***The Technique of Confessing Sins, No. 5

Techniques of the Christian Life

TL04-01***

Now we're looking at the fifth segment on the subject of The Confession of Sin, which is one of the techniques of the Christian life. We find as we examine the Word of God that God has revealed certain techniques which are basic to Christian living. If you're going to live the Christian life, you have to know these techniques. One of them is this one that we've been examining and we're coming to a very crucial application of this technique--an application which has long range repercussions, both now and as far as eternity is concerned for you personally. If we sin we break fellowship with the Heavenly Father and confession of known sins is the way to repair that broken fellowship. Without this fellowship, you are incapable of walking daily with the Lord, no matter what you know. Again I want to caution you to please remember that it makes no difference how far you've gone in the Christian life. Once fellowship is broken, you have entered a period of maximum danger to your spiritual life, and practically overnight you can deteriorate from someone who is close to the Lord to someone who is just completely disoriented where you don't know up from down.

So without fellowship in your daily walk there can be no spiritual growth and there can be no Christian service productive of divine good. You may keep serving the Lord, but what you'll keep cranking out is something that God rejects because it comes from the good side of your old sin nature and therefore it is human good.

We have found that 1 John 1:9 is the key verse. It is the answer. It is the first thing a convert needs to learn. After a person understands John 3:16 and believes what that verse says, the very next thing he must learn is 1 John 1:9. Otherwise, you will put that Christian immediately upon a disastrous course in his spiritual life. And this is the one verse that Satan assiduously attempts to keep a convert from understanding.

This technique is not an indulgence to permit us to sin, because discipline is applied when we do sin (Hebrews 12:3-15). Resisting discipline builds calluses on the soul (Ephesians 4:17). Calluses create spiritual disorientation because they destroy the believer's spiritual maturity, and then a Christian will go spiritually insane. His loyalty, his values, and his vision are completely distorted. You read of that in Ephesians 4:18-20.

Once sin is confessed, it is very important that you forget it. Otherwise, you have not neutralized that confessed sin. You cannot use that sin to rebuke yourself in the future, nor can you use someone else's sin to rebuke that person. What is the principle with God? Forgiven sin is forgotten sin. Now that's a very precious truth, and most Christians are totally oblivious to it, if they ever knew it. Forgiven sin is forgotten. God does not keep a service record on you in heaven for your sins. Confessed sins must be neutralized by the fact that you forget them. If you don't forget them, here's what will happen:

**Guilt**

You will perhaps set up a guilt complex. You're brooding over some sin you've confessed but you couldn't believe that you could ever do such a terrible thing. You're brooding over that; that will set up a guilt complex; and, a guilt complex is always sin. Since a guilt complex is always sin, you're right back out of fellowship. Or something happens in your life and you enter some trial and suffering, and you say, "God why are you doing this to me?" and you think, "Oh yeah, it's because of that sin I committed five years ago." Now if you committed a sin five years ago, God is not going to punish you for that. God always disciplines us for the immediate present--something near at hand. The past takes care of itself through our confession in different ways. What has been confessed in the past is gone.

**Bitterness**

The sin of bitterness can also cause a distinct problem here. Perhaps you are suffering discipline as a result of your sin, even though confession has been made. The discipline you suffered can cause you to be bitter, and that bitterness sets up a new sin. The worst thing is confessing your sin and then discussing it with other people. That is loathsome--to go to other people and discuss your sin. That violates the privacy of the priesthood.

**Other People's Sins**

So the whole question that we are dealing with here with this technique is how do I proceed as a Christian when I am guilty of some horrible sin? How do I proceed? Well 1 John 1:9 is the answer. But the problem along with 1 John 1:9 is forgetting--not only forgetting toward yourself, but forgetting toward other people. The bringing up of other people's sins, whether they are confessed or not, is a sin on your part. If you bring up another person's sin, you yourself have entered a serious breach of fellowship with God the Father. If a Christian has confessed to sin, what is the status of that sin? It is forgiven and therefore forgotten. If it is forgotten, it cannot ever be mentioned again by God. It cannot ever be referred to again by God. God cannot act upon that sin. Even what started out as discipline for that sin, once you confess, it now becomes blessing. It becomes a training experience. God is no longer disciplining you for that sin as such. It has been forgiven and so is forgotten.

