

“Speaking from the Heart”

Lesson 8: Granny’s Glasses

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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’s so I can see good too!”

☞ How different our world would be if we all wore a pair of “Granny’s glasses”!

- If I would look for the good in you, and you would look for the good in me, our lives would be so much more pleasant.
- ☞ At times we are like the buzzard that likes to dwell upon what is rotten and ugly when we should be like the hummingbird that looks for what is sweet and beautiful. We easily remember the “trophy hurts”!
- The basic thought summarized by “Granny’s glasses” is that of showing mercy toward one another.

The Epistle of James has been recognized as the most “practical” book of the Bible. James 2:12-13 presents the “law of mercy.” James says the mistreatment of others is a direct failure to show mercy. Each personal 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. People will instantly know who you are by the way you choose options in life!

Two young boys passed a field where an old woman was plowing. She had taken her shoes off and placed them at the edge of the field. The long day was almost finished and she was on her last row. One of the mischievous boys suggested they take her shoes and hide them. The other offered another option. “Let’s put some money in them and see what she does.” So, they placed the money in one of the shoes and hid out of sight. The old lady finished the row and came to get her shoes. When she saw the money, she dropped to her knees and prayed, “Thank you God! You have supplied the money for the medicine that my husband needed but we had no way to get it!”

As each choose the option of behavior and speech, we will either bring glory to God or dishonor to His Name; we will either speak words of truth and kindness or use useless words that “do not work” to honor God and for which we will have to account on the Judgment Day (Matthew 12:36-37).

A critical characteristic of speaking from the heart—MERCY

What is “mercy”? James 2 presents a contrast of choices—☞ one can choose “mercy” or choose “no mercy.” The word translated as “mercy” communicates the choice to be ready to help those in trouble; to show kindness or goodwill toward the miserable and afflicted, and the emotion is joined with a desire to relieve them. James identifies the contrasting choice as one “that hath showed no mercy.” This is the choice that displays cruel and unmerciful to his neighbor. Remember the woman in John 8.

- Extending mercy is the heart of Christ’s teaching (Matthew 5:7, “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy”) and is an attribute of God (Exodus 34:6-7, “The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in faithfulness and truth; who keeps faithfulness for thousands, who forgives wrongdoing, violation of His Law, and sin”). God’s mercy is the choice of the Almighty when one obeys from the heart the commands of God and are “washed” from their sins.
- Demonstrating mercy is the ☞ fervent desire of God for man to demonstrate.

“With what shall I come to the Lord and bow myself before the God on high? Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings ... Does the Lord take pleasure in thousands of rams, in ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall

I give Him my firstborn for my wrongdoings, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has told you...what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:6-8).

The practice of mercy is often an abysmal 📌 failure. We know it is impossible to judge another's motives or thoughts, but we continue doing so. We are very quick to be negative, critical and condemning toward those we do not like.

The Pit of Despair

Do you remember Bunyan's "Slough of Despond (Despair)." (T)hey drew near to a very miry slough that was in the midst of the plain; and they being heedless, did both fall suddenly into the bog. The name of the slough was "Despond." 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... Christian was left to tumble in the Slough of Despond alone...but could not get out, because of the burden that was upon his back. But...a man came to him whose name was "Help," and asked him what he did there? "Sir," said Christian, "I was bidden to go this way by a man called 'Evangelist,' who directed me also to yonder gate, that I might escape the wrath to come; and as I was going thither, I fell in here." "But why did you not look for the steps?" "Fear followed me so hard, that I fled the next way and fell in." Then said he, "Give me thy hand." So, he gave him his hand, and he drew him out; and set him upon some ground, and bade him go on his way.

Bunyan's narrative emphasized that pilgrims need to avoid the pit and being caught in the Slough of Despond. His narrative stresses two things. First, that God has provided ample promises in His Word so that pilgrims need not linger in such a state of despair when they fall. Second, that God has appointed people called "Help" to assist pilgrims caught in the Slough of Despond.

At times our 📌 personal choices lead us to put those we wish to deny mercy into a "hole." We assign them to that hole/pit in our thoughts and actions. After all, these personalities choose foolishly and are caught in THEIR sin and are "sinking deep in sin." But then they realize their sin, repent and are restored to God (See hymn "Love lifted me"). Our reluctance to accept their repentance is flagrantly unmerciful. We justify our lack of mercy toward the penitent by saying, "They dug the hole, let them stay in it!" Such is self-righteous arrogance and a hard-heart! Such focus only on the PAST!

It was this smug, self-righteousness that angered Christ. "After looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart" (Mark 3:5).

The unmerciful refuses to restore the penitent and does nothing to help them climb out the hole into which bad choices placed them and in which we think they justly deserve staying deep in the pit where we have placed them. This is merciless!

Too many are treated like Joseph whose brothers showed no mercy. Too few are like the merciful Ethiopian Ebed-Melech!

"Then Reuben said to them, 'Shed no blood. Throw him into this pit that is in the wilderness, but do not lay a hand on him'...So it came about, when Joseph reached his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic...took him and threw him into the pit. Now the pit was empty, without any water in it" (Genesis 37:22-24).

