

Citizen's Arrest

Today's Reading

Matthew 7:1-5



We live right on the corner of a four-way stop. Occasionally, my wife and I will sit out on the front porch and talk. I am amazed at how my attention often turns to that intersection. It is startling to observe how many drivers just kind of roll through without coming to a complete stop. When I see that, something within me prompts me to want to run out there as a self-appointed policeman and make a few citizen arrests!

Citizen's arrest! Under the umbrella of "biblical accountability" in the body of Christ, we may feel as if we hold a badge and have a right to turn on our siren and pull people over at will. The violations in the lives of others seem to merit it. But then we read the words "Do not judge" in the opening verses of Matthew 7. That statement does not release us from responsibility to encourage/admonish others. Instead, it is a reminder to exercise caution because we will

be judged in the same manner that we judge. What if someone exercised the same scrutiny of my driving habits that I use at our four-way stop? Would they find me coming to a complete stop at all stop signs and never surging up to 37 MPH in a 35 MPH zone? I can see the lights flashing in my rearview mirror now! Guilty as charged!

So, not one of us is perfect. But the answer is not that we adopt a "who am I to encourage/challenge them" attitude. No, we are to help others, but only after we have first done a self-examination. When we look at ourselves candidly before the Lord, inviting the Spirit of God's help, we begin to recognize our own sin and shortcomings. Then, we are in a position to confess that sin to God and receive His forgiveness. After experiencing our own cleansing, we can see clearly to encourage others.

Anyone out there like me? Need to turn in your badge of judgment? Need to quit making citizen arrests? Need to invite the Spirit of God to reveal your faults before you encourage others?

As you get close to others in an ABF Community or group, watch that you don't allow a critical spirit to dominate your attitude.