

(1.14) Avoid Rash Judgment

Keep your eye on your own self and avoid judging what others are doing. Judging others is wasted effort, leads us astray and can even cause us to sin, but close examination of ourselves is profitable work.

How can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove that splinter from your eye,' while the wooden beam is in your eye? You hypocrite, remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter from your brother's eye.¹*

We frequently judge a thing according to our biases and this often distorts our thinking. If we always lived according to the will of our Heavenly Father it would not bother us when our own views are not accepted and even contradicted. Our judgments are swayed by our internal desires or influenced by outward attractions, and either or both lead us in directions we may not even be aware of. We are at peace with ourselves if all seems to be going according to our wishes; but let things get out of our control and we can become upset and saddened.

Differences of opinions can cause dissensions between friends and neighbors, and between the religious and devout. Ingrained ways are hard to let go of and if one lacks the understanding and determination required to change for the better our ability to make appropriate adjustments is impeded.

Our soul, according to the old philosophers, is inflamed with two contrary affections: the one impels us upward, toward the sovereign beauty; the other drags us downward to corporal things.² If we rely more on our own reasoning power and our own strength than on the transforming power of Jesus Christ then we fail to be enlightened with his wisdom. God's folly is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.³

Our Heavenly Father calls us to obedience to his will which transcends all worldly wisdom and encompasses us with Love that is uplifting.



This article is based on Book 1, Chapter 14 of Thomas of Kempis' writing, "Imitation of Christ." It is not a translation, and there are many of those, but a personal (layperson's) reflection on his writing; if any of it helps give credit to Thomas of Kempis; if any of it fails the responsibility is mine. (rfm)

¹ Matt 7:4-5

² Jean Baptiste Saint-Jure, *The Spiritual Man: On the Spiritual Life Reduced to its first Principles*, 17th Century

³ 1Corinthians 1:25