Suppose that a Christian has not confessed his sin, which you would not know, and you come up and bring up his sin. Now you are violating his personal priesthood. You're interfering with that which is his business and you can't discuss that sin without yourself sinning. So you can't speak of another person's sin without in effect passing judgments, and you are taking over God's prerogative and that is for Him to judge sin.

Romans 12:19: "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place to wrath. For it is written, 'Vengeance is mine. I will repay' says the Lord." So here you have a situation in a home. A husband does something. His wife gets put off, and she starts reviewing his sins for him. Perhaps he has confessed those sins, and they may be legitimate sins. Perhaps he hasn't confessed them. In either case, she has invaded his privacy or she has reminded him of something that he has already confessed, and therefore she cannot mention it again. And the moment she does, a very terrible consequence happens to her.

You have a good friend. You have a falling out. So you reiterate all the grievances of this person over a period of time--of sins, injustices, and offenses that you have suffered. Perhaps that person is aware that they were out of line and they confessed it. You refer to it, and you have brought long-range consequences upon yourself. It is not without reason that the Bible tells us not to judge. Luke 6:37: "Judge not and ye shall not be judged. Condemn not and ye shall not be condemned. Forgive and ye shall be forgiven."

Now human viewpoint justifies calling a person's wrongdoings to his attention and reminding him of it. But the Word of God has this principle which is to live and let live, and leave discipline and judgment to the Lord. And you better believe it--that that's how it works. Romans 2:1: "Therefore you are inexcusable, oh man, whosoever you are that judges, for wherein you judge another you condemn yourself, for you that judge do the same things." God is not asking you to leave judgment to him. He is telling us to leave judgment to him. If you interfere by bringing up other people's sins in any respect whatsoever, God is immediately going to turn to you with a triple whammy that I'll tell you about in a moment.

**Grace**

What you and I have to do is maintain the same attitude of grace toward other people that the Lord has exercised toward us. That is to seek the restoration of people to fellowship--a restoration with a minimum of injury all around. That's what Galatians 6:1 tells us to do. So don't run down, don't expose, don't slander, and don't rant about another Christian who is out of fellowship. Remember your own faults and let that give you perspective on that person's faults.

An attitude of grace will be neither a compromise on your convictions nor will it be a justification of evil. Some people feel that if they do not stand up and sound off in a very pontifical way about other people's wrongdoings that they are violating their own convictions as believers. Supposing you are the victim of somebody's slander, somebody's gossip, or somebody' maligning: what do you do? Your recourse is immediate forgiveness--no questions asked. You immediately forgive (Colossians 3:13). You don't go waiting for the person to confess to you to, apologize, or to ask your forgiveness. If you are the victim, you immediately and completely forgive. Your forgiving and forgetting is not dependent on anything that that individual does.

**Forgive and Forget**

Can you forgive without forgetting? "I'll forgive you, but I'll never forget what you did." The two are mutually exclusive. Anytime you say, "I'll forgive. I won't hold it against you," but then you remember it, you have again entered a sin. You have not forgiven. If you do not forgive immediately when somebody offends you, what you have done is played the fool's role of joining that person in a sin that brings upon you the discipline of God. For this reason, you operate from an attitude of fellowship in Christ that you want to bring people to where they are walking with the Lord. James 5:19-20 describe that spirit and that attitude for us. So what we need to remember is that, relative to ourselves, we are not to exercise judgment or bring up other people's sins. Secondly, we must be careful if we are in the presence of somebody who does that. This may be more to the point for a lot of you. Somebody comes along and begins talking to you about another Christian--about supposed or real failures or injuries or shortcomings of this believer. What should you do? Immediately you are confronted with a major problem for yourself. There are two things you can do.

