

## Jumping To Conclusions

Ponder: Hearing before you decide

Scripture: “The first one to plead his cause seems right, until his neighbor comes and examines him” (Proverbs 18:16, NKJV).

Conventional wisdom says there are two sides to every dispute. More likely, though, there are three: your side, my side, and the right side!

In the proverb quoted above, Solomon echoed a provision of the Law of Moses: “Hear the cases between your brethren, and judge righteously between a man and his brother or the stranger who is with him. You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small as well as the great” (Deuteronomy 1:16b, 17a). Even before the Law of Moses was given, the great patriarch Job said, “I searched out the case that I did not know” (Job 29:16b). That is to say, he was careful to obtain all the evidence before reaching a conclusion.

Certainly we are tempted to jump to conclusions. When a person has presented a case sincerely and, perhaps, even eloquently, we naturally want to believe it. As Solomon warns, however, a second party may shed light on the issue that the first omitted. In short, the case may not be as cut-and-dried as it first appeared.

The quotes from Proverbs, Deuteronomy, and perhaps even the one from Job pertain mostly to legal proceedings. However, the same principle applies in the family, the workplace, and the church. Children will have disagreements – it’s a fact of life! When they do, parents and grandparents must take pains to hear all sides and decide fairly. Our credibility is at stake!

Those in authority at the workplace owe it to their employees to exercise fairness. Aside from being God’s will, such openness and justice improves employee morale and productivity.

Most importantly, Christians must listen to each other and draw conclusions only after hearing all of the evidence. The apostles and elders at Jerusalem exercised such wisdom in Acts 15, giving a fair hearing even to the Judaizers who were in the wrong.

You may not be a judge, employer, parent, or elder, but you are still responsible to avoid jumping to conclusions. We serve a God of justice; let us imitate His justice as we interact with those around us!

Song: “More Holiness Give Me”

Prayer: Righteous God, we praise You for Your constant goodness in all of Your dealings. You are just, and You always deal fairly with everyone. Make us more like You in our dealings with each other. Keep us from jumping to conclusions, for those are most often unjust. Have mercy on us, we pray, in Jesus’ name, Amen.

Joe Slater (Justin, TX)

jaslater1954@gmail.com