Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, p. 125

"Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye?‘ Matthew 7:3.

“Even the sentence, ‘Thou that judgest doest the same things,’ does not reach the magnitude of his sin who presumes to criticize and condemn his brother. Jesus said, ‘Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?’

“His words describe one who is swift to discern a defect in others. When he thinks he has detected a flaw in the character or the life he is exceedingly zealous in trying to point it out; but Jesus declares that the very trait of character developed in doing this un-Christlike work, is, in comparison with the fault criticized, as a beam in proportion to a mote. It is one’s own lack of the spirit of forbearance and love that leads him to make a world of an atom. Those who have never experienced the contrition of an entire surrender to Christ do not in their life make manifest the softening influence of the Saviour’s love. They misrepresent the gentle, courteous spirit of the gospel and wound precious souls, for whom Christ died. According to the figure that our Saviour uses, he who indulges a censorious spirit is guilty of greater sin than is the one he accuses, for he not only commits the same sin, but adds to it conceit and censoriousness.

“Christ is the only true standard of character, and he who sets himself up as a standard for others is putting himself in the place of Christ. And since the Father ‘hath committed all judgment unto the Son’ (John 5:22), whoever presumes to judge the motives of others is again usurping the prerogative of the Son of God. These would-be judges and critics are placing themselves on the side of antichrist, ‘who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.’ 2 Thessalonians 2:4.”

1. Jesus’ words in Matthew 7:1-5 describe someone who is guilty of doing what?

2. Who is the only true standard of character?

3. If we judge, whose place are we trying to take?
4. Whose side are we on when we judge others?

Matthew 7:1-5 (*The Message*)

“Don’t pick on people, jump on their failures, and criticize their faults—unless, of course, you want the same treatment. That critical spirit has a way of boomeranging. It’s easy to see a smudge on your neighbor’s face and be oblivious to the ugly sneer on your own. Do you have the nerve to say, ‘Let me wash your face for you,’ when your own face is distorted by contempt? It’s this whole traveling road-show mentality all over again, playing a holier-than-thou part instead of just living your part. Wipe that ugly sneer off your own face, and you might be fit to offer a washcloth to your neighbor.”

*Our High Calling, p. 233*

“There is a crown for the overcomer. Do you want it? Do you want to run the race with patience? Then do not seek to find something to condemn in your neighbor, but look right to Jesus Christ. Behold His purity, and you will be charmed and will reflect His likeness”

**A TALE OF TWO JUDGES**

In an airport waiting to board her plane sat a very tired woman with two small children about 3 and 5 years of age. The 5-year-old was racing around the walkway, while people shook their heads at the lack of control this mother had over her child.

Meanwhile, the 3-year-old wrestled around on her mother’s lap reaching for a soda cup to get another drink. While the child was drinking, the cup collapsed, and the dark liquid splashed all over the mother and child as well as a few well-dressed people nearby. The mother lost her temper at that point and swatted the little child on the backside while asking loudly, “Can’t you drink anything without spilling it?”

At this point people began to shake their heads in disgust at such a poor display of parenting. A woman nearby stomped away to call Security. Soon two men in airport security garb came and began talking to the woman, along with one of the
airline attendants. The woman who had made the report plopped down in her seat and stated to no one in particular, “Someone had to do something for those children.”

Just as she did that, an amazing thing happened. A kindly woman in business clothing put down her briefcase and joined the discussion. By this time, all eyes were on this development, and everyone was wondering what would happen. The frazzled mother explained her plight to the security officers and the flight desk worker as they smiled compassionately at her and nodded with looks of concern. The businesswoman opened up her briefcase and pulled out paper and pens and began drawing pictures of animals while the 3-year-old named them out loud: “pig,” “cow,” “horsey,” “dog.”

As the call to board was announced, a look of relief swept over the mother’s face as the security officers and the attendant helped her gather up the family’s bags to get on the plane. The businesswoman, obviously distressed over the mother’s plight, could be heard to say: “She is raising those children alone. She and the children have been awake for 32 hours. The airlines lost their luggage and their baby stroller. Every flight she was taking to get back home has either been delayed or canceled. Her ATM card won’t work for some reason, and on this trip she has just learned that her mother [the children’s grandma] is dying of cancer. I have had my children on planes before, and it was a nightmare. I don’t know how that woman survived.”

