge, foolishly playing God. I have judged motives, attitudes, words, and actions of others, especially people who are close to me. I have exaggerated their problems so I won't have to focus on mine. Forgive my hypocrisy and my unkindness. Please release me from the need to evaluate others as I am prone to do. Give me a heart of mercy that would rather extend grace than condemnation. Through your Son Jesus Christ, Amen."



*Paul Anderson
Director, Lutheran Renewal*



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Presence
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Michael Claude Harper

(March 12, 1931- January 6, 2010)

Michael Harper was ordained a priest of the Church of England in 1956. In the fall of 1962 he had an enlightening and empowering experience of the Holy Spirit, and in August 1963 he received the gift of speaking in tongues.

Michael became a pioneer figure in the emerging charismatic renewal in Britain, then an ecumenical leader and a prolific author in what soon became a worldwide, spiritual renewal. In 1963 he began to sponsor meetings in England for several charismatic leaders and by the summer of 1964 he resigned from his parish and established the Fountain Trust to help further charismatic renewal, particularly in the UK, as well as in the Anglican communion.

From the late 1970s to the mid 1990s, Michael's ministry was primarily international with a twofold focus: serving renewal within the Anglican Communion and promoting ecumenical relations among charismatics.

Harper served as the chairman of the 1991 conference sponsored by the International Charismatic Consultation on World Evangelization (ICCOWE). More than 3,000 leaders from 110 different countries attended this historic gathering.

In his days as an Anglican charismatic leader, he wrote 18 books, including *As at the Beginning* (1965), a narrative of the growth of Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement in the twentieth century.

He is survived by his wife, Jeanne.

(This was adapted and expanded by Larry Christenson from the article on Michael Harper in The International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements.)



The Karma of Jesus

by Mark Herringshaw

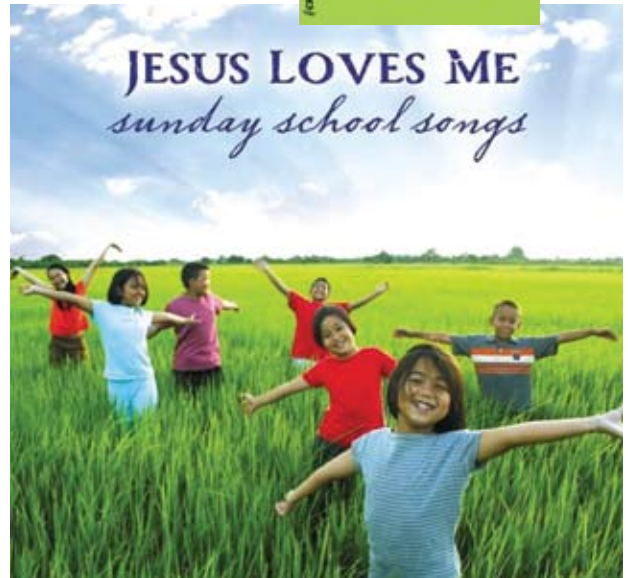
The ancient idea of Karma—reaping what we’ve sown—is recognized in almost every religion in the world. But this principle sets an inescapable trap: If “what goes around comes around,” then every small mistake will haunt us to the bitter end. Originating because of a random conversation with an inquisitive young man, Mark Herringshaw gives a probing look into the implications of Karma and the relevance of Christ’s life. *“The Karma of Jesus”* was named one of the top 25 best “outreach” books of 2009 by “Outreach Magazine.” You may order this book at Amazon.com.



“JESUS LOVES ME, Sunday School Songs”

featuring Jill Herringshaw

This CD is currently available at your local Target store in the CD sampler kiosk. Jill is the featured singer on the CD, and it includes several of her original compositions, including her jazzed-up version of the books of the Bible. Her friend Jeff Victor produced it and his arrangements bring these classic Sunday School songs to a fresh level of meaning and joy.



Mark and Jill Herringshaw are a creative, spiritual dynamic duo! Mark is the interim senior pastor at North Heights Lutheran Church in Arden Hills, MN, an author, spiritual life coach, and Lutheran Renewal Board member. Jill is a worship leader, singer, speaker, and song-writer whose passion is to bring healing and restoration to people through worship and the arts. They have four children. To find out more, please visit their websites: MarkHerringshaw.com and JillHerringshaw.com.

The Secret Chamber

By Shirl Lambert

We come, we run
to the temple of the Holy Spirit
within the secret chamber
of our heart.

My cup is empty.
I place it under His overflowing pitcher of supply.
From an Old Testament prophecy, His promise:
“I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.”

We are encouraged
to drink freely from heaven’s well of provision
for all earthly needs.
Reverently, I enter His temple,
an offering of adoration, praise, and thanksgiving
I bring.

Our Lord is the Host.
He serves from a menu, a meal,
hitherto unknown,
a taste of His love, His wisdom,
and His insight, personalized.

I depart...changed!
Hunger and thirst quenched
Soul and spirit refreshed
Longing...to return to His temple.



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Shirl Lambert was a faithful member of Trinity Lutheran Church in San Pedro, CA, where both Paul Anderson and Larry Christenson were pastors. She now lives in Westminster, CO.

Equipping Conference

February 5-6, 2010

Rise Up!



Leif Hetland on Friday



L-r: Al Schafer, Leif Hetland, Paul Anderson, Mahesh Chavda, Denise Siemens, and Fred Thoni



Worship leader, Eric McIntyre



Mahesh Chavda autographing books

Conference volunteer, Keri V.

2010 Equipping Conference "Rise Up!"

February, 2010 Arden Hills, MN AUDIO & VIDEO ORDER FORM

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		10EQ2	Leif Hetland	Fr. Aft.	<i>Living From Heaven's View: Part Two</i>
		10EQ3	Mahesh Chavda	Fri. Eve.	<i>The Glory Bubble: Part One</i>
		10EQ4	Mahesh Chavda	Fri. Eve.	<i>The Glory Bubble: Part Two</i>
		10EQ5	Mahesh Chavda	Sat. A.M.	<i>The Power of Testimony: Part One</i>
		10EQ6	Mahesh Chavda	Sat. A.M.	<i>The Power of Testimony: Part Two</i>
		10EQ7	Leif Hetland	Sat. Aft.	<i>Glorious Eagle Invasion: Part One</i>
		10EQ8	Leif Hetland	Sat. Aft.	<i>Glorious Eagle Invasion: Part Two</i>
		10EQ9	Leif Hetland	Sat. Eve.	<i>Baptism of Love & Power: Part One</i>
		10EQ10	Leif Hetland	Sat. Eve.	<i>Baptism of Love & Power: Part Two</i>
		10EQ11	Leif Hetland	Saturday	<i>Saturday Lunch: Questions and Answers</i>

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D	V	CODE	SPEAKER	SESSION	DESCRIPTION
		10EQ12	Leif Hetland	Fri. Aft.	<i>Living From Heaven's View</i>
		10EQ13	Mahesh Chavda	Fri. Eve.	<i>The Glory Bubble</i>
		10EQ14	Mahesh Chavda	Sat. A.M.	<i>The Power of Testimony</i>
		10EQ15	Leif Hetland	Sat. Aft.	<i>Glorious Eagle Invasion (Heaven On Earth)</i>
		10EQ16	Leif Hetland	Sat. Eve.	<i>Baptism of Love & Power</i>

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