

Forward: Claiming the Life God Gave You
How To Stop Assuming Your Way Into Messes
Joshua 22:1-34

Introduction: A few years ago, I had a pretty bad head cold on a Saturday night. I hadn't slept much the last few days and was physically and mentally exhausted. However, I still had to get up in the morning and preach twice at Venture, lead a meeting that afternoon, and do a Bible study later that night (we hadn't started the Lincoln Campus yet). A decade or so ago, because I had such a lousy pattern of getting almost no sleep on Saturday nights, my doctors prescribed me a sleeping aid. I only take it on Saturday nights. So, as usual, before I went to bed, I took the sleeping pill, but I also took two Benadryl to try and dry up the flood of mucus that had been forming in my head the last few days. That's probably a terrible combination of medicines, and I don't recommend it! To say it puts you into a deep sleep is an understatement.

In the middle of the night, our burglar alarm blasted out. Our alarm includes an announcement that tells you why it's going off. The blaring siren woke me from a massively deep drug-induced sleep, and all I heard was "... door." Surprisingly, my brain immediately processed the sound and the word "door" to be that somebody had just opened our front door, which is a few feet from our bedroom door. My brain assumed they were coming in the door right now. So, I exploded out of bed and sprinted out our bedroom door. Seeing nobody there, I ran slap into the front door, assuming they were in the process of opening it, and immediately turned the bolt lock, which, to my surprise, wouldn't turn because not only was the door not open, but the lock was also soundly locked just as it should be!

At that second, I heard Keri and the alarm yelling, "basement door." The steps beside the basement door lead directly to my girl's rooms. Being I had just wasted time assuming they were at the front door, I immediately assumed they must already be in the house and on their way up those steps. I had no time to get to the closet to grab a gun or anything else; I had to run as fast as I could to those steps. I went barreling through our house, so much so that while running past our dining room table, I ran over two of our metal chairs that hadn't been put back under the table where they belonged. They bounced across the floor with all the sounds metal chairs make when they crash into something.

Meanwhile, I was repetitively yelling at the top of my lungs, "Get out of my house!!" Once I got to the steps, I went down them intending to tackle whoever was coming up them with enough force to knock them through the wall!! I barely touched a single step as I went down them, all while yelling at the top of my lungs, with the burglar alarm blaring and, by this time, the CPI operator yelling questions out over the speaker system, trying to understand what was happening as he alerted 9-1-1. But, when I got to the bottom of the steps, I immediately scanned the room and realized nobody was in there, and just as what happened at the front door, I found the basement door shut and securely locked! It was a false alarm! The sensor in the basement door had gone bad!

When I ran over the dining room tables, Keri assumed I was in a fight with the intruders, which caused her to jump out of bed, run into the closet, and get a gun! So, by the time I realized it was a false alarm, Keri was standing in the Living Room with a Glock 9mm, and Ari and Remi had both woken up and come out of their rooms to see what in the world was going on. When it was all said and done, I had so much adrenaline in my system that despite the sleeping pill and two Benadryl, there was no way I was going back to sleep that night. Hilariously, our oldest daughter slept through the entire episode! That morning, she woke up feeling great with no clue anything had happened!

After some strong words to CPI to get their alarm system fixed, I realized I needed to adjust my home protection strategy. We needed to change the way we responded to such an incident. Because we didn't have a good plan in place, I was left to make assumptions instead of informed actions. When you add my drug-induced coma to the mix, there is no wonder wrong assumptions were made. Attacking the potential threat unarmed would have likely ended with me getting shot or stabbed out the gate and, as such, put my family at greater risk. It gave Keri the necessary time to get the gun, but the better solution was not to have to go to the closet to get a gun to protect my family in the first place.

So, I now have a loaded gun right beside me when I go to bed, and it's ready to roll. I also determined that if the burglar alarm ever went off again, I needed to take a quick breath before reacting to properly determine where the threat originated. In this case, I assumed the front door based solely on hearing the word "door." If I had paused for half a second more, I would have heard which door and not wasted those precious seconds going the wrong direction. We also decided we needed the kids to make better decisions. If I'm running through the house with a gun, I don't need them walking out of their rooms and risk me confusing them as an intruder. So, the kids were told if they heard the alarm saying fire or carbon monoxide, then get out of the house immediately, but if they heard anything else, shut their door, lock it, and hide until me, Mom, or the police get them out. We also added that if it's a fire or carbon monoxide, somebody must wake up Ada, or she'll never get out of bed! Finally, we made it clear not to let that false alarm place any doubt in our minds about future alarms. We should never assume an alarm is false until we can prove it's false.

