

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

John 8:32 and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

# THE LENEXA EDIFIER

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## REALLY, WHO AM I

by Jim Stauffer

So, the question is who am I? It is not, who do I think I am or how do I view myself, it is in fact, who am I. What is the final determination? Can it be said I am who others see? Why would their opinion or conclusion be any better than mine? No, the real answer is found in the One Who is innately righteous. Because who I am is determined by the correlation of my conduct with His righteousness.

Example. Who do people perceive to be great? Those who do great things. There are heroes in sports, drama, politics and every genre of life, but the person considered to be a great person is the one who in the eyes of the world is a great humanitarian. Bill Gates is an example of a man who through great business acumen acquired great wealth. During the years of that acquisition there were many who viewed him as a pirate of the ideas of others. They believed he found a way to use the mind of other men to amass his fortune. But since he has become wealthy and has now funded and operated many benevolent operations, many see him as a philanthropist and a great human being instead of a cunning businessman.

Fact is, the things Jesus Christ taught while on the earth and practiced Himself will always rank highest in the eyes of men whether they themselves practice such or not. So, how do I become like Jesus rather than like Bill Gates. That is, how do I become the person who is truly represented by such kindness and love, first of God Himself and second of my fellow man. Paul explains it in the following passage, *“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”* (Galatians 2:20)

I am a flawed individual living in the flesh as the Scripture says. The only way I can avoid the way of the flesh is to allow my life to be directed by my Savior, Jesus Christ. In order to do that He tells me I must be *born again* (John 3:3-5). In the process of being born again, one puts off the old man of sin and puts on the new man created in Christ Jesus (Rom. 6:3,4; Eph. 4:22-24; 2 Cor. 5:17). As Paul says, *“But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh*

*in regard to its lusts.”* (Romans 13:14) No doubt when men become wealthy and suddenly become humanitarian in the sharing of their wealth, it is because of the principles Jesus taught while on the earth and subsequently from heaven as He instructed the Holy Spirit to reveal the mind of God through His chosen representatives, the apostles. But that is not the change He has called for. He wants our hearts and minds to be guided in every aspect of life if we are to have a hope of eternity with Him when this life is over. In **Rom. 8:9-11** the apostle mentions individually each member of the Godhead Three as dwelling in us guiding our lives in His service. This is the picture of yielding our control to Jesus Christ the Savior of men. This is what it takes for me to be a servant in His kingdom. This is what it takes for me *to exult in the hope of the glory of God.* (Rom. 5:2)

This process of a new birth. This transformation from one who serves self to one who is guided by Deity, is what enables one to be as Paul says we should. *“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”* (Romans 12:1-2) This explains then, the one who is saved by grace through his faith as is stated in **Eph. 2:8,9**, is indeed *....His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.* (Vs.10)

Indeed, the reason I need salvation in the first place is because my sin separated me from God (Isa. 59:1,2). I must then submit to His will over mine. He rules in me now. Because I am still in the flesh it is imperative I be guided and directed by my Lord if I am to please Him. This entire process must take place for me to be who I wish to be and who I may actually believe I am. It does not matter what I or others may think, but rather what He, The One sitting at the right hand of the Father, Who died to save me thinks. That is who I really am.

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## JUDGING, PRE-JUDGING, AND PREJUDICE

By Andy Diestelkamp

Perhaps one of the best known statements of Jesus is *“Judge not, that you be not judged”* (Matthew 7:1). Ironically, it is often cited by people to *critique* those by whom they feel criticized. However, Jesus is not condemning all critiques of others. This is made evident by: 1) the inconsistency created if His words are taken as an absolute prohibition, 2) the immediate context (vs. 5), and 3) the larger context of Scripture which actually requires making judgments (e.g. Jn. 7:24; 1 Cor. 5).

Contextually, what Jesus is condemning is inconsistent and hypocritical judgment. He is addressing the proclivity we have to judge others more critically than we judge ourselves. Of course, this tendency easily produces numerous misjudgments and prejudices against individuals and their “ilk” which, if unchecked by self-control and sound thinking, leads to a host of generational and cultural prejudices which cause strife and division.

