

Taken from *Girlfriends in God* Loving Hard-to-Love People [Kelly Balarie](#)

Today's Truth

In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness ([Matthew 23:28](#), NIV).

Friend to Friend

The women were getting under my skin. Certainly, when I decided to hang-out with them, I didn't expect their conversations to become so -- "immature and juvenile". Or, that they would loudly talk on top of one another. I expected more than surface talk.

The more I spent time with these women, the more I couldn't help but size up which ones were "the worst offenders." I noted how I was "spiritually better." *I'm more mature. I'm more focused on God. I'm more of the teacher and they should learn from me.*

Because of this mindset, I wanted to get away from them. I wanted to be free of their annoying ways. But, at the same time, I knew a lot was not right within my heart. There was some ugliness that I needed to look at, deep within me. "In the same way, on the outside you (teachers of the law and Pharisees) appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness." [Matthew 23:28](#), NIV

God, is their hypocrisy in my heart? Almost as quick as I asked the question, another question landed in my mind, "Kelly, how can you love them, when you judge them?"

Something hit me. I can't love them with all my heart when I hate their every move. I can't call them higher through my bitterness and annoyance. I can't connect to their heart, when mine is hard as stone. I determined to return back to the group with a change of heart. I would not *be them*, by acquiescing to the way they were acting. I would still be me and be true to my own personality. But, I would join them with a humble heart to learn and to see what God had to teach me. Because, I am growing too, you know.

And, as I did this, an astonishing thing happened: I started to have fun. Their lightheartedness was breaking off some of the heavy-burdens I'd been carrying. I started to realize -- I liked them. And, that I also could love them -- and laugh with them.

Wow. I needed that joy and fun they had, I just didn't know it before. Through pride, I couldn't see. Only repentance and a return to humility allow some breakthroughs.

God was calling me into lighthearted fun. It was just the thing; I had no idea I needed!

Sometimes, the thing we *most want* or *need* is found right on the other side of pride and judgment, as we love others. Then, be it through a conversation, a comment, or a happenstance situation, God teaches something profound. You may even, like me, get somewhere you didn't even realize you needed to go.

Let's Pray

Father, please give me humility. Instead of judging, please teach me how to go about loving others. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Now It's Your Turn

How does judging others prohibit you from loving them? In what ways may God be calling you to lay down your judgment and critiquing ways?