

GRACE BIBLE CHURCH LORTON

Hold Loosely: Accusations, Suspensions, and Judgements (part 1)

Various Scriptures
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Sin – our own sin and the offense caused by other's people's sin – remains a part of everyday life, even for believers in the gospel of Jesus Christ. So, how we respond to the sin of others is a crucial part of our relationships, and how we love our neighbor. Today and next Sunday we'll look at strategies to help us loosen our hold on accusations, suspicions, and judgements.

Ten ways that we can hold accusations, suspicions, and judgments loosely. Not every one of these will apply in every situation but, for the most part, these are ways that we can glorify God, love our neighbor, and deescalate potential conflicts.

1. Ask God for help to search out my own heart and motives (Matthew 7:1-5; Psalm 139:23-24)
2. Ask if it's possible for love to cover the real or perceived offense (1 Peter 4:7-8)
3. Ask others for wise counsel (Proverbs 11:14; 15:22; Matthew 18:16; Philippians 4:1-2; Galatians 6:1)

4. Ask hard questions of yourself (Jeremiah 17:9)

5. Do not infer other people's motives (1 Corinthians 4:3-5; 1 Samuel 16:7).

Questions to Consider

1. Recall an instance when you were wrongly or falsely accused of something, or someone judged you without even having a conversation about the thing they judged you for. How did you feel? How did you respond? Now, recall an instance when *you* jumped to an accusation or judgment without adequate knowledge. What could you have done differently?
2. What are some Bible verses that direct believers to make judgements? So, what was lacking from the judgements that Jesus condemned in Matthew 7:1? What are some common "logs" that blur your vision when you are jumping to accusations of others?
3. What does the Bible mean when it says "...love covers a multitude of sins"? Can you think of an example of someone choosing to let love cover your sins?
4. What are some ways that a fellow believer can help you when you are struggling with another person's sin, or even just your suspicion of their sin? What would be an example of wise counsel that delivers you in such a situation?
5. What are some hard questions that you might ask yourself when you are wrapped up in accusing, suspecting, or judging another person?
6. Why should we not make the leap from observing behavior to inferring motives? Can you think of a recent time that someone judged your motives without actually knowing them?

Recommended booklets: *Judgements, Rash or Righteous* (2009) and *Suspicion, How to Overcome "Paranoid" Thinking* (2018). Both by Lou Priolo.