

Pleasant Valley
Church of Christ

3317 Amidon
Wichita KS 67204
(316) 838-4195
www.letjesusleadus.org

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Classes 9:30 am
Worship 10:30 am
Evening 6:00 pm

Wednesday

Classes 7:30 pm

The Pleasant Valley Church of Christ is a non-denominational group of believers who are committed to following Jesus in our attitudes, our relationships, and our worship. If you want the same thing in your life, please contact us. We'd like to help.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Wings



*"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31)*

June 29, 2008

When to judge?

by David King

"Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment" (Jn. 7:24).

The spirit of our age is one of tolerance. It is considered impolite to offer any criticism, to render any judgment, in regard to the behavior of others. The end result is a society that has lost the ability to blush. All manner of deviant behavior is excused on the premise that we do not have the right to criticize or condemn others. After all, who are we to judge?

Predictably, people can find Scripture to justify this spirit of openness. The favorite passage is the saying of Jesus, "Judge not, that you be not judged" (Matt. 7:1).

But those who quote this verse conveniently ignore other Scriptures which suggest a proper role for judging. Our opening text is a good example. Jesus did not forbid all judging; rather, He warned against the kind of harsh, hyper-critical fault-finding that ruins personal relationships. On other occasions, judgment is not only allowed, it may be necessary, if administered properly ("righteous" judgment).

So we are expected to render judgment in some cases, but are forbidden to judge in others. How can we tell the difference? How can we know when to criticize and when to keep silent? The Bible offers us some guidelines in making that decision.

First, what is the basis of our criticism? Is my judgment based on clear Scriptural precepts or on personal preference? Sometimes the things that we condemn in others are really little more than pet peeves that have no foundation in divine law. When we begin criticizing

others over details that God has not revealed, we have placed ourselves in the role of judging God. "Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge" (Jas. 4:11).

Second, what is the intent of those you are judging? Are they capable of doing better, or are they honestly doing their best? "On some have compassion, making a distinction" (Jude 22). "Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do" (Col. 3:13). In such cases, we can gently encourage growth without resorting to criticism.

Finally — and most importantly — what is my intent in offering the criticism? Is my goal to genuinely help the person I'm criticizing, or is this an exercise in self-promotion? The church at Corinth were experts at judging; their bickering and squabbling were legendary. But in Paul's view, most of the problems were not the issues over which they squabbled, but the carnal spirit that sought to gain advantage by putting down others (1 Cor. 3:1-4). True love seeks to serve others, not conquer them (1 Cor. 13:4-7).

Judging others can become an irritating, even destructive, habit. But if administered with care, it has a useful place among those who seek to improve marriages, churches, friendships, indeed, the whole world.