One, if a person comes along and starts talking, you can obviously listen. You can listen to that person as he is slandering. We could use the word "gossip" because it might be true gossip as well as false gossip. But he is taking another Christian to task about his sin and you listen to it. You know what happens? The person who is describing this to you is immediately under the judgment of God, and by you listening to it, you have joined him in that judgment. Immediately you take up that person's problems. Many times a Christian is going along and you have no problems whatsoever. You're walking in fellowship with the lord. Your life is prosperous in spiritual things. Along comes some character who's all tied up in carnality, and they start spewing out to you their frame of reference. If you sit and listen, you will be tempted to accept that person's frame of reference. The result will be that you will look at things from that person's viewpoint, and suddenly after a while of conversation you have taken their problem. Here you are happy in the Lord, in fellowship. Now you have taken over this character's problem and put yourself out of fellowship in the process.

The other course is to speak two very significant words. Now, "Get lost" are two of the most precious words in the Bible relative to a carnal character who's trying to get you on their sinking ship. Just don't listen. It is not worth it. I'm going to tell you something dear friends. Most of you think you're going to live a long time, don't you? Most of you are not going to live a long time. You'll be lucky to make it to 100 years of age--lucky to make 100. Consequently before very long you are going to be right in the Lord's presence and eternity is going to begin. Are you going to look back from eternity and are you going to look back to that time when this creep walked up to you in order to start maligning and to start bad-mouthing some other believer over some imagined or real personal affront, or over some problem? Are you going to put yourself where you look back from the marvels of God's presence and think back on the day when you listened to this character; accepted his frame of reference; took his problem upon yourself; and, along with it his discipline? Then you check back on the results and say, "I lost this reward. I lost this reward and this reward," because I listened and entered in under God's judgment against this person.

Don't be kidding yourself that you don't listen to people. I mean the minute somebody opens their mouth and begins bringing a critical attack, you cut it off right then. Don't kid yourself to say, "Well I'm listening so I can see what the problem is; so I can pray for this person; or, so I can hold him up before the throne of grace." You are not kidding God with that.

**Triple Discipline**

Here's what happens. You bring up another person's sin, or you stand in the presence of somebody who is telling you something about another believer, another person, whether it is true or false. Did you get that? Don't try to think you have a way out where if it's true then it's OK. Whether it's true or false doesn't matter, and most of the time you don't know whether it's true or false. Let's put you in the place. You start maligning somebody. You start slandering. You start being critical. One, you have a mental attitude sin. You hate that person. You envy that person. You have some quality of mind of bitterness toward that person. But that's why you are openly doing what you're doing. It starts with this. Now God disciplines you for that mental sin. The worst kind of sins are the sins of the mind because that's where everything else begins.

Number two, you have now openly slandered. So God puts a second discipline on you. Now you're strapped with two layers of discipline for this sin--first in the mind, then an overt expression. Then there comes a third factor and that is, whether the person's sin is real or not, you have mentioned a sin. In the judgments of God, there is a discipline for that sin. The Word of God tells us in Matthew 7:1-2, first of all, "Judge not that you be not judged." Verse 2 says, "For with what judgment you judge..." That means whatever sin you attack you shall be judged. You are going to be judged on the basis of that sin. What judgment, whatever sin you mentioned about another person, whether that person did it or not, you are going to be judged for that. "And with what measure you measure (that is, what judgment that sin calls for), it shall be measured to you again." That is, you yourself will receive that measure of discipline. You have mentioned a sin. That sin bears a certain penalty. You measure out therefore the penalty toward that sin by the fact that you brought it up as a sin for judgment. God says He takes that penalty and puts it upon you. So you get a third judgment--the judgment of the discipline that is due for that sin.

Now this is not to say that the guilty person, if he is guilty, will himself not receive this judgment--that he will be free of that discipline. But it does say that you have added to yourself this judgment. So here God comes and he disciplines you with the sin you mention. So if you want to have a good time on the telephone with some of your sweet Christian friends as you discuss the other believers, just keep this triple whammy in mind. Until you have a nasty attitude in the mind, which is sin number one, you won't be openly slandering and talking about other people's shortcomings, which is sin number two, and then you will not be receiving the discipline due to that sin which God says, "You name it. That person's got it coming, and whatever I do with him you're going to get it." You are going to get that judgment measure to you. What measure you should measure, it shall be measured to you. You will receive that judgment. Is that worth it to you? How much grief and disappointment has been brought into your life?

