

Some of the most amazing structures ever built are the Pyramids of Egypt, as a group considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. The stones that make it up were dressed so precisely that it is difficult even today to insert a knife edge between them. Consider that the Pyramids were built without the benefit of a computer aided design station, electric tools, or laser alignment devices. They must have had a very good method of measuring the distances involved in their plans.

Today the problem of building things is intensified by the miniaturization of electronic devices. If the widths of the electrical paths and the distances between them are off by the fraction of the width of a hair, then the system will not work as designed. Here, too, a tremendously precise measurement system is essential for success.

We have all used a ruler or a yardstick for our own building projects. You can get them free as advertisements if you look around. But what if the ruler you had was made out of rubber? What if the separation between the marks varied according to some unknown parameter? It would make all of our measurements invalid, and doom any project we tried to make.

In 1905, Albert Einstein developed a revolutionary theory about the way space and matter interact. It is called the theory of relativity, and one of the consequences is that as you approach the speed of light, space shrinks along your direction of travel. Einstein further supposed that gravity was actually the bending of space around an object. This is all a little bit like having an elastic ruler.

If you have endured all of this physics without hurting your brain, then we can go on. There is a similar phenomena that occurs in our minds. We also can measure things differently when we lay the ruler against ourselves as opposed to others. This is especially apparent when we deal with a person who is suffering from Alzheimer's. They naturally cannot believe that there is anything wrong with their own thought processes. When you try to tell them that they are having problems with their thinking, they vehemently deny it. In essence, they are using their mind as a ruler to measure itself, and they cannot see themselves clearly.

How do we truly gauge our own thoughts? How do we keep from getting caught in the trap that Jesus described in Matthew 7:3-5:

*"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."*

It is such a danger for us, for it is so easy to measure others and have them come up short, and have them measure us short. Fortunately, the only true measurement can be made by God. For this reason we need to stay out of the whole measurement business, and leave it to Him. Our own rulers are not to be trusted, for they are stretched by our egos and desires. Paul speaks in a similar way in 2 Corinthians 10:12:

*"We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise."*

And Jesus also said in Mark 4:24:

*"Consider carefully what you hear," he continued. "With the measure you use, it will be measured to you--and even more."*

So we must be careful and sensitive in all of our judgments of others. Or else our elastic ruler might snap back right in our face.

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