

# the mouth of two or three witnesses

by William MacDonald

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## Transcript

“...that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.” (Matt. 18:16).

As far as the Bible is concerned, there must be the testimony of two or three witnesses in order to form a valid judgment. If we would only observe this principle, we would save ourselves oceans of trouble.

The natural tendency for us is to hear one person’s side of a case and to immediately decide in his favor. He sounds convincing and our sympathies go out to him. Then later we learn that his was only one side of the story. When we hear the other side, we realize that the first man had distorted the facts or at least colored them in his own favor. Thus, “the first to plead his case seems just until another comes and examines him” (Prov. 18:17, NASB). When we make a decision before trying to ascertain the full facts, we act less righteously than the world’s judicial system and place ourselves under the censure of Prov. 18:13 NASB, “He who gives an answer before he hears, it is folly and shame to him.”

When Ziba reported to David that Mephibosheth hoped to gain the throne, David accepted the slander without investigation and gave all of Mephibosheth’s property to Ziba (2 Sam. 16:1-4). Later Mephibosheth had a chance to tell the king the true facts. David then realized that he had made a decision without having sufficient evidence.

The Lord Jesus recognized this principle. He said that His testimony concerning Himself was not sufficient (John 5:31). So He presented the testimony of four witnesses: John the Baptist (vv. 32-35); His works (v. 36); God, the Father (vv. 37, 38); the Scriptures (vv. 39, 40).

By failing to obtain the competent testimony of two or three witnesses, we can cause broken hearts, ruined reputations, divided churches and severed friendships. If we follow God’s Word, we will avoid tons of injustice and human hurt.

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