**Judgment**

Well I know you say, "But we have to look at sin. We are confronted with facing up to the fact that there are things that are wrong. So let's look at the word this word "judge." There is a way that you may judge in a correct way. You may judge in a way that will not bring you under this kind of triple discipline. The Greek word is "krino." "Krino" means simply to judge. It means several different things. It means, for example, "to select" or "to prefer." We have this in Romans 14:5: "One man esteems one day above another. Another esteems every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." Esteem--or judge--that's a legitimate kind of judgment. If you want to observe Christmas; put up a Christmas tree; hang Holly on your door; and, hang mistletoe all over the house to have a little fun, that's your business. You're free, and nobody has any business coming around saying, "Mistletoe? There's a lot of hanky-panky going on around here. It is not your business to judge another believer. If you do, in comes triple discipline. Now this kind of judgment--to prefer or to select--is legitimate.

**Discernment**

A second meaning of this word is to judge such as you have in 1 Corinthians 10:15: "I speak as to wise men. Judge what I say." There the word "judge" can be described by the translation "discernment." There is a difference perhaps between the way we would use the word "judge" and the word "discern." Discerning is legitimate. Judging in the sense of condemning is not legitimate. Here in 1 Corinthians 10:15 you are asked to discern as wise men. Then it also means "to reach a decision." 1 Corinthians 7:37: "Hath so decreed (hath so judged)." This is another legitimate sense. It's just a decision.

**Legality**

Then it has a legal term meaning--to hold court. In 1 Corinthians 5:12, Paul speaks about the right of a congregation to hold court relative to sin within its midst. "For what have I to do to judge them also that are without (that is, unbelievers). Do not you judge them that are within (believers in the local church)?" Now this kind of judgment within the local church relative to church members who are in open violation of the moral codes, openly violating the Word of God who are in sin, this is a legitimate area of church discipline (1 Corinthians 5:12). Paul uses this word before the Roman court in Acts 25:10, "Where I ought to be judged." It is legitimate for the judge of a court to pass a decision down--a judgment.

There's a third example here in 1 Corinthians 6:6 in settling a dispute or quarrel, "But brother goes to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers." Here the word "krino" is translated as going to law. Can two church members go to law with one another? On the west coast there is a seminary. Five professors decided they didn't like the policy, the thrust, and the direction of that seminary. So they created a rebellion among the student body and they ended up where they sued the school--a Christian institution, a seminary. They took that school to court--Christians suing Christians. Can they do that? Not even if you're a seminary professor--you can't do that. The Word of God says Christians do not sue Christians. Well, you say, "I've got a case. This person is out of line. I have a real case." What does the Bible tell us to do? We have a legitimate case. If we were to go to court, we probably could win it in a court of law. But the Bible says you do not go to law. What do you do? You turn it over to the Lord, and you personally take the loss. That's exactly what it says. It says you take the loss. You don't take another Christian to a court of law over an issue. This word is used here in judging another Christian. This is one way you cannot judge another Christian. This is one of the kinds of judging which is condemned.

Then there's a use as a divine court. 2 Timothy 4:1: "Christ who shall judge the quick the living and the dead at His appearing in His kingdom. This of course will be a legitimate judging. It will be a true judging. The Scriptures use this word to pass judgment upon men, and thus to express an opinion, as in Matthew 7:1-2 that we already read. What are you doing here? You are judging some other believer and passing your opinion, and here judging is used in a way which is not legitimate. You cannot judge a Christian in this way.

