

Walk a Mile in My Shoes

*Walk a Mile in My Shoes*¹ sung & written by Joe South 1970

If I could be you and you could be me for just one hour. If we could find a way to get inside each other's mind. If you could see me through your eyes instead of your ego. I believe you'd be surprised to see that you'd been blind.

*Walk a mile in my shoes, walk a mile in my shoes, and before you abuse,
criticize and accuse, walk a mile in my shoes.*

Now your whole world you see around you is just a reflection. And the law of common says you reap just what you sow. So unless you've lived a life of total perfection. You'd better be careful of every stone that you throw.

And yet we spend the day throwing stones at one another 'cause I don't think or wear my hair the same way you do. Well I may be common people but I'm your brother & when you strike out and try to hurt me its a-hurtin' you.

There are people on reservations and out in the ghettos. And brother there but for the grace of God go you and I. If I only had the wings of a little angel, don't you know I'd fly to the top of the mountain, and then I'd cry.

The Splinter & the Beam are the Same Size!

¹"Don't judge, so that you won't be judged. ²For the way you judge others is how you will be judged - the measure with which you measure out will be used to measure to you. ³Why do you see the splinter in your brother's eye but not notice the log in your own eye? ⁴How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the splinter out of your eye,' when you have the log in your own eye? ⁵You hypocrite! First, take the log out of your own eye; then you will see clearly, so that you can remove the splinter from your brother's eye! (Matt. 7:1-5)

A “splinter” and a “beam” (log in the CJB) are actually the same size when viewed from a reverse perspective. Any splinter in your eyes feels like a “beam.” If we ask a brother to look in our eyes he can clearly see that it is just a splinter—but it feels like a log! When we sense that our brother is offended because of “some little thing we did to him,” we must remember that in his eye this “little thing” is a beam! We may think we were only 10% wrong, but in his eye we were 90% wrong. If we consider *Yeshua*'s imagery of a stingy eye being an evil eye, He seems to warn us not to criticize someone for stinginess while remaining blind to our own greed. A generation after *Yeshua*, the Talmud records *Rabbi Tarfon* complained about the popularity of *Yeshua*'s speck-in-the-eye adage saying, “I wonder whether there is anyone in this generation who accepts reproof, for if one say to him ‘Take the speck from between your eyes,’ he will answer, ‘Take the log from between your eyes!’” (Arakhin 16b)

In Matthew 7 *Yeshua* is teaching on equity (justice, fairness, impartiality, evenhandedness, equal treatment, legitimacy, lawfulness, righteousness). *Yeshua* tells us not to pass judgment on one another. This is not a prohibition from judiciary functions nor should it be construed as a license for sin and subjective morality. Rather, we are forbidden to assume to sit in יהוה's (or *Yeshua*'s) seat of judgment. It is forbidden for us to decide who is saved and who is not, who will be exalted and who will be humbled, who will be damned and who will rise. With such assumptions (which, in fact, are tossed about rather cavalierly in the Body of Messiah's theology and popular practice) we risk judgment ourselves. If I assume that I have received His grace (the desire and power to do His Will), then it would be unconscionable for me to deny the same source of grace to another.

We Should be Striving for a Clear Conscience

A clear conscience involves that inner freedom of spirit toward יהוה and others that comes by knowing that יהוה's Holiness is not offended by one's thoughts or actions, and that no one can point the finger at you and say, “you've offended me, and you've never asked for my forgiveness.” *Rabbi Sha'ul* charged Timothy saying: “This

charge, son Timothy, I put to you, in keeping with the prophecies already made about you, so that by these prophecies you may fight the good fight, armed with trust and a good conscience. By rejecting conscience, some have made shipwreck of their trust." (1 Timothy 1:18-19) We are to fight the good fight armed with trust (faith) and a good conscience—to always have a conscience void of offense towards יהוה and towards man. The greatest single hindrance to gaining a clear conscience is the feeling that the ones we offended were wrong too! In fact, we often feel that they were mostly wrong. Our focus (the speck vs. the beam) on blaming them balances our own guilt and forces us to live with both guilt and blame. It is our “natural inclination” to find other people or circumstances which are to blame for what we have done in order to justify or excuse our offenses and shortcomings. The greater our guilt, the more we must blame. The resulting bitterness and guilt are devastating to our mental and emotional health and balance. Scripture warns us to not resist His grace: “*See to it that no one resists (misses out) on G-d's grace, that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble and thus contaminates many.*” (Hebrew 12:15) *Yeshua* wants us to look at life from both sides now—from our perspective and from our brother’s perspective. He wants us to “walk in one another’s shoes.”

