

Dirty Windows or Blurred Vision?

by Jim Liebelt

Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?—Matthew 7:3 (NIV)

I recently read a story about a business owner who constantly complained about the dirty windows of his competitor's store – directly across the street from his own. Perhaps it was just his pet peeve, but the storeowner complained continually to other business owners in the community about how his competitor's dirty windows were a disgrace to the community – and how it could reflect poorly on his own business.

Another local shopkeeper, tired of hearing the owner's ongoing complaints, suggested that he set a good example and wash his own store windows. The storeowner took the shopkeeper's advice and washed his own windows. The following day, the two met for coffee and the storeowner, remarked, "You were right. It worked! As soon as I washed my windows, my competitor must have washed their store windows also! This morning I noticed from my store that they were clean and shining!"

The storeowner had simply suffered from blurred vision. He judged his competitor wrongly! When he cleaned the windows of his own store, he was able to see that his competitor's windows were also clean!

Sometimes, we look at others with blurred vision. We see things in other people's lives that we don't think are right or acceptable and find fault with them. We judge them. Sometimes, like the storeowner, we complain to others about the faults we think we see. But, too often when we find fault in others it is simply because our own vision is blurry. I know, for example, when I find fault in others it is often regarding issues I have in my own life. I find that I have a tendency to project real faults in myself – onto others – who most likely don't have those faults at all. Jesus warns us not to judge others (Matthew 7:1) and addressed the issue saying, "...first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye" (Matthew 7:5).

Today, when you are tempted to judge or complain about someone, take a moment first to see if it is only your own vision that is blurred.

GOING DEEPER:

- 1. Think of an example in your own life where you've recently judged someone about the "speck" in their eye, knowing that you have a "plank" in your own eye to deal with.*
- 2. Why do you think it's so easy to have "blurred vision" when it comes to other people?*
- 3. What can you do today to clear your vision – and not judge someone else?*

FURTHER READING:

Matthew 7:1-5; Romans 2:1; 1 Samuel 16:7