Now who is going to judge a believer in this way? Let's back up here. I want to make it clear that it is the believer who is in the outer circle who is going to judge. When a believer in the outer circle passes evaluations on another believer, he is in a carnal status and he is judging. But when he is making the same decisions used by the same Greek word "krino," he is making a decision when he is in the inner circle, then it is discerning. This is legitimate, while the prior case was not legitimate. In other words, unless you are a spirit filled Christian, you had better not try to pass evaluations concerning what other believers are doing, Even if you know what they are doing, it is none of your business. It is only the business of the Lord. It is His place to exercise judgment and vengeance. There are certain areas such as we've indicated here within a church situation where discipline would be in order. And that has to be, as the Scriptures say, by those who are spiritual who handle that, lest the evaluation should go from discernment to judging.

Now you can discern. You can listen to what a person says. The apostle Paul listened to what Peter was saying. In fact he looked at what Peter did, and Peter, because of the pressure from the Jews, would not sit down and eat with Gentiles. And Paul said, "Peter, that is false doctrine. That was wrong for you to do that. We Jewish Christians are on the same ground as Gentile Christians and we should fellowship with them by breaking bread. We should eat with them." Now Paul was not judging Peter. He was discerning a true doctrine and was presenting it in the spirit of restoration to fellowship which is what James commends to us.

So, this kind of judging is wrong. Luke 6:37 says, "Judge not and you shall not be judged. Condemn not and you shall not be condemned. Forgive and you shall be forgiven." Again, judging in the wrong sense is wrong. John 7:24: "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." That's a fantastic verse. You see what it says?

"Jane?"

"Yes, Phoebe."

"Do you know what I sat Sarah doing downtown today?"

"What?"

And you're off and running. Now all you did was saw something. Do you know what you saw? Do you know what Sarah was doing? Can you interpret that? No you can't.

**Slander**

I'll you something else about people who slander; people who bad-mouth; people who gossip; and, people who tell bad things about other Christians. It is almost inevitably a clue to this person's own character. One of the ways for you to get around your own sins is to strap it on somebody else. Maybe it bothers you that you get up in the morning, and the first thing you think about is being able to turn on the TV and watch "As the World Spins By" and "John's Other Wife" or whatever they're called. So you sit there and you spend three or four hours waiting, watching, just really going with this, and then you get to feeling very bad about this. You're condemned. You go to your husband, and he's been sitting there watching the news, and maybe "Hawaii 5-0" came on, so he sat through that. He gets up after an hour or so, and she says, "That's right. All you do is just watch television all the time, don't you? You never do anything else. Why don't you read your Bible?"

The reason she's doing that is because she is condemned about her own television watching, and one of the ways to ease up is to try to demonstrate how bad somebody else is. Whenever somebody else comes along and gives you some juicy hot scoop, you can almost always suspect that someplace down behind the scene, there is a variation of the hot scoop in this individual, and that's why that individual is scooping it. The psychiatrist calls this "relieving inner tensions." It relieves the guilt complex. It's man's relative righteousness. As long as you can find somebody who is worse than you are, you don't feel so bad. You can look all around and see any number of people who are considerably worse than you are, and that's why you're happy right now. You have built your righteousness on the unrighteousness of all the rest of these poor slobs sitting around. But God is not deceived by that.

Remember that when you're ready to start degrading another Christian for any reason whatsoever, that if that Christian has studied this and has become informed, he will know: one--that he's going to steer clear of you because he does not want to bring your triple discipline upon himself; and, two--he knows that you are revealing something about yourself and about your own character by describing what you are describing. These are things that are relieving the fact that you yourself have guilt along some similar lines. Therefore, if you pass an unfavorable judgment on the basis of appearance, this is wrong. You cannot judge on appearance.

Romans 14:3 says, "Let not him that eats despise him that does not eat. Let him that does not eat not judge him that eats. For God has received him." In other words, keep your nose out of other people's business, and do not be judging people. This has to do with those who are eating meats to idols. It is not your business to be criticizing and to be making decisions about what other believers do. You are inexcusable when you try to pass judgment on that.