1. Who were the two judges in the story?
   ______________________________________________________________

2. What was the difference between the two people?
   ______________________________________________________________

3. How does our today’s reading coincide with the story?
   ______________________________________________________________

4. Are appearances sometimes deceiving? Tell of a time when someone thought something about you that wasn’t true.
   ______________________________________________________________
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"The sin that leads to the most unhappy results is the cold, critical, unforgiving spirit that characterizes Pharisaism. When the religious experience is devoid of love, Jesus is not there; the sunshine of His presence is not there. No busy activity or Christless zeal can supply the lack. There may be a wonderful keenness of perception to discover the defects of others; but to everyone who indulges this spirit, Jesus says, ‘Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.’ He who is guilty of wrong is the first to suspect wrong. By condemning another he is trying to conceal or excuse the evil of his own heart. It was through sin that men gained the knowledge of evil; no sooner had the first pair sinned than they began to accuse each other; and this is what human nature will inevitably do when uncontrolled by the grace of Christ.

“When men indulge this accusing spirit, they are not satisfied with pointing out what they suppose to be a defect in their brother. If milder means fail of making him do what they think ought to be done, they will resort to compulsion. Just as far as lies in their power they will force men to comply with their ideas of what is right. This is what the Jews did in the days of Christ and what the church has done ever since whenever she has lost the grace of Christ. Finding herself destitute of the power of love, she has reached out for the strong arm of the state to enforce her dogmas and execute her decrees. Here is the secret of all religious laws that have ever been enacted, and the secret of all persecution from the days of Abel to our own time.”

1. What sin leads to unhappy results?
_____________________________________________________________

2. When a religious experience doesn’t have love . . . (Finish the sentence.)
_____________________________________________________________

3. When we point out the sin in someone else’s life, what are we trying to do?
_____________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________

4. Just pointing out someone else’s sin isn’t enough to some people; they will try to compel (or force) people to do what?
_____________________________________________________________
Galatians 6:1-6 (Amplified Bible)

“BRETHREN, IF any person is overtaken in misconduct or sin of any sort, you who are spiritual [who are responsive to and controlled by the Spirit] should set him right and restore and reinstate him, without any sense of superiority and with all gentleness, keeping an attentive eye on yourself, lest you should be tempted also.

“Bear (endure, carry) one another’s burdens and troublesome moral faults, and in this way fulfill and observe perfectly the law of Christ (the Messiah) and complete what is lacking [in your obedience to it].

“For if any person thinks himself to be somebody [too important to condescend to shoulder another’s load] when he is nobody [of superiority except in his own estimation], he deceives and deludes and cheats himself.

“But let every person carefully scrutinize and examine and test his own conduct and his own work. He can then have the personal satisfaction and joy of doing something commendable [in itself alone] without [resorting to] boastful comparison with his neighbor.

“For every person will have to bear (be equal to understanding and calmly receive) his own [little] load [of oppressive faults].

“Let him who receives instruction in the Word [of God] share all good things with his teacher [contributing to his support].”

The Upward Look, p. 366

“It is the one who has every reason to distrust his own principles who is keenly alive to the failings of others. If there were not some lack in our own experience, we would not be so suspicious of our brethren. It is he whose conscience condemns him who passes judgment so readily. Let everyone tremble and be afraid of himself. Let him see that his own heart is right with God. Let him weed his own garden; he will find enough to keep him busily employed. If he does this work faithfully [he] will not have time to find fault with the gardens of others. Instead of judging others, let us judge ourselves. Let us make sure that we are among the number who are ‘elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ’ (1 Peter 1:2). ‘Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently’ (verse 22).”

HERE’S WHAT I THINK

Kenneth gets straight A’s in school. He is respected by the teachers and other students as one of the smartest guys in the class. Randy, who has to work hard just to do better than average, observed Kenneth using a cheat sheet during a major science exam. He was shocked. He kept the information to himself, but he watched during every exam, and sure enough, Kenneth cheated every time. When
Kenneth got an award at assembly for academic success, Randy wanted to stand up and expose this cheater for the fraud that he was. One of Randy’s friends, Craig, commented on how he wished he could get good grades like Kenneth. That was all Randy could take. He coolly replied to Craig, "You can get good grades like Kenneth, if you cheat." And then he walked off in a storm.

According to the challenge of Jesus in this lesson, how should Randy deal with his anger toward Kenneth and his outburst at the lockers with his friend Craig? What would have been the ideal response when he first noticed the cheating? What should he do about it now?

Go to http://guidemagazine.org/rtf to post your answers. Your thoughts and feelings may seem clearer to you when you write them down, so we’ve provided space for you here as well. You may also wish to share them with your class later. Be up-front and honest.