Jesus is prioritizing self-critique as being necessarily first in order to then be able to adequately help others with their problems. This does not require perfection from us before forming an opinion, offering a critique, or rendering a judgment. This is again evident by the fact that we are called to do so, yet none of us can rightly claim perfection. For example, parents are not perfect in their own lives or in their parenting, but this reality does not forbid them to train their children (Eph. 6:4) which will, of necessity, require critiques and judgments. Still, humility and love must temper all discipline.

God created us to learn, discern, critique, and make judgments. As thinking people, we are constantly doing this; and such judgments are naturally made through the lens of our own limited experiences. This is one of the ways in which we both prosper and attempt to protect ourselves from harm. For example, a woman who was sexually molested by a man will naturally have a tendency to be wary of males. Thus, when she is approached by a male, she may become nervous. Based on her experience, she is making a judgment that she is in potential danger. This is a pre-judgment. Any circumstance which departs from the norm of perceived safety is immediately judged as suspect. This is a natural process and is not inherently wrong.

However, we are not mere animals who must react with “fight or flight” when confronted by these conditioned responses. As beings created in the image of God, we can and are expected to exercise self-control. We can reason that our initial reaction based on limited information is not logically or justly applicable to all persons despite our experiences and, therefore, does not require “fight or flight.” Thus we check our initial judgments with sober-mindedness, patience,

mercy, and love and temper prejudicial responses and behaviors. This is how the mind of the spirit controls the reactions of the flesh and thus bears good fruit (cf. Gal. 5:16-26).

Judgments happen in a host of circumstances daily for all of us about everything from the mundane to sublime, from the harmless to the serious. When I experience anything with any of my five senses, my brain immediately begins to process it and make judgments despite the fact that I do not yet have all information necessary to make an accurate or fair judgment; but this fact alone does not stop my brain from thinking or making such judgments. Thus, one intuitively evaluates and makes judgments about everyone’s motives and attitudes and potential based on their appearances, words, and actions. By experience we know that many pre-judgments are inaccurate. Still, while acknowledging that “you can’t judge a book by its cover,” we will look at the cover and make an initial judgment.

This is why it is imperative that God’s Word be the foundation of our learning. Indeed, the ability to discern good from evil is a sign of spiritual maturity (Heb. 5:14). Without doubt, the culture in which we are raised and the values imparted by our parents and society at large are formative to the kinds of judgments we make. This is why we need to create a culture of Christ in our hearts and our homes so as to be better people and render better judgments in all cases.

**323 E. Indiana Ave., Pontiac, IL 61764 •  
andydiestelkamp@gmail.com  
Taken from [thinkonthesethings.com](http://thinkonthesethings.com)**

## “We Sorrow Not As Those Who Have No Hope!”

Just prior to the Campbell-Owen debate in the early 1800’s the great Scottish skeptic visited Alexander Campbell at his farm in Bethany, Virginia (now West Virginia) just west of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. As they walked together in the evening, visiting, Owen pointed out to Campbell that he had an advantage over Christians in that he had no fear of death. Campbell thought for a moment and then acknowledged that many Christians do fear death (which is still true!) but then pointed to an ox munching lazily under a nearby tree and noted to his guest that he was no better than the ox. “The ox, like you, has no fear of death, but then, he has no hope in death either. He has nothing to look forward to in the hereafter.” We, as Christians, have hope in death, to see our redemption, and our redeemer who died for us. Paul the Apostle wrote to the Thessalonians who had lost loved ones to persecution, *“But we would not have you ignorant, brethren,*

*concerning them that fall asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as the rest, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with him."*

**(1Th 4:13f)**

My wife's mother has been gathered unto her people, like Abraham of old (**Genesis 25:8**) and like David, concerning his first child with Bathsheba she has gone to be with her beloved daughter (**2 Samuel 12:23**) and she has become part of my treasure in heaven. The same is true of EVERY faithful Christian! There will be a great family re-union when this life is over. The faithful will meet family they never knew they had, and that's a good thing!

