

Testing Another

Mark 10:2
Charlie Brackett

The Pharisees came to Jesus and asked Him a question for the purpose of testing Him. "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" they asked. This is an important question for us to consider since the laws in our land now allow divorce for any cause. For this lesson, however, I want us to think on the business of testing our fellowman, a practice the Pharisees were quick to embrace.

The Pharisees fancied themselves experts on religious law. They taught that divorce for any cause was justified and used Moses as their authority. But, earlier, Jesus modified what they taught, and the Pharisees wanted to put Him in His place. If the truth be known, they were jealous of Him. He taught with an authority they did not have. The people listened to Him, and the Pharisees felt threatened. They loved their places of honor among the people, places to which they had become accustomed, and they didn't want to lose them to this Galilean, this lowly carpenter from Nazareth.

It is not wrong to test a man. 1 John 4:1 warns, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world." And Jesus Himself said in Matthew 7:15f, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits." We *must* test those who teach us to see if they are from God.

Those Pharisees were wrong because their purpose was not to learn if Jesus was from God. They wanted to trap Him. Jesus had demonstrated His divine sanction by many miracles, powerful wonders which only God could have done. The Pharisees refused to acknowledge that He had passed that test. Out of selfish ambition, they wanted only to stop Him. May we never test another person in the same spirit with which those Pharisees tested Jesus!