The Scripture texts below are the story Jesus told about the Pharisee and the Publican who went to the temple to pray. In between the story of the two men, some quotations from Christ’s Object Lessons have been inserted. There are questions about what you have read to help you think. Ask God to teach you more about how to love others the way He does and not to be critical as you study today’s lesson.

Luke 18:9-12 (The Message)

“He told his next story to some who were complacently pleased with themselves over their moral performance and looked down their noses at the common people: ‘Two men went up to the Temple to pray, one a Pharisee, the other a tax man. The Pharisee posed and prayed like this: “Oh, God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, crooks, adulterers, or, heaven forbid, like this tax man. I fast twice a week and tithe on all my income.”’”

Christ’s Object Lessons, pp. 150, 151
"Unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others," Christ spoke the parable of the Pharisee and the publican. The Pharisee goes up to the temple to worship, not because he feels that he is a sinner in need of pardon, but because he thinks himself righteous and hopes to win commendation. His worship he regards as an act of merit that will recommend him to God. At the same time it will give the people a high opinion of his piety. He hopes to secure favor with both God and man. His worship is prompted by self-interest.

"And he is full of self-praise. He looks it, he walks it, he prays it. Drawing apart from others as if to say, 'Come not near to me; for I am holier than thou' (Isa. 65:5), he stands and prays 'with himself.' Wholly self-satisfied, he thinks that God and men regard him with the same complacency.

"'God, I thank thee,' he says, 'that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.' He judges his character, not by the holy character of God, but by the character of other men. His mind is turned away from God to humanity. This is the secret of his self-satisfaction.

"He proceeds to recount his good deeds: 'I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.' The religion of the Pharisee does not touch the soul. He is not seeking Godlikeness of character, a heart filled with love and mercy. He is satisfied with a religion that has to do only with outward life. His righteousness is his own--the fruit of his own works--and judged by a human standard."

1. What sort of man was the Pharisee?

2. Did most people look up to the Pharisees? Explain.

3. What was Jesus trying to tell the Pharisees and people who are like them?

Luke 18:13, 14 (The Message)

"Meanwhile the tax man, slumped in the shadows, his face in his hands, not daring to look up, said, "God, give mercy. Forgive me, a sinner."

Jesus commented, 'This tax man, not the other, went home made right with God. If you walk around with your nose in the air, you're going to end up flat on your face, but if you're content to be simply yourself, you will become more than yourself."
"The publican had gone to the temple with other worshipers, but he soon drew apart from them as unworthy to unite in their devotions. Standing afar off, he ‘would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast,’ in bitter anguish and self-abhorrence. He felt that he had transgressed against God, that he was sinful and polluted. He could not expect even pity from those around him, for they looked upon him with contempt. He knew that he had no merit to commend him to God, and in utter self-despair he cried, ‘God be merciful to me, a sinner.’ He did not compare himself with others.

“Overwhelmed with a sense of guilt, he stood as if alone in God’s presence. His only desire was for pardon and peace, his only plea was the mercy of God. And he was blessed. ‘I tell you,’ Christ said, ‘this man went down to his house justified rather than the other.’"

1. Did most people look up to the Publicans? Explain.

2. What was a Publican?

3. What was Jesus’ message to the Publican who repented and people like him?

4. What is going to happen to people who go around with their nose up in the air?

5. Why did Jesus say the Publican went home forgiven but the Pharisee didn’t?

6. How do we know the Pharisee was judging the Publican?

7. Can you think of times past when there have been similar situations at school or at church? What happened? How could you have made a difference?
“Christ does not drive but draws men unto Him. The only compulsion which He employs is the constraint of love. When the church begins to seek for the support of secular power, it is evident that she is devoid of the power of Christ—the constraint of divine love.

“But the difficulty lies with the individual members of the church, and it is here that the cure must be wrought. Jesus bids the accuser first cast the beam out of his own eye, renounce his censorious spirit, confess and forsake his own sin, before trying to correct others. For “a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.” Luke 6:43. This accusing spirit which you indulge is evil fruit, and shows that the tree is evil. It is useless for you to build yourselves up in self-righteousness. What you need is a change of heart. You must have this experience before you are fitted to correct others; for ’out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.’ Matthew 12:34.

"When a crisis comes in the life of any soul, and you attempt to give counsel or admonition, your words will have only the weight of influence for good that your own example and spirit have gained for you. You must be good before you can do good. You cannot exert an influence that will transform others until your own heart has been humbled and refined and made tender by the grace of Christ. When this change has been wrought in you, it will be as natural for you to live to bless others as it is for the rosebush to yield its fragrant bloom or the vine its purple clusters.”

