

Sunday, July 30, 2023

Scripture Reading: Romans 8:26-39

When you judge others, you do not define them, you define yourself.
—Earl Nightingale

Three people. Each is holding a small block of wood.

The first person releases the block, and it falls to the ground.

The second person releases the block, and it moves upwards!

The third person releases the block, and it remains in the same spot — doesn't go anywhere.

Someone is reporting this to you over the telephone. As you listen, you are puzzled. In the first case, the behavior of the wood block is expected. In the second, case the movement of the object is bizarre. In the third case, the result is simply unbelievable. This is because you assume that *all three cases are taking place in the same universe.*

It so happens that the first person is standing on the surface of the Earth. When she releases the block of wood, naturally it falls to the ground.

The second person, however, is standing underwater, so of course the wood floats upward. This is perfectly normal and logical in that situation.

The third person is in an orbiting spacecraft with zero gravity, so the piece of wood stays just where it has been released. This is also normal and logical in that universe.

Three different people with three different experiences can know very different things about something as simple as a piece of wood and what happens to it when it is released. The apostle Paul had strong words for some Corinthian Christians who thought they knew everything, and scoffed at those who seemed to be weak in knowledge.

In the Bible, Paul's words caution us not to grow dependent on our knowledge when trying to deal with conflicts in the church, family or among our friends. We may not have all of the context. We may not have all of the details or relevant information. We probably aren't in a position to make any judgments, or to form any conclusions, and so therefore it may be wise to withhold both.

The Bible says, "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up" (1 Corinthians 8:1).

—Timothy Merrill. Illustration from Edward de Bono, *I Am Right – You Are Wrong: From Rock Logic to Water Logic*. New York: Viking, 1991. 60- 61.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, help me to suspend judgment and censure when not in possession of the facts, and even when I think I am. Train me to respond to what is foreign, strange and different with love — even when I don't understand what is going on. Amen.

Blessings, Lisa & Pastor Ben White

Daily Bible Readings

- Sunday:** James 1-2
- Monday:** Jeremiah 9-12
- Tuesday:** Jeremiah 13-16
- Wednesday:** Jeremiah 17-20
- Thursday:** Jeremiah 21-23
- Friday:** Jeremiah 24-26
- Saturday:** Psalms 85-87

| August 2023 | | | | | | |
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| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | |

Verse to Remember

This week's Verse to Remember is presented as a cryptogram. See if you can decode the message before looking up the verse in the Bible.

Clues: Y=T, D=I

Y K T P Y D X Y J Z V Q K R F D Y J
O V V C Q T K J Z O K Y , O X R R Q
X Q Y K Z V C Q X C Q T K Q F X
D X P D L J Y . — Proverbs 3:5 (NRSV)

WORD LADDER

DIRECTIONS: At each step down, subtract one letter to form a new word. Each step has a clue.

SWEAT

- ___ ___ ___ ___ chair
- ___ ___ ___ consume
- ___ ___ location
- ___ indefinite article

SPINET

- ___ ___ ___ ___ backbone
- ___ ___ ___ twirl
- ___ ___ ___ brooch
- ___ ___ not out
- ___ first person pronoun

