It's Not What It Looks Like
Bill Brinkworth

Too many of us make the wrong assessments of a situation. We look at or hear of circumstances and make a rash judgment with little knowledge of what did happen. Almost every time I have made a hasty judgment, I have found my discernment was wrong. I found myself feeling quite foolish, when I learned what really had happened was not what I thought had happened. Proverbs 18:13 reminds us that our judgments, without having full details of what transpired, will make us feel foolish: “He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.”

We need to hear both sides of the story before “jumping the gun” in understanding an event.

Don’t Judge Too Hard
Author Unknown

Pray, don’t find fault with a man who limps
Or stumbles along the road,
Unless you have worn the shoes he wears
Or struggle beneath his load.

There may be tacks in his shoes that hurt,
Though hidden away from view,
Or the burden he bears, placed on your back,
Might cause you to stumble too.

Don’t sneer at the man who is down today,
Unless you have felt the blow That caused his fall, or felt the shame
That only the fallen know.

You may be strong, but still the blows
That were his, if dealt to you
In the self same way at the self same time,
Might cause you to stagger too.

Don’t be too harsh with a man who sins,
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Immature?
Author Unknown

In 1923, at the age of 20, K. C. Wu, the Governor of Formosa, went to Princeton to take his doctorate in political science. He was interviewed by the Dean, Andrew Fleming.

“Young man,” he said after contemplating the round, boyish face of the applicant, “You are immature.”

“Sir,” replied Wu, “to judge maturity by the criterion of age is an immature thought in itself.”

Dean West promptly admitted him to Princeton.

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Many of us have quickly learned that situations are not always what they appear. Here are several biblical instances where quick scrutiny of a situation would most likely lead to a wrong judgment:

Mary, the mother of Jesus. Joseph quite possibly assumed that Mary had had relations with a man resulting in her pregnancy. I am sure that family and neighbors thought the same thing. Their assumptions, however, were all wrong. Mary, was with child from a super natural occurrence (Luke 2:35) in her life. Mary’s pregnancy was not a result of what they assumed had happened to the young woman. Boy, were Joseph and the others wrong.

Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus. Undoubtedly, when folks heard that Mary was pregnant, I am sure many assumed Joseph had committed sin with Mary. Those folks had no idea that Joseph was trusted to be part of God’s plan, prophesied hundreds of years previously. Boy, were they wrong.

Jesus, when He hung on the cross. When many of the multitudes passed Christ hanging on the cross, I am sure many assumed He was a criminal like the other two that were punished on either side of him. They had no idea that He had done no crime, but was paying the price for their sins. Boy, were their assumptions wrong.

The apostles, when they were killed. Except for John, who died of old age, all the other apostles died by crucifixion, beheading, spearing, or stoning. Unknowing onlookers must have surely wondered what horrible crime they had committed to be punished that way. They had no idea that they were dying for the cause of Christ and had not committed any crime worthy of their punishment. Boy, were those onlookers wrong.

The sick and blind that Jesus healed. Many, I am sure, wondered what sin some of the blind, and sick that Jesus had later healed, had committed resulting in their affliction. Little did they know, that their infirmity was not punishment for their sin or for the sins of their parents, but so that God could get the glory in their healing. Jesus’ ministry was widespread because God got the glory in the healing He did for those with infirmities. Boy, were their judgments wrong.

Today, as in the examples above, many falsely judge a situation. A wrong idea of what we suspect happened or is happening can taint a relationship permanently with a person or an idea about a person. We certainly would not want anyone to falsely think the worst of us in apparent circumstances; so with that in mind, give others a second, third, fourth, etc. chance. Give them the benefit of doubt in a situation, and whatever you do, get more than one side of the story. Get the details from more than your one quick, uniformed glance; then you will be able to make wiser judgments.

Don’t Judge Too Hard
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Or pelt him with words or stones, Unless you are sure, yea, doubly sure, That you have not sins of your own.

For you know, perhaps, if the tempter’s voice Should whisper as soft to you As it did to him when he went astray ‘Twould cause you to falter, too.

Who’s on the Wrong Train?
Tages-Anzeiger

The conductor, checking the tickets on a train to Brussels, announced, “Everybody please get off at the next stop. You are on the wrong train.”

The passengers looked at each other in amazement. Finally, it turned out that it was the conductor himself who had boarded the wrong train.

“The conductor himself who had boarded the wrong train.”
— Japanese Proverb

Quieting the Orphan Baby
Author Unknown

Many years ago, a Santa Fe train was speeding through Oklahoma. In one of the coaches sat a young woman desperately trying to take care of a restless baby, whose crying was annoying some of the passengers.

Across the aisle sat a stout fellow, a picture of comfort and rich living. He glowered at the woman and shouted, “Can’t you keep that child quiet?” On taking a further look at the young woman, he noticed that her dress was one of mourning.

Then he heard the woman gently say, “I cannot help it. The child is not mine. I am doing my best.”

“Where is its mother?” bel lowed the portly passenger.

“in her coffin, sir,” answered the young lady, “in the baggage car up ahead.”

The steelly eyes of the fat fellow filled with tears. He got up, took the babe in his arms, kissed it, and then walked up and down the aisle with the child. He was trying his best to soothe the motherless, little one and make up for his harsh, false judgments.

“When you meet a man, you judge him by his clothes; when you leave, you judge him by his heart.”
— Russian Proverb