

How Do You See People?

Joe Slater

What criteria do you use to size someone up? If you had lived in Palestine nearly 2000 years ago, what would you have thought of Jesus? Most of the Jews of that day rejected Him, at least partly because they used the wrong criteria to evaluate Him.

Paul, for one, learned his lesson from this mistake. He wrote: *“Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh,. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer”* (2 Corinthians 5:16).

Our culture is not the first to be fixated on physical attractiveness. Is (s)he tall? short? slim? heavy? smooth-complected? Human wisdom would dictate that the savior of the world should be strikingly handsome; but Isaiah said regarding Jesus, *“He has no form or comliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him”* (53:2)

How do you, as a Christian, treat people whose physical appearance isn't all that impressive? Does God love them any less? Are they any less entitled to hear the gospel? Are they second-class citizens in the kingdom?

Socio-economic factors influence us far too heavily in our relationships with other people. How old is this person? Is (s)he married or single? If married, what about children? How much education does (s)he have? What does (s)he do for a living? What about his/her financial status?

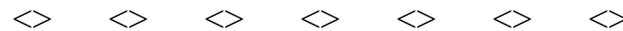
Here again, Jesus might not have met your expectations. Single at 33 (what's the matter with Him?); no formal education from the rabbinical schools; a lowly carpenter with no place to lay His head. How would you

have treated Him had He walked into the assembly where you worshipped?

To the Jews of that day, Jesus was simply a carpenter's son (from Nazareth, of all places)! He was the brother of Joseph & Mary's other children. He was just a friend of tax collectors and sinners. Jesus' enemies regarded Him according to the flesh, looking right past Who He really was.

Unfortunately, we are inclined to do the same, especially if we see some characteristic we don't like. This person is unskilled in the social graces. That one appears uppity. Another has a criminal background. Too often, we turn up our noses and ignore them. Regarding them according to the flesh, we look right past the fact that each one is a precious soul made in God's image – a priceless soul Jesus bled and died to save!

Brethren, let each of us determine that “from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh.”



MAYBE NEXT TIME THEY SHOULD READ IT INSTEAD

Two women were arrested for attempting to smuggle crystal methamphetamine inside a Bible to a man jailed in the Livingston, Louisiana Parish Detention Center.

The intended recipient, a 30-year-old man, had been in the jail for seven months on a variety of drug-related arrests.

-- via Jacksonville, AL

Spiritual Economics 101

For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him (Matthew 13:12 NASU).

It just doesn't sound fair! The rich get richer; the poor get poorer. The thing is, this fact of life is even as true, if not more so, in the spiritual realm.

Jesus made this statement in the chapter known as the "parable chapter." One of the reasons why He spoke in parables was to conceal the spiritual truths from the spiritually blind. He wanted to give insights to those who can "see."

Here is a divine law of the Lord. The more you have spiritually, the more you will gain; the less you have spiritually, the little you have will be lost. Think! The spiritual life is not stagnant. If we are nurturing our faith, we grow; if we are starving our souls, we are dying a slow spiritual death. It's that simple.

Jesus will bless our efforts to grow spiritually. When the apostles asked Jesus, *"Increase our faith"* (Luke 17:5), they failed to realize a simple fact. Their association with Jesus for three years had increased their faith, and their faith was continually growing. Their felt need for an increase of faith indicated spiritual growth. On the other hand, the person who is not aware of his need is losing what little he has.

If we water our plants, they will thrive and grow. You cannot neglect them and expect them to give you pleasure. Paul also teaches the same principle when he wrote, *"Whatever a man sows that shall he also reap"* (Galatians 6:7).

Someone said, "You get out of life what you put into it." I think we can say we get out of our spiritual life what we put into it as well.

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