You may look up Romans 14 10: "But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ," and that's where the judgment is really going to be made. You are very foolish to kid yourself by thinking that since you may deceive other people, you can also deceive God. That's the game among Christians--operation front--to put yourself out in front so that you look really good. The reason you look good out in the front is because you have learned to look grim; you have learned how not to smile; you have picked up a few clichés; and, you know how to say "Praise the Lord" and "Hallelujah" at the right time. You also know how to have that sweetness and light Easter Sunday look on your face every day of the week. You know how to play a few taboos, and you let everybody know that there are certain things you just don't do. There are certain programs that you don't watch on television, because you have checked them out very carefully and thoroughly, and you know you don't watch programs like that. And that's why you get this respectable front, and everybody says, "Oh wonderful wonderful Christian person." However, you're going to stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. God is not going to run a television tape of what you have done. But the records are going to show what rewards you have. That's when the evidence will be in.

Romans 14 13: "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." Here you have again, judging, this same word "krino." We're still on this "krino" in a bad way.

There are many other verses. Let me just give them to you. You can look them up for yourself: Romans 2:1 and 1 Corinthians 4:5. 1 Corinthians 10:29 deals with your interfering with another person's freedom. "Live and let live" is the principle. Colossians 2:16. James 4:11- 12. And Romans 14:22: "Happy is he that judges not himself in the thing which he allows." Happy is he that judges not himself, that does not "krino" himself, and require him to condemn himself before the Lord." That is a happy Christian. The way you avoid that is by that confession of sin.

**Examination**

There's another word we ought to look at briefly. This is "anakrino." "Anakrino" means to pass judgment upon, and it means to examine in order to find answers. Acts 17:11: "These (speaking of the Christians at Berea) were more noble (which means more open-minded) than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word of God with all readiness and eagerness of mind, and searched ("anakrino")--they examined the Scriptures daily whether those things were so." This is a legitimate kind of judgment. This is what you should do. This is for when the pastor-teacher is instructing in a group. And, by the way, why does he instruct you in a group? It's for privacy. If he tries to instruct you one-on-one, this is not legitimate. In other words, if he says, "Now I'm teaching you about judging." He asks you a few questions and he says, "Now, have you been judging anybody."

"Yes. I talked about Mrs. So-and-so."

"You did?"

"What did you say about her?"

"Well I said I don't like that perfume she uses. I told my husband about it. I think it smells something like Darkness from Hades."

"Did you pray about that?"

"Yes."

"How long did you pray?"

"Three-and-a-half minutes."

"Three-and-a-half minutes, huh?"

This could go on and on, and none of this is my business. You are your own priest. And when you are told to accept the teaching authority in the group of a pastor-teacher, you are told to respect the fact that God has given him the right to instruct a group--particularly that flock. And what you have to respond to is to the truth. It is not wrong for you to reject what a pastor-teacher tells you if he has taught you what is false. But how are you going to find out if what he has taught you is true or false. The same way these original Bereans did. They "anakrino"'d the Word. They examined it, and they said, "Yes that's what the Word tells you."

If a pastor gets up and he simply tells you, "Now this is what the Word of God says, or he says, "Now I feel as I have read the Word that this is what this means," that's one thing. This is why we take the trouble to give you a word from the original language. You can't leave this study and say, "Well, Dr. Danish says that you can examine and discern," as if it were my opinion. That happens to be what the Word of God says--that you are to "anakrino" a certain thing. You are to examine and to see what is there. God never tells us that we cannot examine and notice that some Christian is way out of line. Some Christian is living in sin. But after you find, and you have noted, and you have been able to perhaps have good reason to believe that what you see is what it appears to be, that this person is guilty of sin, the point is what do you do with that? At that point you can enter the "krino" judgment of slandering, gossiping, discussing this, or passing this on because of the viciousness of your own mental attitudes. Or you can commit that to the Lord for the point of restoration that James calls for as one who is in fellowship as part of the body of Christ. One brings you blessing. The other brings you into the same discipline, but with a triple thrust to it, that the other person has taken upon himself.

1 Corinthians 10:25,27 talks about asking no questions for conscience sake when you're out having dinner. "Anakrino" is translated here as "asking no questions." So it has this business of examining, then it also has the meaning, from that, "to discern." This is the matter of discerning while you are in fellowship. 1 Corinthians 2:14-15 says, "The natural man (the unbeliever) receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him. Neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual (that is, in fellowship) judges (or discerns) all things, yet he himself is judged of no man ("anakrino").

