

Stop Judging by Appearances

✖ I had a stunning experience recently that God used to point out something to me. I had been away for a few days visiting and praying with Rose Weiner, a close friend of mine who lives in Gainesville, Florida. Rose and her husband, Bob, had a ministry raising up churches on the campuses of the United States and in other nations. They discipled and trained many hundreds of young people to take the gospel to the nations.

My teen-age daughter, Faith, had stayed home with a girlfriend to take care of our house and pets. Like a typical parent, I had given many instructions about the care of the house, yard, animals and pool; but I trusted Faith, who is very sensible and capable, to follow them. I called a few times, and everything was fine.

I was totally unprepared for the shock I received when I returned home. Everything seemed all right at first. The dogs came running to meet me as they usually did.

But when I got out of the car and bent down to pet them, I had to take a second look at Faith's chow chow, Koa. He was usually a pretty, beige color. Now his coat had a streak of pink down the back and tail. I wondered if he had fallen into a strawberry patch!

When I went inside, I found Faith standing at the top of the stairs, smiling demurely. I returned her

smile—momentarily. Then I
saw it: a wide, bright, peppermint-pink streak down one side
of her
pretty, blonde hair.

“Faith, what happened to you?” I cried. I thought there
must have been some terrible mishap. She was joined by Haley,
my
secretary’s daughter, who was grinning from ear to ear. Her
dark hair
was now deep green on one side and blue on the other.

I freaked out! Faith laughed at my reaction, but to me,
pink hair was no laughing matter. I ranted and raved until she
agreed
to wash the color out—of both her hair and the dog’s.

After looking at it for a while, however, I decided the
color wasn’t too bad. I let Faith keep it for a few days.
Later, I
began to think about her hair and about my visit with Rose.

When I was at Rose’s, a friend called to tell Rose about
a book he recently had read that enumerated reasons we are not
in
full-scale author blamed the lack of fire on leaders who
had made mistakes and who had gotten offtrack by
overemphasizing
various truths.

Rose and her husband were mentioned in the book, along
with other people I knew well. Though I’m sure the author
highlighted
these leaders and their ministries out of concern for the body
of
Christ, I was grieved by the thought of his playing policeman
in an
effort to set us all straight.

Thinking about this situation reminded me of Faith's hair and my reaction to it. I had been so busy focusing on her looks that I had forgotten about all the things Faith had done over the weekend to take care of our home.

They were not small things. Looking after the pool was a hard job because our area had been badly affected by floods, and the pool was full of muddy water. Cleaning our big house is not easy, either—but it was neat and tidy when I returned.

We have three phone lines with people calling all the time. Faith had taken care of everyone. She had also handled the ministry office. Our dog had been hit by a car a few days prior to my trip and needed a lot of attention. He was fine.

In addition to keeping track of my things, Faith had also helped a family in her church who had lost everything they owned in a flood. What was left of their house was under two inches of mud, and she had been over to help them clean. She had brought home three large bags of washing to do for them.

I had missed it all because of the pink hair. We can be so blind! Thank God for His endless grace and patience.

I thought about the various books that had been written highlighting the mistakes my friends and many other ministries had made at one time or another. Certainly, the mistakes—like Faith's pink

hair—were obvious. Most people could have seen them.

But what about all the thousands of young people who were saved and filled with the Spirit through their ministry on the campuses of America and many other nations? What about the thousands of kids who became dedicated to the call of God on their lives? Many received a real sense of destiny because of the ministry and revelation of my friends, who had given their lives for the gospel! I wondered how it was that none of this was mentioned in these books.

One time Rose told me about a very generous gift that had been given to her and Bob for their China outreach. When I heard about it, I felt blessed myself. I wanted to write to the often maligned faith teacher who had given it to them and tell him, “You blessed me because you blessed my friends.”

In the same way, when I heard about the negative things said in the book, I had a great desire to write the author and say, “You hurt me because you hurt my friends.” I don’t know of a ministry that has been around for any length of time that hasn’t ever goofed, said some dumb things or headed off in a wrong direction occasionally. But Jesus is the Great Shepherd. He will shepherd His sheep—and He knows what He is doing.

Moreover, we can trust the Holy Spirit to convict and

change God's people. It is not our job to change one another!
I can
point out what is wrong with you, but I don't have the power
to change
it. When the Holy Spirit convicts, He does have the power to
change it.
Big difference!

The next time you are tempted to see only the obvious
mistake in another person or organization, say to yourself,
"Pink
hair." Maybe those simple words will remind you that there are
many
wonderful things you have forgotten regarding that person or
ministry.
Maybe they will even cause you to clap your hands over your
mouth as
Job did when God asked Him, "Where were you when I laid the
foundations
of the earth?" (Job 38:4, NKJV).

Remember: Jesus hasn't forgotten the wonderful things. He
loves our leaders so very much! If we persist in criticizing
them, He
may demand, "Where were you when I delivered My Son from the
grave?
Where were you when I brought forth the first fruits of the
church?"

Maybe my daughter's hair is oversimplifying it, but it's the
same principle to me.

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