Yeshua's talmidim are commanded to pray this prayer, “*Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*”(Matthew 6:12) He went on to solemnly warn us that if we do not forgive men when they sin against us, יהוה will not forgive us. “*For if you forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will not forgive yours.*” (Matthew 6:14-15) Thus for *talmidim* (disciples) of *Yeshua*, issues of forgiveness are not optional. We do not have the luxury of holding grudges or nursing bitterness. We are not privileged to retain our anger or to repay evil with evil.

The principle the Master teaches us here is the well-attested Biblical concept of מדה כנגד מדה, *midah-k'neged-midah*, measure for measure. He elaborates the point well in Matthew 7:1-5: “*With the same measure we use, it will be measured to us.*” In Matthew 18 just as the indebted servant was unwilling to forgive the small debt of his fellow servant (the speck), so too the King was unwilling to forgive his great debt (the beam).

The Destructive Power of Wrong Attitudes

While it is essential that we recognize and confess wrong actions against those whom we have offended, it is even more important for us to discern, confess and change wrong attitudes which were either the cause, caused by or resulted from our wrong actions. *Kefa* warns us “*For Whoever wants to love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit, turn from evil and do good, seek peace and chase after it.*” (1 Peter 3:10-11) This is almost a direct quote of Psalm 34:14-15 “*N^etsor l^e-shon^e-cha me-ra us^e-fa-te-cha mi-da-ber mir-ma. Sur me-ra. va^ea-se tov ba-kesh sha-lom v^e-rod-fe-hu.*” (“...keep your tongue from evil and your lips from deceiving talk; turn from evil, and do good; seek peace, go after it!”). This is usually more difficult than we realize. We are so involved with our emotions that we fail to realize the attitudes which we are actually reflecting to the people around us (especially our families, close friends and brothers).

More than we realize, people are reacting to our attitudes, It is, therefore, essential that we learn how to “judge ourselves” in wrong attitudes in order that we not “be judged by others.” Can you identify the root attitude responsible in each of the following family conflicts?

Examples of Family Conflicts

CASE #1

"Friday I came home for lunch and both of my brothers were there. When I came in the door, the first thing my younger brother said was, 'What are you doing here?' I said that I came home for lunch. Then he said, 'Well, you can just go back

to school where you belong.' Since they were there before me, they should have had my lunch ready. But they hadn't done a thing. I said, 'Why didn't you fix me something?' My brother said, 'We didn't feel like it!'

"When I asked why they were acting that way, they said that it was none of my business. We had a few wrong words. After this, I ended up going back to school without eating lunch and by being very disappointed with my brother. I want very much to get along with him. I hope the L-rd will show me how this is possible."

CASE #2

"While I was washing the floor, my little sister came in. (She had been out playing.) I asked her to get upstairs and help my other sister clean her room. She just gave me one of those looks as if to say, 'Just-who do you think you are-giving me orders?'

"Then she bluntly said, 'No!' Mom was on the phone, so I took matters into my own hands and began to help her walk up the stairs. I ended up dragging her by her arms. It didn't hurt her, but to make trouble, she began to scream and cry as if I were trying to kill her." I got a bad spanking and it was all her fault!

CASE #3

"Well, I was sitting in front of the television-naturally. My dad came in and told me to go and do something besides watch television. So I went over and got one of my friends. We were playing in the garage and were hitting the door with a basketball when my dad came out swearing at us as he always does.

"I said, 'Well, you don't have to swear about it.' He said, 'I'll swear if I want to.' I told him, 'Not around me. Swear some other place.' Well, this set off the fuse. He grabbed a stick from the garage and came at me, swinging. I told my friend to scatter. He ran one Way, and I ran the other.

"We went over to his house and my friend told his mother what had happened. She said he can't come over anymore. At this rate I'll lose all my friends. When I came home, my dad said, 'if you don't stop causing trouble, I'm going to stick you in a home.' He always threatens to stick me in a home."

CASE #4

"Dad, Mom and I were at the breakfast table when we started discussing my future occupation. Somehow I said the wrong thing! I said that my life as a married woman would have little outside activity, etc. I gave Mom's as an example of such a life. I didn't mean for it to cause friction, but it sure did! She told me I was ungrateful, unwilling to help around the house, etc., etc. I said many things I shouldn't have. It's so-o-o hard. I love her very much, but we always have a tense feeling between us."

Yeshua then added in Matthew 7:7-11:

♪Ask and it shall be given unto you, seek and ye shall find. Knock and it shall be opened unto you, Allelu, Alleluia.♪

ⁱ <http://www.mytuneslive.com/song.php?sid=224833>