

# Benefit of the Doubt

By: Gary Henry

“For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you” (**Matthew 7:2**).

**IT WOULD BE A BETTER WORLD IF EACH OF US WOULD BE AS PATIENT WITH OTHER PEOPLE AS WE ARE WITH OURSELVES.** When it comes to mistakes that we have made, we tend to be very “understanding,” but we aren’t always so lenient toward the mistakes made by those around us. But Jesus Christ calls upon us to grow in this area of our thinking, and there are several ways we can do this:

**WHEN OTHERS HAVE ERRED, WE CAN PLACE THE BEST POSSIBLE INTERPRETATION ON THE EVIDENCE.** Very few things happen in this world that aren’t capable of more than one explanation. Rather than jump to the worst possible interpretation, we need to do for others what we always hope they’ll do for us: believe the best until the facts force a more negative conclusion, which is then accepted reluctantly.

**WE CAN GIVE OTHERS TIME TO IMPROVE.** Every single one of us is a work in progress. At present, we continue to make mistakes that we hope we’ll not make quite so often in the future. Consequently, we hope that others will extend grace to us and allow us the time we need to make the adjustments we’re trying to make. Wouldn’t it be wise to give them the same consideration?

**WE CAN SEE OTHERS MORE FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF THEIR POTENTIAL AND LESS FROM THAT OF THEIR PRESENT PERFORMANCE.** When Jesus spoke to the adulterous woman who had been brought to Him, He did not condone her sin. In fact, He commanded her to repent: “Go and sin no more” (**John 8:11**). In saying that, however, He showed more compassion than her accusers had shown. In His view, she was more than a person who had sinned — she was a person with potential, one who could **OVERCOME** the bad choices she had made!

*“For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.”*

Matthew 7:2

It ought to be sobering for us to remember that a day of accounting awaits us all, a day when we’ll be judged by God. At that time, we’ll want God to show every possible leniency to us. But Jesus warned, “With what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.” And James said, “Judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy” (**James 2:13**). So we need to ask: what kind of accounting by God are we setting ourselves up for?

If you put up with yourself, why not put up with everyone else?