

# WHAT DO OTHERS SEE?

By Keith Greer

"Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established." (Proverbs 4: 26)

The apostle Paul wrote to the saints in Rome, to "Let us not therefore judge one another anymore: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." (Romans 14:13)

Over the years I've seen a troubling trend among many brethren that needs to be fixed. One of the most troubling things I have witnessed is the lack of love for others. Whenever I might point out an area where one might be putting a stumblingblock up for others, the most common reply I have received is "That is his/her problem, not mine."

Does this attitude sound like one that a Christian should have? According to Paul, we should have an attitude of uplifting each other, not discouraging one another. In 1 Peter 1:22, we are told that as Christians, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently."

Not long ago, a sister came to me, and she was greatly discouraged. When I asked her why, she said, "It just seems like people are only concerned about self. It's my way or no way!" Can it be that we have become so hardened that we don't see what kind of people we really are? **WHAT DO OTHERS SEE?**

Do they see people that treat each other with loving kindness? Or, do they see people that "bite and devour" one another? "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself. But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!" {Galatians 5:14,15}

Do they see people that try to give each other the benefit of the doubt? Or, do they see people who would have no qualms about humiliating another in front of others, whether or not other members, or even visitors, were standing by. "Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. Therefore If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." {Romans 12:19-21}

In a passage that we are often fond of quoting to our children, Jesus said "Therefore all things whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." (Matthew 7:12) Do we really consider, when we are dealing with one another, that we are to treat them as we would want to be treated. Ask yourself this question "How would I like it if my brethren treated me the way that I treat them?" Would it be an improvement?

Jesus said that "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John 13:35) What does the lack of love tell our brethren and also say to others? Brethren who don't have a deep abiding love for their own brethren are sending out the wrong message!

**AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?** Each one of us should hope, and pray to God, that our answer would be better than Cain's! One of the most observable actions we possess, as God's people, is our relationship with other members of the body. People can tell when others like to be in each others presence. What happens when the Amen is said after the closing prayer? Do folks just hurry up and get out and the building is empty in five minutes? When folks linger, talk and enjoy fellowship after a worship service or Bible study, it sends a positive message to others. On the other hand, if the building is emptied very shortly after the dismissal prayer – that sends a message too. \*\*\*