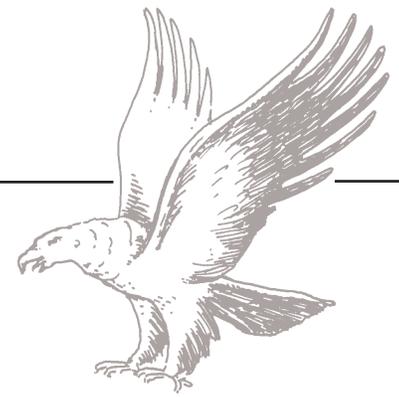


Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



February 15, 2015

Are Christians Judgmental?

We hear it all the time: “You’re so judgmental!” The best way to avoid such criticism is not to avoid expressing any opinion at all, but to use good judgment in doing so.

*“Judge not, that you be not judged”
(Matt. 7:1).*

*“Solid food belongs to those who
are of full age, that is, those who by rea-
son of use have their senses exercised to
discern both good and evil” (Heb. 5:14).*



One of the most common labels that gets thrown at Christians is “judgmental.” Any attempt to express a Biblical opinion on a subject (especially those involving morality) is met with a sneering “Oh, you Christians are so judgmental!” We get slammed with that criticism so much that many of us now shy away from expressing our faith. Better to be quiet than to be labeled “judgmental.”

What does this word mean? Why do people use it to describe us? And what can we do to avoid it?

The dictionary defines the word as “displaying an excessively critical point of view.” Sadly, many Christians fit that definition. They are quick to condemn and slow to listen. They are harsh in their treatment of those they disagree with. And the opinions they push with such arrogance are often poorly

informed and delivered with disdain for the hearer. (And this describes only how they treat their fellow Christians!)

But guess what? Many atheists and free thinkers are also judgmental, guilty of all the above. They can be just as hateful, just as harsh, just as close-minded, as any Christian. (If you don’t believe it, spend time reading the comments section on some apologetics blogs.) You see, being judgmental is not a Christian problem; it’s a *human* problem. All of us—including those who claim an enlightened understanding of tolerance—have a tendency to pounce on others who do not agree with us.

But consider a variation on this theme: Have you noticed that people who exercise *good judgment* are generally not considered *judgmental*? You know the type: They seem to know exactly when to insert themselves into a situation to resolve a problem—and when to quietly back away to avoid a problem. They are skilled at dealing with people, having a knack for saying the right thing at the right time, and nothing more. Even when they rebuke,

they do so with a firm gentleness that evokes concern, not animosity.

In other words, these people have a highly developed sense of *moral discernment*; they “have their senses exercised to discern good and evil.” They make judgments all the time regarding people, situations, and behaviors. But their judgments are thoughtful, accurate, measured, careful, calm. Everybody—atheist and believer alike—appreciates the beauty in that kind of character.

The problem is not *that* we make judgments; it’s *how* we make them. True, the “judgmental” label is sometimes just a knee-jerk reaction to a contrary opinion; but all too often it’s a legitimate complaint. The best way to avoid that insult is to be a person of *good judgment*. Educate yourself on the topic at hand; carefully consider all the factors involved before blurting out an opinion; think through the implications of what you say *before* you say it; and speak with gentleness and respect for your opponent. People still may not agree with you, but they will respect you as a person of good judgment.

– David King