My point in telling you that story is that all kinds of assumptions were made that night, and most were wrong. Luckily, nothing bad happened, and we learned from it to prepare us for what I hope never happens to us or anybody else. However, making the wrong assumptions doesn't always end with a funny story. In relationships, incorrect assumptions can create totally unnecessary drama and tension and, if severe enough, can lead to irreparable damage.

A perfect example of the danger of making basic assumptions is found in our study of the book of Joshua. We spent the last five weeks looking at all the golden nuggets found in the section of Joshua focused on recording which land belonged to which tribe. Joshua then transitions us to the conclusion of the book with a story of a completely incorrect assumption that almost resulted in a horrific consequence for the nation of Israel.

Proposition: There are four parts to the story of Joshua 22 and the incorrect assumption that almost resulted in Israel ending up in a civil war.

It all began beautifully. The first part of the story is in Joshua 22:1-9.

(1) Joshua honors the faithfulness of the fighting men of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh to God and Israel and releases them to go back across the Jordan to their families with a challenge. (22:1-9)

A. 1 At that time Joshua summoned the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, 2 and said to them, "You have kept all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you and have obeyed my voice in all that I have commanded you. 3 You have not forsaken your brothers these many days, down to this day, but have been careful to keep the charge of the LORD your God. 4 And now the LORD your God has given rest to your brothers, as he promised them. Therefore turn and go to your tents in the land where your possession lies, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you on the other side of the Jordan. 5 Only be very careful to observe the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways and to keep his commandments and to cling to him and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul." 6 So Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they went to their tents. 7 Now to the one half of the tribe of Manasseh Moses had given a possession in Bashan, but to the other half Joshua had given a possession beside their brothers in the land west of the Jordan. And when Joshua sent them away to their homes and blessed them, 8 he said to them, "Go back to your tents with much wealth and with very much livestock, with silver, gold, bronze, and iron, and with much clothing. Divide the spoil of your enemies with your brothers." 9 So the people of Reuben and the people of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh returned home, parting from the people of Israel at Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan, to go to the land of Gilead, their own land of which they had possessed themselves by command of the LORD through Moses.

B. Notice there is nothing but admiration and gratefulness in the tone and language of Joshua. There isn't any sense of jealousy or betrayal that these tribes were already given land on the east side of the river (Numbers 32), but just the opposite. There is a sincere admiration and gratitude to these men for upholding their commitment to God to fight for their brothers on the west side of the Jordan while leaving their families on the east side to fend for themselves! Nothing but love is going on here, and in that love, Joshua wants to make sure it goes with these two-and-a-half tribes when they get to the other side of the river.

C. In verse 8, we see the wealth Israel accumulated in their conquest, but more importantly, we see Joshua reminding them of the commandment of Moses to

share the spoils of war with their brothers (Numbers 31), who stayed behind to keep their tribes alive and running. In this case, the family and friends of the warriors from the eastern tribes have spent the last seven years developing the tribal lands, working the fields, raising the animals, establishing their settlements, and not only protecting their own families but also the families of the fighting men who went with the other tribes across the Jordan to fight. They are not returning home to people sitting on the couch looking at Instagram all day, but people who have built up the very lands and cities these warriors will now be able to come home to and immediately begin to thrive on! They need to share the love when they get home!

- D.** However, even more important is that they share the love of God when they get to the other side of the river! We will zoom in on this next week when we close out our study of Joshua, but I can't let you miss the challenge Joshua gave them in verse 5. As they set off to functionally live separated from the other tribes, Joshua wants to make sure they are VERY CAREFUL about obeying the Law of Moses, that is, the Covenant that God made with Israel, that if they followed, would bring His blessings on them; but if they disobeyed, they would bring his curse! So, Joshua says, **“5 Only be very careful to observe the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you,”**
- E.** Joshua then clarifies what he means by that statement with five specific commands:
- 1. Let your affection be for God. – “to love the LORD your God,”**
 - a. “’âhab, *aw-hab*’; or ’âhêb, *aw-habe*’; a prim. root; to *have affection* for (sexually or otherwise):—(be-) love (-d, -ly, -r), like, friend.”¹
 - b. “4 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.” (Deuteronomy 6:4-5)
 - 2. Let your actions be God’s. – “and to walk in all his ways”**

