

# GOD HAS SPACE FOR YOU

This question came from a teenage reader:

## **JUDGING: Why do people judge others because of their religious beliefs?**

Let me tell you a story: a young lady of high school age, Megan, (not their real names) found a deeper, closer walk with God after attending a youth conference. Her boyfriend, Mike, had to work and couldn't attend. She came back home ready to light the world on fire for the Lord but Mike didn't share her new enthusiasm. Conflict followed when Megan told Mike she loved Jesus more than she loved him. When he didn't understand her position and argued with her that he expected his girl to love him more than anyone, even Jesus, they broke up.

Now, maybe you think that's the end of the story and should be since they don't see eye-to-eye on spiritual matters. But Mike was unhappy with the outcome because he felt judged by Megan for her religious beliefs. He said, "I believe in God, too, but I feel this is a private matter between myself and God. I don't appreciate feeling I'm not as good as you because I want God to have a place in my life even if it's not first place." Mike wonders why religious people are so judgmental.

Judge, judging, judgment all mean in the following order: to form an idea, opinion or estimate about any matter; to criticize or censure; to think or suppose—according to *Webster's New World Dictionary*. The question posed to this column refers to the definition, criticize or censure, according to my judgment (opinion or estimate).

The Bible says, "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." (Matthew 7:1, 2 and Luke 6:37), alongside this verse: "By their fruit (deeds/character) you will recognize them." (Matthew 7:16, 17, 20) As you can see, Scripture admonishes believers to judge not (criticize or censure), while at the same time to judge (discern character).

The *NIV Study Bible* regarding Matthew 7 on *Judging Others* says: "The Christian is not to judge hypocritically or self-righteously (see verse 5). The same thought is expressed in Matthew 23:13-39. To obey Christ's commands in this chapter, we must first evaluate a person's character—whether one is a 'dog' (see verse 6) or a false prophet (see verse 15), or whether one's life shows fruit (see verse 16). Scripture repeatedly exhorts believers to evaluate others carefully (see John 7:24). In other words, it isn't, either/or, it's both/and; character discernment and avoiding criticism/censure of others.

Was Mike right in feeling unjustly criticized? I'll let you use your best judgment (opinion or supposition) to decide.

Perhaps the better question to ask is: Are Christians exceptionally judgmental (critical) of others, even other believers and if so, why are we? We need to examine our own lives for two things: exceptional criticism of others **and** failure to discern the character of others. These may be areas where we, as Christians, need to listen and learn from our example, Jesus Christ.

**" Not by might nor by power,  
but by Spirit, 'says the Lord Almighty' "**  
**(Zechariah 4:6)**



## QUOTE SPACE

Character, in the long run, is the decisive factor in the life of an individual and of nations alike.

Theodore Roosevelt



## SPACE FOR TIPS

### COOKING SUBSTITUTIONS IN A PINCH

For: 1 Tbsp. fresh herb

Use: 1/3 to 1/2 tsp. dried herb (of the same kind)

For: 1 clove garlic

Use: 1/8 tsp. garlic powder

For: 1 egg in baking

Use: 1 tsp. cornstarch plus ¼ cup water

For: 1-cup sour cream (in baking)

Use: 7/8-cup buttermilk or sour milk plus 3 Tbsp. of butter

For: 1-cup margarine or butter (in baking or cooking)

Use: 1-cup hard shorting or 7/8 cup vegetable oil

For: 1 square unsweetened chocolate

Use: 3 Tbp. cocoa plus 1 Tbsp. oil

## THE FUNNY SPACE

...from a Catholic elementary school test including poor spelling:

- **Adam and Eve were created from an Apple tree. Noah's wife was called Joan of Ark. Noah built an Ark and the animals came on in pears.**
- **Samson slayed the Philistines with the axe of the Apostles.**
- **Moses led the Jews to the Red sea where they made unleavened bread which is bread without any ingredients.**
- **The Egyptians were all drowned in the dessert. Afterwards, Moses went up to Mount Cyanide to get the ten amendments.**
- **The greatest miracle in the bible is when Joshua told his son to stand still and he obeyed him.**
- **Solomon, one of David's sons, had 300 wives and 700 porcupines.**



## SPACE FOR YOU

This newsletter exists for you, the reader in cyberspace. My wish is to create a space of interest, of fun, and of practicality. And I'd like to hear from you. Do you have a hard question you'd like an answer to? Do you want to contribute your 2 cents worth about this newsletter? Click here: [bmluke@genuinejoyministries.org](mailto:bmluke@genuinejoyministries.org) and let me know.

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