1. Christ does not drive but . . .

2. If we have an accusing spirit what do we need?

3. If you try to counsel someone, your words will influence for good only what your own . . .
Matthew 10:16-18 (Amplified Bible)

“Behold, I am sending you out like sheep in the midst of wolves; be wary and wise as serpents, and be innocent (harmless, guileless, and without falsity) as doves.

“Be on guard against men [whose way or nature is to act in opposition to God]; for they will deliver you up to councils and flog you in their synagogues,

“And you will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a witness to bear testimony before them and to the Gentiles (the nations).”

Matthew 18:14-16 (Amplified Bible)

“Just so it is not the will of My Father Who is in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost and perish.

“If your brother wrongs you, go and show him his fault, between you and him privately. If he listens to you, you have won back your brother.

“But if he does not listen, take along with you one or two others, so that every word may be confirmed and upheld by the testimony of two or three witnesses.”

SO WHAT?

If you have ever been on the receiving end of judgment, you know how painful it can be. Receiving a rebuke tends to put us on the defensive, which doesn’t help us grow. But don’t walk away from the challenge of helping others grow. It’s hard, but it may be one of the greatest tools in the spreading of the gospel because it models the way Jesus won people to Himself while He was here on earth. He called sin for what it was, but the sinner was joyfully restored to a better life. People were drawn to the way He told the truth.

How can we help others choose a better path, as Jesus did? The key might be in the way we react. First, we check ourselves and remember every time we have done something similar. Next, we ask God’s mercy, and ask Him to help us see clearly enough to help someone else. Help won’t come through judgment, but through grace. Finally, thoughtfully and prayerfully write that note or say those words that will point your friend to a better way.

Whatever you do, don’t walk away from this challenge. Think about where the church would be if we just left one another alone with our problems.

1. Does God care when someone hurts us? Explain.

2. Why does Jesus counsel us to go and talk to the person we feel wronged us?
3. What does praying and/or writing a note to the person if we can’t talk to him or her do for us? What does it do for the other person involved?

4. Why does God tell us to be wise as serpents and innocent as doves? How does that correspond with today’s lesson?

5. If we are the one that has wronged someone how should we react? What does the Bible tell us?

Match the verse with the text.

2. Romans 14:10-12 (NIV) _____
3. Matthew 18:15-17 (NIV) _____
4. Proverbs 18:17 (NIV) _____
5. John 3:17 (NIV) _____
6. Ezekiel 7:27 (CEV) _____
7. John 7:24 (NIV) _____
Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, pp. 127-129

"When a crisis comes in the life of any soul, and you attempt to give counsel or admonition, your words will have only the weight of influence for good that your own example and spirit have gained for you. You must be good before you can do good. You cannot exert an influence that will transform others until your own heart has been humbled and refined and made tender by the grace of Christ. When this change has been wrought in you, it will be as natural for you to live to bless others as it is for the rosebush to yield its fragrant bloom or the vine its purple clusters.

"If Christ is in you ‘the hope of glory,’ you will have no disposition to watch others, to expose their errors. Instead of seeking to accuse and condemn, it will be your object to help, to bless, and to save. In dealing with those who are in error, you will heed the injunction, Consider ‘thyself, lest thou also be tempted.’ Galatians 6:1. You will call to mind the many times you have erred and how hard it was to find the right way when you had once left it. You will not push your brother into greater darkness, but with a heart full of pity will tell him of his danger.

"He who looks often upon the cross of Calvary, remembering that his sins placed the Saviour there, will never try to estimate the degree of his guilt in comparison with that of others. He will not climb upon the judgment seat to bring accusation against another. There can be no spirit of criticism or self-exaltation on the part of those who walk in the shadow of Calvary’s cross.

"Not until you feel that you could sacrifice your own self-dignity, and even lay down your life in order to save an erring brother, have you cast the beam out of your own eye so that you are prepared to help your brother. Then you can approach him and touch his heart. No one has ever been reclaimed from a wrong position by censure and reproach; but many have thus been driven from Christ and led to seal their hearts against conviction. A tender spirit, a gentle, winning deportment, may
save the erring and hide a multitude of sins. The revelation of Christ in your own character will have a transforming power upon all with whom you come in contact. Let Christ be daily made manifest in you, and He will reveal through you the creative energy of His word—a gentle, persuasive, yet mighty influence to re-create other souls in the beauty of the Lord our God. 'Give not that which is holy unto the dogs,' Matthew 7:6.’

