

Judging Righteously

Romans 2:1-23 There are only a few things we are permitted to judge according to the Scriptures. We are permitted to judge ourselves, to judge or know others by their fruits and to judge the times. We are warned by Paul and Jesus of the danger of judging others. The reason it is so dangerous to judge another is because if we misjudge or accuse another, we open ourselves up to the very same things we are judging in another person. We can judge a person's actions, but we cannot judge their motivations. Only God can know the hearts of men. Sometimes the Lord may give us discernment about what is in another person's heart, but this knowledge is not to cause us to judge, but instead to cause us to pray for that person.

We have a righteous Judge who judges all things. He judges us and gives to every man according to his deeds. That righteous judge is Jesus. If we are saved, our salvation will not be judged, but our works on earth will be judged, and we will be rewarded accordingly. As the Lord judges our works, He also sees the motivations in our hearts when we did those works. Sometimes we fall into the trap of doing good deeds for others because it is expected of us or because we want the praise of men. Our works on earth that will last forever are those works we do in love and obedience to God's will and the leading of His Spirit.

Several years ago I was visiting regularly a troubled girl in a mental institution. It seemed my visits were availing nothing, and I was burdened down with the obligation to visit this girl. My pastor had asked me to do this, so I did. One day a prayer warrior asked me, "Linda, did the Lord ask you to visit this girl?" I thought for a moment, and then I realized He never led me to do this, but instead I was visiting this girl out of obligation, not obedience to the Lord. I learned a great lesson that day. People can ask us to do many things, and we can do many good deeds, not out of love and obedience

to the Lord, but out of obligation to men.

There are works created from the foundation of the earth that we are to walk in. I believe when we die the works that will last forever and not be burned will be those that are written already in our book of life. We also need to be careful to obey God not out of duty, but out of love for Him. When I think about how I need to get my own act together and be busy about the Father's will, I will not have time to sit in judgment of others. I daily pray that the Lord will cleanse my heart of every wrong motivation and cause my actions in obedience to Him and in reaching out to others always to be rooted in love. Jesus came to do the will of the Father, and every action He displayed on earth was rooted in His love for the Father. I want to be like Jesus in His desire always to please the Father rather than men.

Lord, forgive me for the times I have done works simply out of obligation to others. Purify my heart and cause me to always be motivated by love, not duty.

**READ: 1 Chronicles 16:37-18:17; Romans 2:1-23; Psalm 10:16-18;
Proverbs 19:8-9**