## The Great Delusion

**Dan S. Shipley**

In the night of His betrayal, Jesus tells His disciples, *"All ye shall be offended in me this night."* (**Matt. 26:31**). But Peter thought otherwise and said so. *"If all shall be offended in thee, I will never be offended"* (**v.33**). Peter was saying, in effect, what so many others have said down through the years: "It won't happen to me:" — but it did.

"It won't happen to me" is a pernicious but popular form of self-deception that blinds us to truth, facts, and reality. This was brought home to me recently when a friend of a friend of mine was hospitalized as a result of a serious motorcycle accident. One of his visitors remarked that she would like for her son to come up and see first-hand what happens to people who ride those "awful machines". The answer coming from the hospital bed was not what she expected. "It won't do any good for your son to see me like this", he replied. "They all think it won't happen to them." Having two grown sons and another "going on grown," I can appreciate his reply. Citing accident reports, death and injury statistics, personal testimonies, and the like to teenagers with "motorcycle fever" is like talking to deaf people — because, like the man said, they think it won't happen to them. However, would-be motorcycle jockeys are not the only ones who suffer from such delusions.

Consider, for instance, the multitudes of grown, intelligent people (including some anti-motorcyclists) who choose to ignore the frequent and competent warnings linking smoking to cancer and heart disease. They **know** the risks, they know that tobacco will contribute to nearly 130,000 cancer deaths this year, yet somehow conclude, "It won't happen to me." Shortly before dying with lung cancer a dear friend once told me, "We always think it just happens to the other fellow, don't we? — too late we learn better." But the cherished delusion doesn't stop here.

Think of the mountain of evidence drinkers choose to ignore. Over 55% of all highway deaths are alcohol-related; over 6 1/2 million Americans have become

alcoholics and 3 million teenagers are headed in the same direction. Alcohol contributes to broken homes, neglected children, lost jobs, and countless other problems yet the drinker, even when sober, comes to the irrational and preposterous conclusion that "It won't happen to me."

Foolish? Consider the fact that one out of six unmarried women will become pregnant this year. Some of them will be Christians, taught from youth to "flee fornication" and to keep themselves pure. Think, too, of young Christians who choose to marry and spend the rest of their lives with a non-Christian. They have heard of the dangers, the weakening influences in such a relationship, yet they continue to think what they **want** to believe, "It won't happen to me."

Finally, consider the host of unfaithful who have become spiritual dropouts through the years. Most never thought they would; they didn't plan to. Perhaps, they too, lived with the Great Delusion of Peter. Do you?

Quote: "The homemaker has the ultimate career. All other careers exist for one purpose only - and that is to support the ultimate career."

**Source: "Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis" (2006)**

Where you are on the road is not as important as which way you are headed.

Straight living cannot come out of crooked thinking .

Narrow minded? Well, a person's mind should be narrow enough to shut out everything but the truth, and broad enough to accept all truth.

The pessimist has no motor; the optimist has no brakes.

Moreover, with some the principal involved has a greater urge than the principle.

**Anvil Sparks: R.L. Whiteside**

***Next time you think you don't feel well enough to attend worship, use this as your gauge:***

*"But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having won over the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. But while the disciples stood around him, he got up and entered the city. The next day he went away with Barnabas to Derbe. After they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."'" (**Acts 14:19-22**)*

**Psa. 1:1** *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.*

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Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

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**Elders Ron Peck and Jim Stauffer**

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## **OUR ADDRESS IS:**

7845 Cottonwood Dr.

Lenexa, Kansas 66216

913-764-9170

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## **What Must I Do To Be Saved?**

**Hear** the gospel - Romans 10:17

**Believe** in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

**Repent** of sins - Acts 17:30

**Confess** Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

**Be Baptized** for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

**Be Faithful** unto death - Revelation 2:10