"But (note the contrast which highlights mercy) Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, a eunuch, while he was in the king's palace, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the cistern. Now the king was sitting at the Gate of Benjamin; and Ebed-melech went out from the king's palace and spoke to the king, saying, 'My lord the king, these men have acted wickedly in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet whom they have thrown into the cistern; and he will die right where he is because of the famine, for there is no more bread in the city.' Then the king commanded Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, saying, 'Take thirty men from here under your authority and bring Jeremiah the prophet up from the cistern before he dies.' So Ebed-melech took the men under his authority and went into the king's palace to a place beneath the storeroom, and took from there worn-out clothes and worn-out rags, and let them down by ropes into the cistern to Jeremiah. Then Ebed-melech the Ethiopian said to Jeremiah, 'Now put these worn-out clothes and rags

under your armpits under the ropes”... So they pulled Jeremiah out with the ropes and lifted him out of the cistern.” (Jeremiah 38:7-12).

Note: Each person makes a choice. Will you assign someone to occupy permanently the “hole they have dug for themselves” or will you mercifully pull them out following their godly sorrow and repentance! “King Zedekiah said, ‘*Behold, he is in your hands*’... So, they took Jeremiah and threw him into the cistern ... and Jeremiah sank into the mud” (Jeremiah 38:5-6).

Tragically man chooses to “dig his own pit.” “He has dug a pit and hollowed it out, and has fallen into the hole which he made” (Psalm 7:15). *BUT he can choose to repent!* He is not forever damned to his mistakes.

Rescuing one from the “pit” is God-like mercy! “He brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the mud; and He set my feet on a rock, making my footsteps firm” (Psalm 40:2).

Will you choose “mercy” to accent your speaking from the heart? Not a prejudicial, proportioned mercy based on your personal feelings and relations, but the mercy as God shows based upon another’s desire to do what God says. 🕊️ God’s mercy means “the past is no longer present” to the obedient!

“Brothers and sisters, even if a person is caught in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual are to restore such a person in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you are not tempted as well. Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks that he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But each one must examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting, but to himself alone, and not to another. For each one will bear his own load” (Galatians 6:1-5).

Those who have godly sorrow and repentance, “have put on the new self, which is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—it is a renewal with no distinctions or degrees... So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other... just as the Lord forgave you, so must you do also. In addition to all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.” (Colossians 3:10-14)

Instead of showing the merciful forgiveness required by God, we think 🕊️ our conclusions are infallibly accurate. Such prejudgment leads us to assume something about another regardless of the actual truth! We then measure out mercy and forgiveness in degrees that we think are deserved.

Sadly, 🕊️ too many are more like the vulture than the hummingbird!

But those who wear “Granny’s Glasses” are different! Look closer at these spectacles that help us see so well and facilitate our godly vocabulary as we are speaking from the heart.

“Granny’s Glasses” Rejected!

There are numerous instances in Scripture where people forgot to put on the glasses of mercy. Their failure is common knowledge to all Bible students.

🕊️ *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. We fall into the same trap. When certain people’s names are mentioned, we instantly become jaded. Therefore, we should not be too critical of Eli. We must remember the tragedy of his snap judgment. Snap judgments are often founded on little evidence and often very wrong. Quick judgments; jumping to the wrong conclusions must be avoided. 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. They probably are still feeling godly sorrow and an unloving and unforgiving attitude only burdens them more!


Uncomfortable query—How do you “see” one who has committed a sin but felt godly sorrow, repented, confessed and has been forgiven by God? The Christian who speaks from the heart will follow Job’s godly example.


🕊️ “Behold, you have taught many, and you have strengthened weak hands. Your words have helped the stumbling to stand, and you have strengthened feeble knees.” (Job 4:3-4).





🕊️ *Job and his three friends*

Job's predicament is well-known. Devastated through a series of quick tragedies, he was rendered a broken pauper in the garbage dump! Three friends made their way to comfort him yet all failed to show mercy. They first sat in silence sharing the pain of Job. But then they began to speak and increased Job's suffering.

- 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.

These three  rejected Granny's Glasses of mercy because they arrogantly thought they knew everything about Job! Such insight into their character is sad. They professed to be concerned and to show compassion, but their attitude was devilish and their communication only increased Job's sorrow.


This arrogance is present in our day—Some are  shunned by others who think they know facts when they are just arrogantly judging! Satan has control of their hearts and they can only "see" bad. They fail to recognize the critical aspect of "forgiving and forgetting."

- Philippians 3:13 gives the directive, "one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead."
-  Many have a problem with "forgetting." They cannot "let go" of the sin because they cannot erase it from their mind. They fail to understand the forgiveness process.
-  "Forgetting" is from the Greek word *ἐπιλανθάνομαι* (*epilanthanomai*). And it translates the concept of "to neglect; to overlook; to lose out of mind; have no consequence; no longer present."
- The  forgiveness of sins results in one being positioned so he is no longer in that sinful condition. The consequences of that sin do not impact him in the sight of God. It does not mean the action is erased from memory. What he did "then" has no bearing on what he is "now"! "Forgetting" is a choice made to admit the sinner is not what he once was—it is "letting go" of the Trophy Hurts of the past!
-  The challenge to Christians, when you are personally confronted with a sinner who has deeply wounded you but has repented and is forgiven, do you look through Granny's Glasses?
- This is illustrated by Paul's forgiveness. "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service, even though I was previously a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus." (1 Timothy 1:12-14).



