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# Words of Truth

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## The Cover Is Not The Whole Story

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If you grab a book at a library or a bookstore and look at the cover, do you consider yourself as having read the book? Would you say that you know the story, facts, etc. in that book just by looking at the cover. I hope you answered those questions with a "no". The fact is, all reasonable people understand that a book cannot be understood just by looking at the cover. Ignorant people of the world understand the common saying, "you cannot judge a book by it's cover."

If we can understand that books have more to them than just a cover, why is it so hard to understand that about nearly everything else? A Scripture that most of us know, teaches us not to judge according to appearance? Here is that Scripture: "*Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment*" (John 7:24). That Scripture is not hard to understand. You read it. Do you understand it?

Another Scripture says: "*He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him*" (Proverbs 18:13). Again, this particular passage doesn't require a whole lot of thought to understand. It is rather simple. You have to hear things out before you speak to a conclusion. Therefore, if someone is telling you something, listen to the whole story before you render a response. Again, the principle behind that truthful teaching is, you cannot look briefly at the surface of something and know all the details.

As Christians, every judgment we render can ultimately come back upon us on the Day of Judgment. Think hard about that. In a context dealing with hypocrisy, here is what the Scriptures say regarding this: "*Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again*" (Matthew 7:1-2). Now, think about all we have Scripturally uncovered in this study this far. You cannot look at how something appears and come to a conclusion. You have to get the whole story before you answer regarding it. You will be judged in the manner in which you have judged others. Now, do you really want to judge according to how something first sounds or appears? The fact is, not all things end up the way they first appear.

### **It Looks This Way, But Really Is This...**

A man decides to give up everything to be a follower of our Lord and obey His will. He is willing to teach, suffer persecution, etc. The most faithful amongst the Lord's people trust

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him. Whenever other disciples are doing something, he is there. He does not miss times of assembling. Sounds good, right? WRONG! I just described Judas Iscariot whom was a thief and ultimately betrayed Jesus (Matthew 10:1-5, Mark 3:12-14, Mark 14:17-25, Luke 22:1-6, Luke 22:47-71, etc.). He was so trusted by the faithful that they even put him in charge of taking care of the Lord's money (John 12:1-8). Think about it, on the surface, Judas was a very faithful man. Beyond the cover though, he was a conniving, murderous, thief. He even went so far as to hang himself rather than attempt to repent of his sins (Matthew 27:1-10). The cover page and the inside story were not the same with Judas. The disciples, without any fault of their own (I Timothy 5:24-25), did not see who Judas really was.

A brother in Christ contacts a brother in the congregation and informs him that he is ill and unable to assemble with the saints. This information is passed on to the congregation so that they do not wait for him to show before worshipping God (I Corinthians 11:33). Later that same evening, the ill brother in Christ is spotted at a grocery store by one of the members of the congregation. The brother approaches and says, "I thought you were sick and could not worship God today. Did you make a miraculous recovery?" The now accused brother simply replies that he feels better now than he did earlier. The accuser then charges that the earlier ill brother violated Hebrews 10:22-25 and that he will be bringing others to begin the process of Matthew 18:15-17. From there division begins in the congregation.

Regarding the illustration above, who is anyone to charge someone with having a false illness no matter how it appears? One might say, "I would never miss a service with the saints to God unless I was nearly dead and then I know I wouldn't be better that same day." Who are you to compare yourself in judgment toward another (II Corinthians 10:12). Things, that some may prefer not to share, like diarrhea or vomiting can quickly stop. Sometimes after a good puke you feel better. Now, apply all we have discussed.

### **The Thought Out Application**

If you judge someone based upon how something appears. If you answer a matter before the whole story is told. You are transgressing the Law of God (I John 3:4) and for that you will earn damnation (Romans 6:23). Additionally, you have created an impossible standard of judgment that the Lord will now turn and use upon you (Luke 6:36-38)! We are to be fruit inspectors (Matthew 7:15-20). That takes thought and time. You better be very, very careful about how you judge someone else.

### **Conclusion**

*"Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth [condemn; Strong's # 2919] his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another" (James 4:11-12)?*