**Judge Through**

There is one more word we will look at it. That's "diakrino." "Ana" means "again." "Dia" means "through"--judging through, and that's exactly what it means--"to judge through." It can be used in the sense of being at odds with yourself, to doubt. Romans 4:20 says, "He (Abraham) staggered not ("diakrino") at the promise of God. He did not doubt. Romans 14:23 says, "And he that doubts ("diakrino") is damned if eats because he eats not of faith; for whatsoever is not of faith is sin. This is acting from a guilt complex. "To make a distinction"--1 Corinthians 4:7: "Who makes you to differ from another"--exalting one person over another. God doesn't recognize persons--making a distinction ("diakrino"), judging through, or to pass judgment. 1 Corinthians 14:29 says, "Let the prophets speak, two or three, and then one of them judge. That's legitimate. Then to judge yourself--1 Corinthians 11:31 says, "If we would judge ourselves, then we would not be judged."

What I'm trying to express is that these are all passages which indicate that there are some times when judging is legitimate. You can never judge unless you are in the inner circle. Then your judgment will be relative to discerning, to examining, and to understanding, relative to the Lord's guidance to you. It will never be for you to judge in such a way that you are going to take that information and pass it on to somebody else. I am telling you that if you discuss a sin that another person has committed and that person has confessed that to God, it is gone and forgotten, and if you bring that sin up again, heaven help you. There is a lot of grief in the lives of people, and the worst grief is going to come at the Judgment Seat of Christ because you have judged somebody. You have slandered them. All of this has come from your mental hatred. You've spoken openly. You've made a judgment. You've brought an attack upon them.

The result is that you go out of fellowship. Now maybe you feel sorry for what you did, or you just forget it, and you go on. There are calluses built up and you're a little insensitive to the Lord. You do it again and the insensitiveness builds up and it builds up until finally you are slandering, you're in a frenzy, and you're absolutely spiritually insane in what you're saying. All the time, out in eternity, you are losing, losing, losing, because in the meantime you're serving the Lord; you're singing in the choir; and, you're giving your money, all to no avail. It is a terrible thing. Get it straight. God says you can never name a person's name and attach his sin, his shortcomings, or his fault with his name. You can name it to God. You can name it in the sense of discerning that this person has this problem, and as a member of the body of Christ I'd like to see that resolved. You can name it to Him but you cannot discuss this with anybody else.

Be careful if somebody comes up to you and they open up. Remember, they're obviously not going to say, "Now, I've got something to tell you." They're going to say, "How is Mrs. So-and-so?" That is often a signal that the prober has shoved his nose in your direction to see whether you're going to cut it off or invite it in. That's the question: "How is Mrs...?" "What about...?" Those are clues for you to watch for. And the minute somebody starts mentioning another person, turn down your hearing aid. Play deaf. Play dumb. That's the easiest way to do it. Some of you have more talent at that than others. I'm pretty good at playing dumb.

It's very disconcerting if a person asks you, "What about Mrs. So-and-so? I hear..." Just look at them, cross your eyes, and say, "What?" They'll shake their heads and say, "Boy, that's a waste of time." You will save yourself eternal grief and you will save yourself guilt complexes that will cause you to be striking other believers with their sins which is usually why you're doing it. A person who's happy in the Lord is not preoccupied with your shortcomings. It does not mean that he's not interested. It does not mean that he's not disappointed if he sees you falling short of what you should be as a believer. However, he is not preoccupied with being interested in that, and making stock out of it or attacking you for it. Most attacks are ignorant people who have looked upon outward appearances and their own corrupted frame of reference has distorted what they saw or what they thought they heard. Don't ever forget that. Consequently, they are revealing their own carnality state and their own spiritual insanity.

You can join them, or you can say, "That's not for me." There is a way to judge for discernment. There is a way to judge for slander, and God will discipline you for that in a triple way. I'm telling you it is not worth it.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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