Note: To “walk in His ways” is to walk the way He walks!
 - 3. Do what God said. - “keep his commandments”**
 - 4. Find your identity in Him – “and to cling to him”**

¹ Strong, J. (2009). [*A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and The Hebrew Bible*](#) (Vol. 2, p. 9). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

Note: “*daw-bak*’; a prim. root; prop. to *impinge*, i.e. *cling* or *adhere*; fig. to *catch* by pursuit:—abide fast, cleave (fast together), follow close (hard after), be joined (together), keep (fast), overtake, pursue hard, stick, take.”²

5. **Passionately live your lives for Him! – “and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.”**

- F. Beyond the obvious reason that God is to be worshiped and obeyed, why was it so important for Joshua to uniquely emphasize this? They know this is what they are supposed to do, so why is Joshua telling them so overtly, like a parent reviewing driving instructions with their teenager for the one-hundredth time before they take the car and hang out with their friends? Our children know they aren’t supposed to speed or text and drive, but we always tell them the obvious anyway; why? The reason is because we know what we used to do the second we didn’t have any accountability present in our life! We remember that the moment our parents couldn’t see the car going down the street, we floored it and took off like we were trying to win the Daytona 500! For the eastern and western tribes, the physical separation was significant. It wasn’t just a river. D.K. Campbell notes,
- G. **“But this was not simply because an ordinary river would separate the Eastern from the Western tribes, for the Jordan is not an ordinary river. Mountains on each side rise to heights above 2,000 feet and the Jordan Valley nestled in between is in effect a great trench 5 to 13 miles wide. During a part of the year the intense heat greatly discourages travelers.”³**
- H. So again, why is the topography of the land such a concern? Well, the center of the worship of God (the Tabernacle and the Altar) was in Shiloh. Therefore, given the extreme terrain between the Eastern and Western tribes, the Eastern tribes wouldn’t be able to readily access the altar the way the Western tribes would. So, the eastern tribes were not only out of sight from the western tribes, but they were also going to be out of sight of the religious system designed to help keep everybody accountable to God. Therefore, although Joshua reminds them of what he has told them numerous times, he can’t ignore the temptation the eastern tribes will face in being “out of sight” and “out of mind” of the official worship of Yahweh!

The second part of the story is where everything goes south! In Joshua 22:10-20 we find out that ...

² Strong, J. (2009). *A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and The Hebrew Bible* (Vol. 2, p. 29). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

³ Campbell, D. K. (1985). *Joshua*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, pp. 365–366). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

(2) The western tribes assume the worst about a monument built by the eastern tribes and immediately set out to destroy them! (22:10-20)

A. **10 And when they came to the region of the Jordan that is in the land of Canaan, the people of Reuben and the people of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh built there an altar by the Jordan, an altar of imposing size.**

Note: The text is going to explain to us what this actually is and why they built it, but the first thing it does it let us see how the western tribes responded.

B. **11 And the people of Israel heard it said, "Behold, the people of Reuben and the people of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh have built the altar at the frontier of the land of Canaan, in the region about the Jordan, on the side that belongs to the people of Israel."**

Note: A rumor ran all over the western tribes of Israel that the eastern tribes had built a huge altar on the west side of the Jordan River!

C. **12 And when the people of Israel heard of it, the whole assembly of the people of Israel gathered at Shiloh to make war against them.**

Note: The first response is not to send an envoy to the eastern tribes to find out if the rumor was true but rather to rally an army together to make war on the people who had just spent the last seven years fighting for them to have an inheritance in the promised land! Now, luckily, before they started killing their own people on the east side of the river, they did at least decide to send an envoy to confront them with their conclusion. They didn't go objectively but very much condemningly. They went to pronounce judgment, not to find out what happened! Watch ...

