

None of My Business

Can you imagine being Mary on the night the angel came to her to let her know about God's plans for her? What kind of thoughts went through her mind? She had to know that Joseph would be upset. She had to know that most folks wouldn't believe her story of divine conception. She had to know it would look bad for her. Yet, what did she say? "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (**Luke 1:38**).

This drives home an old mantra I've learned over the past few years. "It's none of my business what everyone else thinks of me." I've been trying to learn that you can think that I'm the most wonderful person in the world, godly, spiritually-minded, disciplined, and having it all together. But if my relationship with God stinks, your assessment of me won't help me a bit. And the opposite is true as well. You may think I'm an awful person, having done awful things, accusing me of all kinds of wrong-doing, attributing to me all kinds of wicked motives. However, if my relationship with God is right, then your assessment of me doesn't hurt me a bit.

First, I see this from Mary's perspective. So what if others think she is a liar. So what if others think she is a fornicator. So what if others think she is an immoral sinner. This was God's plan for her and she was going to submit. It was none of her business what everyone else thought of her. It was her business what God thought of her.

Second, I see this from God's perspective. God definitely knew what men would make of this story. God knew that some of the Jews would reject and mock Jesus as being born in sexual immorality. In **John 8:41**, the Jews essentially mock Jesus saying that they weren't the ones born in sexual immorality; He was. They had "one Father—even God." But God worked His plan anyway.

Don't misunderstand. I don't want to suggest that we can live however we want without regard to the consciences of others. We know the Scripture teaches differently (**Romans 14; I Corinthians 8-9**). What we need to understand is that the Bible teaches us to submit to God no matter what anyone else thinks of us. The Bible teaches us that we are not slaves to every whim of every other person in the world. What matters is our relationship with God, not what everyone else thinks about us. We need to get rid of our personal image consultants and simply surrender to the Lord. We need to say along with Mary, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word."

At the same time, I can't help but see this in the second person as well. If it is none of my business what you think of me, it is really none of my business what you think of someone else either. What matters about those other people is their relationship with God. What you think about them doesn't change the truth of that. You may think someone is the greatest person since Jesus Himself. But if he teaches soul-damning error it shouldn't matter to me how great you think he is. At the same time, you may think someone is the devil incarnate, but that shouldn't impact me. Who knows why you think that. Maybe you have a misperception. Maybe you are just mistaken. Maybe at one time she committed sins that she has now repented of. All I know is that it is really none of my business what you think of someone else. **II Corinthians 12:20** lists gossip and slander among a litany of relationship sins. **Matthew 15:19** lists slander with a host of sins that proceed from the heart. **Ephesians 4:31** says we should put slander away from us. We shouldn't slander and gossip and we shouldn't heed slander and gossip.

In **II Corinthians 6:8-10**, Paul demonstrates the same point. We should not judge Paul based on what others thought about him. Some folks praised him. But if he were leading them to hell that praise would mean nothing. On the other hand, some folks slandered him and treated him as an imposter. That treatment and that reputation did not change that he was a true apostle of the Lord. It is really none of our business what everyone else thinks of Paul. What really matters is Paul's relationship with God.

I completely recognize that none of us will be able to fully ignore what others think of us or someone else. But we need to work on that. We need to work on our relationship with God and focus on others' relationship with God. As we do, we'll be mindful of what really is our business. And our business will be the Lord's business.

-Edwin L. Crozier