

94. Judging and Condemning Others.

But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. *Jas. 3, 8.*

An evil tongue is the devil's best servant; when it wags, he can, as it were, take it easy, for his work goes on apace without him; he presses the button, and the tongue does the rest. "The slanderer has the devil on the tongue," says Luther.

When we see our neighbor do something that we think wrong, how quick we are to judge him harshly! When some one complains of a neighbor, how quickly we condemn him before hearing him! But our Savior says: "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned." Luke 6, 37. People often try to defend themselves by saying, "I may say anything that is true." But what of it even if it be true? Who told you that it is your duty to make public what will harm your neighbor? It will do no one any good; therefore keep it to yourself. Go to your neighbor and tell him his fault and by speaking kindly to him, try to make him see the error of his way. There is the place and that is the time for you to talk; and this is also the manner in which you should go about it.

Many a one has a sharp and keen eye for the faults and follies of others; he observes their slightest mistakes, but his own gross faults and huge sins he does not perceive. Oh, how necessary therefore for everyone to begin searching himself when any judging and condemning is to be done, to sweep away the filth from his own door before he does that service for some one else. The Book says: "Be ye therefore merciful as your Father also is merciful." Oh, how much must yet be changed in us if we really wish to imitate the exalted example of our kind heavenly Father! How often do we judge our neighbor harshly!

Yet, if we are merciful as our Father in heaven is merciful, we shall not delight to judge and condemn; but we shall forgive and forget. But this is not all. God goes to the root of the matter and says: "Let none of you *imagine* evil in your hearts against his neighbor."

Prayer.

Merciful and gracious God and heavenly Father, I render Thee heartfelt thanks and praise for having, during all the days of my life, taken such fatherly care of me and having up to this very hour graciously guarded me against all harm of body and soul. I pray Thee by that grace which Thou hast promised all penitent sinners that Thou wouldst cover and nevermore remember the sins that I have committed against Thee and my neighbor, both knowingly and unknowingly. If I but think evil in my heart against my neighbor I am already a sinner against Thy commandment. I therefore plead guilty before Thee, who searchest the heart; but I also appeal to Thy grace in Christ Jesus. Amen.

My soul, be on thy guard:
Ten thousand foes arise,
And hosts of sin are pressing hard
To draw thee from the skies.

This devotion is one of 318 taken from *Daily Bread* by F. E. Pasche, published by CPH in 1926, but now in the public domain. They have been copied and reformatted by Rev. Bruce G. Ley and made available for distribution by pastors and missionaries.

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