

*Judge Ye Not*

*by Frederick Wickert*

Forgive me Father, for I have sinned!

It is written, "Judge ye not, that ye may also be judged." I have judged in violation of that law. I have learned how wrong I was in my judgment—or perhaps I should say misjudgment.

I have learned of my misjudgment in increments. I will go back a couple of years to explain what I am talking about, lest what I have said thus far be viewed as gibberish.

I never read newspapers. After a long career in law enforcement, both in the Air Force and in civilian life, I learned that what one reads in the newspaper is frequently a long way from the truth. Additionally, unless it is local in nature, whatever one reads in the newspapers in the way of actual news, is old news. It has already been on the radio and television for many hours, and sometimes days before it is seen in the newspaper. Therefore, I just don't bother with newspapers.

In watching the news on television, I always find myself watching the FOX news network. FOX news network has a reporter that I never cared for. Was it because she didn't do a good job? Not at all. It was that I had judged her, and I did so wrongly.

The woman always wore dark pants suits. She had her hair cut short. She presented herself, at least in my view, more manly than feminine. I judged her to be a lesbian. I had an instinctive disdain for her. It was based solely on her appearance. The clothes she wore, her hair style and the way in which she presented herself. Although she usually wore ear rings, she appeared not to wear much, if any make up.

I never considered myself to be a chauvinist. I don't even know that my attitude towards this woman could be considered to be a chauvinist attitude. I do know that I was wrong to have formed such opinions without considerably more evidence to go on. I was a cop for twenty five years. I had learned not to jump to conclusions. I knew better than the average person, to do that is folly. I am reminded of a police lieutenant teaching a class in the police academy. He taught us never to assume. He explained that when you assume, it makes an ass out of u and me. He was right.

A few weeks ago, I learned much to my dismay, that this woman reporter that I had unfairly branded as a lesbian was actually a married woman with children. I learned this when she returned to work after being absent for a while. The reason for her absence had been maternity leave.

I was astonished to learn this, and I mentioned my surprise to my wife. I explained to my wife how I had mistakenly branded the woman. I was surprised, yes. Was I remorseful or repentant? Oh no. Not me. I needed a greater lesson, and tonight, I got one.

Tonight as I was watching FOX news, they reported that one of their own is undergoing some life threatening surgery tomorrow. They went on to explain that this very same woman is going to risk her life tomorrow to try to save the life of her baby. The baby needs a liver replacement to live. Tomorrow, that very same woman reporter I had so callously branded, and had demeaned the character of, is going to give half of her own liver to her child in an attempt to save his life, and in doing so, is risking her own life.

I am the guy who cast aspersions on her character, but tonight I have learned that she has far more character than I. Once again, it has been shown to me how faulty my character really is. It has happened before, but as many students do, I failed to learn my lessons and I failed the test.

When I learned she was married and had children, I was not remorseful and I was not repentant. I certainly am now. I am ashamed of myself. Instead of disrespect for that woman, I now have the greatest of respect for her. You can be sure that my self respect has been greatly diminished in the process.

Father, I have sinned. I beg your forgiveness. Truly, had I followed the commandment, "Judge ye not that ye may also be judged," I would not have found myself in this sin.