

Do you wear Granny's Glasses when you are speaking about another person? Do the words you use, the facial expressions seen, the posture, etc., reflect the love of God? (1 Corinthians 13:4-7; Galatians 6:1; James 5:9)

"Granny's Glasses" Challenge Us!

It is a challenge to MATURITY (Luke 6:36,37). Do we really understand what the Lord is commanding? Have we permitted Satan to manipulate our feelings so we rationalize harsh, unloving, and insensitive attitudes toward someone who has hurt us, but has repented of that hurt?

It is a challenge to EMULATE GOD (1 Samuel 16:7). Are we arrogant enough to say we can "see" better than God sees? God's judgments are based upon the heart and this fact encourages us to be cautious in stating conclusions about others.

It is a challenge TO ACT DIFFERENTLY THAN THE WORLD (John 7:24).

It is a challenge that MUST BE ACCEPTED (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). If the Church is to grow, it must portray the mercy of God.

Are YOU Seeing Through Granny's Glasses?

Be challenged! Apply these points in an honest and personal way. Are you speaking from a heart that reflects God's mercy? (James 2:12-13).

God knows that it is hard for man to show mercy. However, He expects us to do it! The practical Christianity commanded by James, challenges us to wear "Granny's Glasses" with three points...

- ◆ Let Scripture, not society, be your standard (12a).
- ◆ Let love be your Law (12b).
- ◆ Let mercy be your message (13).

Try to imagine how different this world would be if all wore a pair of "Granny's Glasses." I would look for the good in you and you would look for the good in me. We would be merciful and patient in those areas where failure is found and, we would help each other grow in spiritual maturity.

A very penetrating and discomfiting query...When you think of the one person that has wounded you the deepest, do you look at them with Granny's Glasses?

Is it true that, "at times, we are more like the buzzard that dwells upon the rotten and ugly and unlike the hummingbird that looks for the sweet and beautiful"? *"I have purposed that my mouth will not transgress"* (Psalm 17:3).



Lesson Eight: "Granny's Glasses" **Dalraida Church of Christ**

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"So speak, and so act, as those who are to be judged by the law of freedom. For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy" (James 2:12, 13).

A little boy said to his playmate, "When I get older, I want to wear glasses just like Granny's because she can see so much more than most people. She can see good in a person when everyone else sees bad. She can see what a fellow meant to do even if he did not do it. I asked her one day how she could see so good, and she said it was the way she learned to look at things when she got older. When I get older, I want a pair of glasses just like Granny so I can see good too!"

At times we are more *like the buzzard* that likes to dwell upon what is rotten and ugly than *like the hummingbird* that looks for what is sweet and beautiful.

The Epistle of James (2:12-13) presents the "law of mercy." Each association presents the Christian with a choice of behavior/speech options. It is mandatory that the Christian chooses to live and speak with the accent of Christ.

As each choose the option of behavior and speech, we will either bring glory to God or dishonor to His Name (Matthew 12:36-37).

A critical characteristic of speaking from the heart—MERCY

James 2—one can choose "mercy" or choose "no mercy." James identifies one "that hath showed no mercy," is a choice to display cruel and unmerciful words (Matthew 5:7; Exodus 34:6-7). Demonstrating mercy is the fervent

desire of God for man to demonstrate (Micah 6:6-8).

The practice of mercy is often an abysmal failure. We are quick to be negative, critical and condemning toward those we do not like. These choose foolishly and are caught in sin. But they realize their sin, repent and are restored to God. The unmerciful fails to restore the penitent and never permit them to climb out of the hole in which we have placed them.

Bunyan's "Slough of Despond (Despair)" depicts the Christian Pilgrim being careless and falling into sin's pit. "Here they wallowed for a time, being grievously bedaubed with the dirt; and Christian, because of the burden that was on his back (sack full of sins), began to sink in the mire...could not get out, because of the burden that was upon his back. But...a man came to him whose name was "Help." Then Help said, "Give me thy hand." So, he gave him his hand, and he drew him out; and set him upon some ground.