D. **13 Then the people of Israel sent to the people of Reuben and the people of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh, in the land of Gilead, Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest,¹⁴ and with him ten chiefs, one from each of the tribal families of Israel, every one of them the head of a family among the clans of Israel. 15 And they came to the people of Reuben, the people of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, in the land of Gilead, and they said to them, 16 "Thus says the whole congregation of the LORD, 'What is this breach of faith that you have committed against the God of Israel in turning away this day from following the LORD by building yourselves an altar this day in rebellion against the LORD?**

1. In the Book of Deuteronomy, we read the Law that the western tribes believe the eastern tribes have broken,

2. **13 Take care that you do not offer your burnt offerings at any place that you see, 14 but at the place that the LORD will choose in one of**

your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I am commanding you. (Deuteronomy 12:13-14)

3. They didn't objectively ask, "What is this thing you built?" nor "What are you using it for," but instead assumed it was an active altar and thus a willing testimony to the breaking of The Mosaic Law. They came accusing, not inquiring! Now, the fact that it was built on the opposite side of the river from the eastern tribes' lands should have caused a slight hesitation in the fiery accusation of the western tribal leaders, but it didn't. These guys were furious, and they verbally unloaded on the tribal leaders of the east. Look at what they said,

E. 17 Have we not had enough of the sin at Peor from which even yet we have not cleansed ourselves, and for which there came a plague upon the congregation of the LORD, 18 that you too must turn away this day from following the LORD? And if you too rebel against the LORD today then tomorrow he will be angry with the whole congregation of Israel. 19 But now, if the land of your possession is unclean, pass over into the LORD's land where the LORD's tabernacle stands, and take for yourselves a possession among us. Only do not rebel against the LORD or make us as rebels by building for yourselves an altar other than the altar of the LORD our God. 20 Did not Achan the son of Zerah break faith in the matter of the devoted things, and wrath fell upon all the congregation of Israel? And he did not perish alone for his iniquity."

1. Verse 19 lets us learn more about their accusation's assumptions. They assume the altar is built on the western side of the Jordan River because the eastern tribes believe the east side of the Jordan is unclean land. So, in their accusation, they tell the eastern tribal leaders that if they believe their lands are unclean, then bring all their people to the western side so they can worship the Lord and make sacrifices where they are supposed to do it. They even offered to find a place for the eastern tribes to live if they felt their lands were unclean! The fact that they were willing to make a land arrangement for these two-and-a-half large tribes on the west says there is still a love for them, but the proper fear of the Lord's wrath on the nation for disobeying the Law is, unfortunately, driving their completely irresponsible reaction because incorrect assumptions are driving it. Their fear of God's wrath is highlighted by the mention of two previous occasions when God disciplined the nation because of sin.
2. In verse 20, they bring up what happened in Joshua 7. Joshua sent 3,000 soldiers to defeat Ai, the maximum amount his advisors said was needed to defeat a truly "cupcake" level opponent. However, it ended with the Hebrew soldiers running for their lives and 36 of them being killed. This all happened because Achan had disobeyed God in the battle of Jericho and took

things devoted to the Lord. After discovering what happened, Joshua executed Achan and his entire household.

3. Earlier, in verse 17, they mentioned what happened in Peor. We learn about this in Numbers 25:1-9 and Revelation 2:14. While Moses was still leading the people of Israel, they started attacking and decisively defeating the Kings on the east side of the Jordan. The King of Moab, fearing the Israelites and their God, implemented the counsel of the prophet Balaam and instructed the Moabite women to seduce the men of Israel into having sex with them and eating meat sacrificed to Baal as a part of the worship of Baal. This resulted in a terribly ugly scene. Moses executed the chiefs of the people who had apparently either participated in the sexual idolatry or knowingly permitted it, along with every other man in Israel who had given in to the temptation. However, the wrath of God on Israel for their rebellion still resulted in 24,000 people dying from the plague God placed on Israel because of their rebellion!

- F. So, the point is that the leaders of the West are in no way objectively questioning the leaders of the Eastern tribes. They have come with total confidence in their assumptions about the altar the Eastern tribes built on the western side of the Jordan River. They are essentially there telling them why they are about to attack, not to discover if they should!

In the third part of the story, the truth comes out!