Christians actions toward fellow saints (Romans 14:4)

Brethren who refuse to show mercy are discussed. Why? Because they harbor a harsh attitude and an unforgiving heart. Mercy is not in their vocabulary. Sadly, their behavior will result in their denial of God's mercy at the Judgment!

Scribes and Pharisees toward Christ (Luke 15:1,2; 7:34)

God's mercy can be defeated by hatred! A sad tragedy is too frequent. Many Christians  cannot speak good words about another because they harbor unforgiveness. This causes them to make a devilish judgmental attitude on EVERY action that is done. If one refuses to repent with godly sorrow this is understandable. But often, 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!

Although the temptation to pre-judge those who have previously hurt us is a knotty problem in our lives, we must be able to show mercy to others. God expects us to be merciful. God has directed these commands to us. While these are simply stated, they require great discipline and self-control. They are not “impossible.” They are expected. Their compliance is mandatory and will be reviewed as we stand before God’s Judgment Bar!

📖 *Be consistent. Be acutely aware of hypocrisy!*

- Matthew 7:1-5, “Do not judge, so that you will not be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ and look, the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye!”
- Romans 2:1, “you have no excuse, you foolish person, each one of you who passes judgment; for in that matter in which you judge someone else, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.”

It is easy to allow our mercy to be dealt out in degrees by personal bias. Satan tempts us to offer various levels of “judgment” based upon our personal feelings. Strong personal feelings that remember and collect “Trophy Hurts” are treacherous to merciful attitudes. Consistency is the “crucible” of Christianity!

📖 *Be alert that we often allow the outward to control our ideas*

- John 8:7, “He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.”
- 1 Samuel 16:7, “Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God does not see as man sees, since man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

We must remind ourselves that every life struggles with unique pressures and stresses and situations. These are not struggles faced by others. No one has grown up in the environment you have. No one has been taught the facts you have been taught. To judge unmercifully is wrong! We do not know their struggles. I recall talking to one who grew up in the world. After studying the Scriptures it was said, “But I never knew this! I was never told this!”

📖 *Train yourself to find good*

- 1 Corinthians 16:14, “All that you do must be done in love.”
- James 4:11-12, “Do not speak against one another, brothers and sisters. The one who speaks against a brother or sister, or judges his brother or sister, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it... who are you, judging your neighbor?”
- Luke 6:35, “love your enemies and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High.”
- Psalm 7:8, “The Lord judges the peoples; Vindicate me, Lord, according to my righteousness and my integrity that is in me.”

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, “So speak, and so act, as those who are to be judged by the law of freedom.”

- James 4:11, "Do not speak against one another, brothers and sisters. The one who speaks against a brother or sister, or judges his brother or sister, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it."

🕊️ 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 (Note the trait that it "endures.")—"Love is patient, love is kind, it is not jealous; love does not brag, it is not arrogant. It does not act disgracefully, it does not seek its own benefit; it is not provoked, does not keep an account of a wrong suffered, it does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; it keeps every confidence, it believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."
- Galatians 6:1, "Brothers and sisters, even if a person is caught in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual are to restore such a person in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you are not tempted as well."
- James 5:9, "Do not complain, brothers and sisters, against one another, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door."

"Granny's Glasses" Challenge Us!

🕊️ *It is a challenge to MATURITY*

Luke 6:36,37, "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned."

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?

There is danger in presuming to know the heart of one who has wounded us and question their position with God when their "fruits" reveal true repentance. Do we realize that the anger of God awaits anyone who shows such arrogance!

Maturity has seen the foolishness of snap judgments and the tragedy of withholding mercy!

🕊️ *It is a challenge to EMULATE GOD*

1 Samuel 16:7, "God does not see as man sees, since man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

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, "Do not judge by the outward appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

🕊️ *It is a challenge that MUST BE ACCEPTED*

If the Church is to grow, it must portray the mercy of God. The Gospel presumes "good" in ALL! Believing that everyone has some element of "good" within them, we must reach out to lost souls and find that good regardless of how "bad" they appear!

1 Corinthians 6:9-11, "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor those habitually drunk, nor verbal abusers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God."

Are YOU Seeing Through Granny's Glasses?

Be personally challenged by Granny's Glasses! Apply these points in a very honest and personal way. Are you speaking from a heart that reflects God's compassion?

"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; mercy triumphs over judgment" (James 2:12-13).

God knows that it is hard for man to show mercy. However, He expects us to do it! The Biblical 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 through mutual encouragement, we would help each other grow in spiritual maturity.

A very penetrating and discomfoting 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"?

Be sure you are looking through "Granny's Glasses" and can say,

🕊️ **"I have purposed that my mouth will not transgress" (Psalm 17:3).**