1. When will you be able to influence others?

2. If you have Christ in you . . .

3. If we look at the Cross and remember Jesus there, will we accuse, be critical or be conceited?

4. How can you touch a brother (or sister) in Christ?

5. What type of spirit (attitude) will save someone?

6. Has any person been saved censure or reproach (severe criticism)? What does happen?

Hebrews 4:11-13 (Amplified Bible)

"Let us therefore be zealous and exert ourselves and strive diligently to enter that rest [of God, to know and experience it for ourselves], that no one may fall or perish by the same kind of unbelief and disobedience [into which those in the wilderness fell]."

"For the Word that God speaks is alive and full of power [making it active, operative, energizing, and effective]; it is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating to the dividing line of the breath of life (soul) and [the immortal] spirit, and of joints and marrow [of the deepest parts of our nature], exposing and sifting and analyzing and judging the very thoughts and purposes of the heart."

"And not a creature exists that is concealed from His sight, but all things are open and exposed, naked and defenseless to the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do.”
"Our hearts must be melted into tenderness and love for one another. We may criticize ourselves just as severely as we please. The one who criticizes another gives evidence that he is the very one who needs to criticize himself. Pray God to show you what you must remove from yourselves in order that you may see the kingdom of God."

**WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH ME?**

Walking into the courtroom to pay for a traffic ticket, a young man noticed, to his joyful surprise, that the judge was his former soccer coach. Whew! While the young man knew the judge well enough to know that although he would be driving differently as a result of this time in the courtroom, he was at least confident that he would be shown mercy.

Everything has to do with being confident in the one who judges us. We know that Christ loves us and has paid with His life to lead us to a better way. His correction, even though it might be strong, will always be loving. That isn’t always the case with those who judge us on earth—the critics and the gossips.

Before we write them off, however, we had better check the list again and see if our name has ever been on it. We might find that there have been times when we have skillfully stabbed people in the back with our words. There are probably times when we have been unkind and didn’t feel a bit sorry.

If you find that your name might be on the list, erase it with the blood of Christ. By faith, we can have this assurance, but remember that by faith others have the same right to the mercy of God.

1. What will help us treat everyone the way Jesus would treat them?

2. What should we do before we speak?

3. Is it possible to kill someone without them being dead? Explain.
4. Will Jesus forgive us if we have been critical of others, or if we have gossiped? Can we keep from letting it happen again? Explain.

_____________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________

Romans 14:12, 13 (*Amplified Bible*)

“And so each of us shall give an account of himself [give an answer in reference to judgment] to God.

“Then let us no more criticize and blame and pass judgment on one another, but rather decide and endeavor never to put a stumbling block or an obstacle or a hindrance in the way of a brother.”

Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, January 3, 1893

“There are many who are treated as tares and hopeless subjects, whom Christ is drawing to himself. Men judge from the outward appearance, and think they discern the true measurement of a man’s character; but they make many blunders in their judgments. They put a high estimate upon a man whose appearance is as an angel of light, when in thought and heart he is corrupt and unworthy. On another whose appearance is not so favorable, they pass criticism, make him an offender for a word, and would separate him from the church because of his supposed defective character, when it may be that he who reads the heart, sees true moral worth in the man. Human judgment does not decide any case; for the Lord’s thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are his ways our ways. He whom we would separate from the church as altogether unworthy, is the object of the Lord’s solicitude and love. All heaven is engaged in doing the appointed work of drawing souls to God, and the Lord has said concerning his word, ‘It shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it’

“Then since the Lord is working through his own divine agency upon the hearts of those whom we would term hopeless subjects, let not man be officious, let him stand out of the way of God’s work; for his word that goeth forth from his mouth, will accomplish its appointed work, and prosper in the thing whereunto it is sent. Let not man set himself up as judge of his brethren; for God ‘hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.’ And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.’ ‘But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? For
we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way. ‘For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son. . . . For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.’”

**HOW DOES IT WORK?**

Try a quick judgment check. In the table below, write some common things that really bother you about other people. Avoid the extremes—superficial things such as wearing socks with sandals or horrific crimes such as rape and murder. Instead, focus on the things that you meet up with every day that are wrong—such as gossip, exclusion, dishonesty, arrogance, etc.

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<th>Briefly state your judgments below</th>
<th>Check the box that applies</th>
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Look at your list and ask yourself: How many times have I helped someone overcome this problem? If I did so, did I show the kind of love and mercy Jesus showed?