- (3) **To the shock of the leaders of the tribes of the west, they found out the eastern tribes built the edifice as a monument to encourage future generations in the west that the eastern tribes were committed to God and the entire nation of Israel, not as a working altar! (22:21-29)**

- A. **21 Then the people of Reuben, the people of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh said in answer to the heads of the families of Israel, 22 "The Mighty One, God, the LORD! The Mighty One, God, the LORD! He knows; and let Israel itself know! If it was in rebellion or in breach of faith against the LORD, do not spare us today 23 for building an altar to turn away from following the LORD. Or if we did so to offer burnt offerings or grain offerings or peace offerings on it, may the LORD himself take vengeance.**
- B. They are the first to admit that if they have done what they are being accused of, then God's wrath should be poured on them! However, the conclusion of the western tribes is based on incorrect rumors and wrong assumptions. They then explained the real reason for why they built it and how it was being used by them.
- C. **24 No, but we did it from fear that in time to come your children might say to our children, 'What have you to do with the LORD, the God of**

Israel? 25 For the LORD has made the Jordan a boundary between us and you, you people of Reuben and people of Gad. You have no portion in the LORD.' So your children might make our children cease to worship the LORD. 26 Therefore we said, 'Let us now build an altar, not for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice, 27 but to be a witness between us and you, and between our generations after us, that we do perform the service of the LORD in his presence with our burnt offerings and sacrifices and peace offerings, so your children will not say to our children in time to come, "You have no portion in the LORD." 28 And we thought, If this should be said to us or to our descendants in time to come, we should say, 'Behold, the copy of the altar of the LORD, which our fathers made, not for burnt offerings, nor for sacrifice, but to be a witness between us and you.' 29 Far be it from us that we should rebel against the LORD and turn away this day from following the LORD by building an altar for burnt offering, grain offering, or sacrifice, other than the altar of the LORD our God that stands before his tabernacle!"

- D. Joshua himself had established the concept of building monuments. For instance, Joshua made one in the Jordan River and on the western bank of the Jordan when God parted it. The Eastern tribes had this idea planted by Joshua's leadership. The eastern tribes were not using it as an altar at all! The tribes in the west had come to destroy the eastern tribes for building a monument to testify of their unity with them!
- E. The motivation of the eastern tribes was positively proactive. They wanted to ensure future generations have unity and respect for one another. However, they failed to be proactive with the present generation and let them know what's going on!!!
- F. Talk about a complete misunderstanding that almost ended in total disaster!! Fortunately, the western tribes sent an envoy to let them know why they were about to kill them before they actually did it.

Thankfully, in the fourth part of the story, a positive ending comes out of an incredibly tense moment.

- (4) The Western tribes accepted the explanation of the Eastern tribes and fully embraced that they were unified in their common worship of God through obedience to the Mosaic Law. (22:30-34)

Note: 30 When Phinehas the priest and the chiefs of the congregation, the heads of the families of Israel who were with him, heard the words that the people of Reuben and the people of Gad and the people of Manasseh spoke, it was good in their eyes. 31 And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said to the people of Reuben and the people of Gad and the people of Manasseh, "Today we know that the LORD is in our midst, because you have not committed this

breach of faith against the LORD. Now you have delivered the people of Israel from the hand of the LORD. 32 Then Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, and the chiefs, returned from the people of Reuben and the people of Gad in the land of Gilead to the land of Canaan, to the people of Israel, and brought back word to them. 33 **And the report was good in the eyes of the people of Israel.** And the people of Israel blessed God and spoke no more of making war against them to destroy the land where the people of Reuben and the people of Gad were settled. 34 **The people of Reuben and the people of Gad called the altar Witness, "For," they said, "it is a witness between us that the LORD is God."**

Application: Roger Ellsworth wrote,

"We are not naturally people of peace. We come into this world with a sinful nature that puts us at odds with God and often at odds with others. But our God is a God of peace. Through the redeeming work of his Son, the Lord Jesus, God brings us into a state of peace with himself. He also gives us peace within. The people of God are, therefore, to be people of peace, and any failure in that area is a denial of the gospel we profess to revere. Nothing so hinders the progress of the gospel as lack of peace among God's people, and nothing so promotes it as warm-hearted unity."⁴

4 Biblical Principles To Keep You From Assuming Your Way Into A Mess:

The first Biblical principle to keep you from assuming your way into a mess is to ...