Our reluctance to accept a penitent's repentance is unmerciful. Too many are treated like Joseph whose brothers showed no mercy (Genesis 37:22-24). Too few are like the merciful Ethiopian Ebed-Melech (Jeremiah 38:7-12).

Will you permanently assign one to the "hole they have dug for themselves" or will you mercifully pull them out following their godly sorrow and repentance! "*Behold, he is in your hands*" (Jeremiah 38:5-6).

Tragically man chooses to "dig his own pit" (Psalm 7:15). BUT he can choose to repent if "Help" appears! He isn't forever damned to his mistakes (Psalm 40:2).

Will you choose "mercy" to accent your speaking from the heart? God's mercy means "the past is no longer present" to the obedient! (Colossians 3:10-14)

"Granny's Glasses" Rejected!

Eli and Hannah (1 Samuel 1:14-17). Eli made a quick and foolish judgment. It was a snap judgment made with improper evaluation. Eli's tendency reflects an all-too-common failing in our communication process. When certain people's names are mentioned, we instantly become jaded. When a person has made mistakes then felt godly sorrow and repented, we must never allow their past mistakes, that are forgiven and forgotten by God, to govern our attitudes toward them.

How do you "see" one who has committed a sin but felt godly sorrow, repented, confessed and has been forgiven by God? (Job 4:3-4).

Job and his three friends. Three friends made their way to comfort him yet all failed to show mercy. They sought to explain WHY...

- ◆ Bildad (Job 8) accused Job of impurity/sin.
- ◆ Eliphaz (Job 15:1-4) accused Job of irreverence toward God.
- ◆ Zophar (Job 11:1, 2) accused Job of arrogance.

They professed to be concerned and to show compassion, but their attitude was devilish and their communication increased Job's sorrow.

Today some are shunned by others because of arrogantly judging! Satan has control and they can only "see" bad. They fail to recognize the critical aspect of "forgiving and forgetting" (Philippians 3:13). "Forgetting" translates the concept "to neglect; to overlook; to lose out of mind; have no consequence; no longer present." This does not mean the action is erased from memory. It does mean what he did "then" has no bearing on what he is "now"! "Forgetting" is a choice to let go of the "Trophy Hurts" of the past! (1 Timothy 1:12-14).

Christian's actions toward fellow saints (Romans 14:4). Brethren refusing to show mercy harbor a harsh attitude and an unforgiving heart. Mercy is not in their vocabulary. Sadly, their unmerciful behavior to others results in God's mercy being denied to them at the Judgment!

Scribes and Pharisees toward Christ (Luke 15:1,2; 7:34). God's mercy can be defeated by hatred! Many Christians cannot speak good words about another because they harbor unforgiveness. They show a devilish judgmental attitude for EVERY action. If friends and family are involved there is no judgmental attitude demonstrated. BUT if it is someone else, even if they express godly sorrow and repentance, then this hatred is evident. And so, degrees of mercy are dealt depending on the relationship. And, the saddest fact, the Christian does not see his wrong in this behavior! All he sees are the "Trophy Hurts"!

In the above instances similar actions and attitudes are present in our day.

- ◆ We know that judging by personal prejudice is wrong.
- ◆ We know that it is impossible to know another's motives.
- ◆ BUT! We seldom show the attitude of mercy to those in need (Job 4:3-4). We thus reject "Granny's Glasses" in practical living! It is a tragic conclusion but true.

"Granny's Glasses" Prescribed!

Be consistent. Be acutely aware of hypocrisy! (Matthew 7:1-5; Romans 2:1)

Be alert that we often allow the outward to control our ideas! (John 8:7; 1 Samuel 16:7)

Train yourself to find good (1 Corinthians 16:14; James 4:11-12; Luke 6:35; Psalm 7:8). If our Lord could find good in Zacchaeus (Luke 19), in a penitent Publican (Luke 18), and in a prostitute (Mark 14), surely, we can find good in anyone around us!

Always be very cautious (James 2:12; 4:11)