

American Decency Association

PO Box 202, Fremont MI 49412 231-924-4050 www.americandecency.org
Encouraging Christians to guard their heart May 2025

Be Careful When Pointing fingers

by Steve Huston



“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” Galatians 5:22-23

I know a man who professes that he is a Christian, but who is a very angry man. His temper seems to always be just below the boiling point and it takes very little to move him to impatience, road rage, unkind words, and very harsh tones. His anger, pride, and lack of self-control lead to constant double-standards, unreasonable demands, and self-promotion. He speaks badly of others in an attempt to make himself look better or to shift responsibility away from himself.

If one dares to do their Christian duty, as given

by the Apostle Paul, to reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine – even when done gently and lovingly – they have “poked the bear” and receive either a flat denial and/or find themselves to be the recipient of a personal attack, thereby hoping to take the focus off from himself.

At the same time, he also has many good qualities that ingratiate himself to others. Regardless, it’s vital to recognize that such carnality of the heart destroys. On the short list, it ruins relationships, fractures friendships, harms homes, and often makes one’s witness worthless, for people are always watching. Recently, my teenaged daughter asked, “Is _____ a Christian?”

A few weeks ago, I read a story that made me think about my friend and made me wish he could learn the lesson found therein. The story is about a man who was having severe conflicts with his neighbor. His heart was

filled with feelings of hatred, bitterness, wrath, jealousy, contentions, emulations, strife, envying, and even murder. This man blamed his neighbor for the feelings within himself. And because he thought these feelings were his neighbor’s fault, he decided that the remedy would be to shun his neighbor and live as a hermit. So, he did.

One day, the man filled his glass water jug at the stream. He set it down, but the jug tipped over and poured out its contents. This made him so angry that he picked up that glass jug and, with all his might, smashed it against a rock.

Suddenly, he was struck with the shocking realization that the reason for his anger lay entirely within himself. It was not his neighbor’s fault at all. Even living as a hermit, there was that explosive anger inside him, just waiting to escape.

How often do we blame our emotional outbursts

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How often do we blame our emotional outbursts



on others or circumstances or on being tired, hungry, or sick? Those things may play a role in such manifestations and sometimes understandably so, but isn't the real issue a heart problem?

As I read that little illustration and thought how applicable it would be for my friend, the Holy Spirit prodded my heart as if to say, "Be careful when you point a finger at someone, there are always three fingers pointing back at yourself." Or, as Jesus said, *"And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?"* (Matt. 7:3)

That's not to say that we aren't to examine the actions of others, compare them to Scripture, and even deal with them Biblically and lovingly (with truth and grace) – we are; it's our duty. **But first**, we are to use those actions as a call to prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to examine

our own hearts to see "if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." (Ps. 139:24)

From there, we are to pray for that brother or sister in Christ and ask the Lord to create an opportunity in which we can, with God's grace and love, speak with them, as we would desire for others to come alongside us with gentleness and truth.

If we had a cut on our foot, our body would come alongside with knowledge. We would gently clean out the wound, apply salve and a Band-Aid, and check on it from time to time to see how the healing process is progressing.

The church is the Body of Christ; how much more ought we to be concerned about those parts which are hurt or not functioning as prescribed by our Lord. It's not just for the good of the part; it's vital for the whole. Left untended a cut can become infected, eventually affecting the whole.

Although there may be times that our humanness

jumps to the foreground, due to fatigue, sickness, and such, the believer's life is to be characterized by the nine virtues listed in our key verse. It's Christ that should shine through our circumstances, not our carnal humanity. The fruit of the Spirit is to be so abundant in our life that when the world presses upon us, sweet juice and the oil of gladness is what spills out.

In other words, our heart needs to be so full of the Holy Spirit that there's no room for the works of the flesh and its fruit which are listed in that same chapter of Galatians, just prior to our key verse. Yet, if those carnal or fleshly traits fill one's life, when the press comes, bitter and distasteful juice is what spills out, leaving a bad taste for others to swallow and deal with.

O Lord, when I am in the press of life, may succulent, sweet juice pour forth. May others be encouraged and sweetened by my life because of Your Spirit filling me with His fruit and leading me to obedience. In Jesus' name, Amen.



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