- (1) Never assume you should compromise the doctrines of the Gospel or the moral and ethical standards the New Testament makes abundantly clear. If unity requires this from us, then we cannot have unity.**
 - A. The eastern tribes agreed that if they had violated the law of God in the blatant matter the western tribes assumed they had, then they certainly deserved the wrath of God! They in no way believed they should be allowed to remain a part of the nation of Israel if they blatantly disregarded the Covenant that God made to establish them as a nation of His people!**
 - B. 4 You have commanded your precepts to be kept diligently. 5 Oh that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes! (Psalm 119:4-5)**
 - C. 10 For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision party. 11 They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach. ... 13 This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, 14 not devoting themselves to Jewish myths and the commands of people who turn away from the truth. (Titus 1:10-14)**

⁴ Ellsworth, R. (2008). [*Opening up Joshua*](#) (pp. 107–108). Leominster: Day One Publications.

- D. 15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world--the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions--is not from the Father but is from the world. 17 And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:15-17)**

The second Biblical principle to keep you from assuming your way into a mess is ...

- (2) Don't assume negative conclusions are valid until proven. Those inclined to do so typically suffer from, insecurity, jealousy, bitterness, or foolishness!**
- A.** Have you ever noticed that some people are inclined to always assume the worst about everything and everybody? This kind of response is typically associated with people who are so insecure that they are like one of those angry little dogs that are constantly barking, or they are just so eaten up with jealousy or bitterness that they can't respond positively to anything, or they are just sincere fools who don't know any better! The Bible says,
- B. 29 Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly. (Proverbs 14:29)**
- C. What your eyes have seen 8 do not hastily bring into court, for what will you do in the end, when your neighbor puts you to shame? (Proverbs 25:7b-8)**
- D. 14 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. 15 This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. 16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. 17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. 18 And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. (James 3:14-18)**

The third Biblical principle to keep you from assuming your way into a mess is ...

- (3) Never assume you properly understand a situation until you've asked questions and objectively considered the answers.**
- A. 5 Get wisdom; get insight; do not forget, and do not turn away from the words of my mouth. 6 Do not forsake her, and she will keep you; love her, and she will guard you. 7 The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom, and whatever you get, get insight. 8 Prize her highly, and she will exalt you; she**

will honor you if you embrace her. 9 She will place on your head a graceful garland; she will bestow on you a beautiful crown." (Proverbs 4:5-9)

- B. 2 A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion. (Proverbs 18:2)**
- C. 19 Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; 20 for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. (James 1:19-20)**
- D. Think of the emails, text messages and social media posts you would have never sent had you first asked questions and objectively listened to the answers. I say objectively listen because if we are listening to hear that which justifies our anger then we might as well not ask any questions!**

The fourth Biblical principle to keep you from assuming your way into a mess is ...

(4) Don't demand that people assume your motives are pure. Communicate your heart and let His light shine!

- A. If we are honest, after all Israel had been through, it was a bit naive and flat-out foolish for the eastern tribes to just assume the western tribes would know that the ginormous altar they built was not actually going to be used as an altar! Somebody should have spoken up in the building of that thing and said, "Hey, this really could be taken the wrong way, so let's send an envoy to Shiloh to make sure they know what we are doing here." But they didn't, and perhaps that's why we don't see anybody in the eastern tribes getting mad at the western tribes for thinking what they thought! They certainly explain themselves, but nowhere in the text do we see them getting angry at the western tribes for assuming they were living in sin because, by any reasonable appearance, it certainly looked that way!**
- B. If you're married and assume you should be able to stay out all night without giving your spouse any idea about where you are and what you're doing, then you are an arrogant idiot who shouldn't be shocked to come home to a worried and angry spouse! Assuming that people should understand our motives without us doing anything to reveal them is just flat-out arrogant!**
- C. Jesus said,**
- D. 13 "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. 14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your**

good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:13-16)

- E.** This was not a call to run around and tell people how to act. This was Jesus saying to us that if our works don't proclaim God's glory, then our works are worthless! If a love for God and others is not clearly driving you, then your works are as useless as salt with no flavor!
- F.** So, when it comes to our motives, if you want people to believe you love them, if you want your family to believe you love them, then stop demanding that they believe you, and let your light shine! Stop demanding that people assume something about you that you aren't clearly portraying!

To wrap this up let me just say that if you've never repented and surrendered your life to Jesus then the biggest mess you will ever make is assuming you are going to heaven. Jesus said,

21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' 23 And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.' (Matthew 7:21-23)