

GIVING THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT

TEXT: (Proverbs 25:8, MSG)

⁸ Don't jump to conclusions—there may be a perfectly good explanation for what you just saw.

INTRODUCTION

1. "Because of something you have seen, do not quickly take someone to court. What will you do later when your neighbor proves you wrong?" (Proverbs 25:7-8, NCV).
2. "Just because you've seen something, don't be in a hurry to go to court. For what will you do in the end if your neighbor deals you a shameful defeat?" (Proverbs 25:7-8, NLT).
3. "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you" (Matthew 7:1, NIV).
4. "A motive in the human heart is like deep water, and a person who has understanding draws it out" (Proverbs 20:5, GW).
5. "After all, who knows everything about a person except that person's own spirit? (I Corinthians 2:11, GW).
6. "Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance" (I Corinthians 13:7, NLT).

I. THE PROBLEM WITH JUDGING

1. "Do not judge, or you too will be judged" (Proverbs 7:1, NIV).

A. Don't Jump to Conclusions

1. "Don't jump to conclusions—there may be a perfectly good explanation for what you just saw" (Proverbs 25:8, MSG).
2. "Go and marry a prostitute, so that some of her children will be conceived in prostitution" (Hosea 1:2, NLT).
3. "This will illustrate how Israel has acted like a prostitute by turning against the LORD and worshiping other gods" (Hosea 1:2, NLT).
4. "Don't jump to conclusions—there may be a perfectly good explanation for what you just saw" (Proverbs 25:8, MSG).

B. God's Standard for Judgment

1. "Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged" (Matthew 7:1-2, NLT).
2. "Don't pick on people, jump on their failures, criticize their faults—unless, of course, you want the same treatment. That critical spirit has a way of boomeranging" (Matthew 7:1-2, MSG).
3. "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye" (Matthew 5:3-5, NIV).

4. “Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces” (Matthew 5:6, NIV).
5. “Don’t be flip with the sacred. Banter and silliness give no honor to God. Don’t reduce holy mysteries to slogans” (Matthew 5:6, MSG).

C. We Are Not Competent to Prejudge

1. “Don’t shoot off your mouth, or speak before you think. Don’t be too quick to tell God what you think he wants to hear. God’s in charge, not you—the less you speak, the better” (Ecclesiastes 5:2, MSG).

II. CUTTING PEOPLE SLACK

1. “Love patiently accepts all things” (I Corinthians 13:7, NCV).

A. Love Accepts All Things

1. “Do to others as you would have them do to you” (Luke 6:31, NIV).
2. “A person’s wisdom yields patience; it is to one’s glory to overlook an offense” (Proverbs 19:11, NIV).
3. “Sensible people control their temper; they earn respect by overlooking wrongs” (Proverbs 19:11, NLT).
4. “The wise are patient; they will be honored if they ignore insults” (Proverbs 19:11, NCV).
5. “Smart people know how to hold their tongue; their grandeur is to forgive and forget” (Proverbs 19:11, MSG).

B. Always Looks for the Best

1. “Always looks for the best” (I Corinthians 13:7, MSG).

CONCLUSION

1. “*Seek* grace and mercy from God and others every day. *Accept* grace and mercy from God and others every day. *Show* grace and mercy to others every day.”
2. “Be kind to each other, sympathetic, forgiving each other as God has forgiven you through Christ” (Ephesians 4:32, GW).
3. “Put up with each other, and forgive each other if anyone has a complaint. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. Above all, be loving. This ties everything together perfectly” (Colossians 3:13-14, GW).