

mercEmail

"He delights in mercy" (Micah 7:18)

Yes Sir, Colonel!

by Hugo McCord

A serviceman wrote about a bit of unintended comedy during a company inspection at the Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama. The inspection was being conducted by a full Colonel. Everything had gone smoothly with the inspection, until the officer came to the man standing just next to the soldier who recalled the incident.

The Colonel stopped, looked the man up and down and snapped out, "Button that pocket, trooper!" The soldier, more than a little rattled, stammered, "Right now, sir?" "Of course, right now," was the reply. Whereupon the soldier very carefully reached out and buttoned the flap on the Colonel's shirt pocket.

For some reason, peculiar to our human nature, it is always easier to see the unbuttoned pockets of others than it is to see our own. Splinters in other people's eyes seem to be more obvious than planks in our own eyes (Matthew 7:1-3).

Brother McCord's short story illustrates very well how we are often blind to our own faults while very clear sighted when it comes to the faults of others. The next time you're tempted to harshly criticize someone, ask yourself the following questions:

1. If I were in that person's shoes, what might I have done?
2. Have I ever been guilty of the same or similar error?
3. Would offering grace and forbearance be more helpful than a harsh criticism?
4. Do I want God to judge me as critically as I judge others?