

“But if you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice,’ you would not have **condemned the guiltless.**”

Matthew 12:7

How many times could this
have been directed to us?

“If you had known____ you would not
have condemned the guiltless.”

“He who answers a matter before he hears it,
it is folly and shame to him.”

Proverbs 18:13

Potential Causes

- Ignorance/misunderstanding of the Scriptures.
- Don't really know everything that was said or done.
- Unaware of possible extenuating circumstances.

Ignorance/Misunderstanding Scriptures

- **Example #1: 1 Peter 3:3–4.**
 - Other “not...but” passages: John 6:27; Matthew 6:19–20.
- **Example #2: Matthew 7:1.**
 - Keep reading.
 - 1 Cor. 5:3, 12–13; Gal. 6:1; John 7:24.

Don't Have all the Facts

- Example: John 21:23.
- Questions to raise:
 - Do I know for sure what was said or done?
 - Enough information to make a judgment?
 - My source of information reliable?
 - Tone of voice?
 - False teacher? Could he mean something else?
Maybe his wording is faulty?

Extenuating Circumstances

- Some things are wrong under any circumstances: lying, adultery, fornication, teaching false doctrine, etc.
- But what about the good works Christians are commanded to do? Visiting the sick and needy (Matt. 24:34–36); visiting orphans and widows (James 1:27); being hospitable (1 Peter 4:9).

Extenuating Circumstances

- Extent/manner depend on several things: each person's abilities, opportunities, and knowledge of the need. Gal. 6:10; Phil. 4:10.
- Not up to me to decide when, how, where, or how extensively another should do these good works.

Extenuating Circumstances—Questions

- Are they doing some things without my notice?
- Are their circumstances such that they're limited in what they can do?
- Do they have other pressing responsibilities?

“For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy.”

James 2:13
