

In search of...

Truth & Right

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Don't Judge Me!

Did Jesus judge people in his ministry?

As you know, there are many in the religious world today who claim that it is an outright sin to judge other people. They say these things especially at times when they, individually, are caught red handed within some particular sin or another or some particular false doctrine or another. They say this as an excuse from dealing with the truth of God's word on any particular subject in which they have learned that they stand condemned before God. The passages that are often cited in support of this defense are: Matthew 7:1, John 12:47, James 4:11. I will endeavor to deal with these passages in this answer as well as cite a few passages that support the idea of making appropriate judgments.

First Matthew 7:1 is often cited as the quintessential passage against judging another. Verse one is quoted most often, "Judge not that you be not judged." Many times this passage is quoted and completely taken out of its original context. It is quoted to mean

that one should NEVER judge another. However, this is not what the passage means and this is not what the original context of this passage means. By examining what the passage says in verses 2-4 you will find that Jesus is not talking about all judging. Jesus is talking about hypocritical judging. Jesus says, "Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." The point of judgment about which Jesus is referring is when the one judging has a fault within his life bigger than the fault in the life of the one whom he is judging. So this person is being a hypocrite in judging. That is the kind of judging that Jesus is condemning. So to use this passage to say that ALL judging is wrong is simply a misuse of the passage. To use this passage to say such would to bring Jesus into contradiction with himself, because Jesus said in John 7:24, "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge

righteous judgment." So there you have Jesus saying directly to "judge righteous judgment" and therein lies the difference between the two. The one type of judgment—hypocritical judgment—is condemned. The other type of judgment—righteous judgment—is approved and encouraged.

In John 12:47 we read, "And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world." This passage, upon initial reading, certainly appears as if Jesus is saying that he did not come to judge the world. Does Jesus mean by this that we are to make no personal judgments in our life regarding others? This is not what Jesus is saying at all. Once again, context is key to understanding this verse. In the very next verse, John 12:48, Jesus says, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." We see from verse 48 that Jesus DOES judge. He judges at the appropriate time—at the last day. We will be judged by Jesus' words and so we must live by them and judge ourselves by them each and every day of our life, to prepare for that great Day of Judgment. We also use Jesus words to teach other people and in so teaching them, it is not we who judge, but the words of Jesus that judge. In addition, the word judge in verse 47 is used in the sense of condemn. It was not Jesus purpose when he first came to condemn mankind. It was his purpose to provide for man's salvation. So the judging that Jesus is saying that he does not do in this passage has no bearing upon personal judgments that we may make one with another.

James 4:11, 12 states, "Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?" This passage is a little more difficult to understand, but I think that we can get the essence of it. First, this type of judging has to do with speaking evil of someone else. The Christian ought never to do this. In fact, we are to give blessing to others, not cursing according to 1 Peter 3:9. So the passage starts with the idea of a Christian who is speaking evil of another Christian. When we personally make judgments against another brother and speak evil of him, then we become a judge instead of one who is practicing the law. We also then judge the law, because we pronounce our own personal judgments upon others particularly when the law does not condemn them. I think that is what this passage is discussing. That is, it is specifically in regard to speaking evil against others. So the judgment that is being made has already been condemned—it is an "evil" judgment, not a righteous one.

The Bible teaches that there is a sense in which the Christian must judge. This is to judge based upon the word of God. Remember, when we judge in this manner, we are not judging someone, but the word of God is judging. Let's look at a few passages. First, in 1 Corinthians 5:12 Paul says, "Do you not judge them that are within?" Here, Paul is talking about judging Christians who are not living according to the standards that Christ sets for them. In particular, he

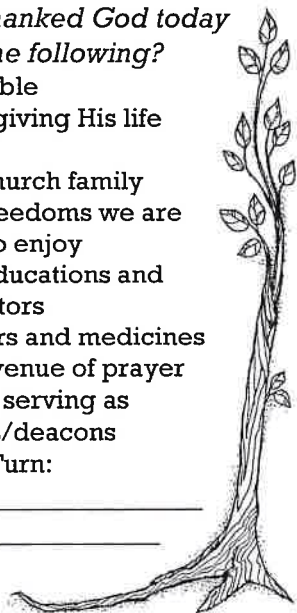
was talking about the fornicator that was among them. However, Paul does not limit this process to just fornication. He says in verse 11, "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat." We are, in fact, obligated to judge Christians who are engaged in these sinful situations. In the very next chapter, we also notice 1 Corinthians 6:1-3. This passage teaches that instead of going to a court of law to settle differences between Christians, we are to judge such matters among ourselves. Here is another form of judging that the Christian is to do. Finally, notice also Matthew 7:16-20. This passage teaches that we are to judge men according to their fruits. As we mentioned earlier in John 7:24, Jesus said, "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." Jesus also said in Matthew 7:6 "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." Who are the "dogs" in this passage? Who are the "swine" in this passage? How do we determine that? We must make judgments. We, as Christians, have obligations to judge certain situations. Jesus taught us to do this in regard to false teachers, people who are not living morally, and those who have proven themselves unworthy of the gospel. Jesus also taught us not to judge inappropriately. We should not judge hypocritically. We should not judge unrighteously, and we should not judge in a condemnatory fashion.

Kevin Cauley

**DEAR GOD,
I WANNA TAKE A
MINUTE, NOT TO ASK
FOR ANYTHING FROM
YOU, BUT SIMPLY TO
SAY THANK YOU,
FOR ALL I HAVE.**

*Have you thanked God today
for any of the following?*

- The Bible
- Jesus giving His life for us
- Our church family
- The freedoms we are able to enjoy
- Our educations and educators
- Doctors and medicines
- The avenue of prayer
- Those serving as elders/deacons
- Your Turn:



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Monthly Challenges

DIRECTIONS: *Each first Sunday of the month, we will have challenges that you should attempt to complete by the end of the month. If we all, as members, complete these challenges, our church will grow in spirit and in number.*

1) MEMORIZING BIBLE FACTS

2 Cor. 4:6 *"For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."*

It is important for Christians to have knowledge of God's Word. This month, our challenge will be to memorize some facts from the Scriptures so we can recall them at a moment's notice. Here are some things we should commit to memory:

- a) **The twelve sons of Israel-** Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, Benjamin
- b) **The apostles of Jesus-** Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Thomas, Matthew, Bartholomew, James, Simon, Thaddaeus, Judas, Matthias, Paul
- c) **God's promises to Abraham-** The Land promise, Gen. 12:1; The National promise, Gen. 12:2; The Spiritual promise, Gen. 12:3
- c) **The organization of the Lord's Church-** Jesus is its founder & owner (Matt. 16:18) and head (Col. 1:18). As such there is no earthly headquarters (John 18:36). Local congregations are overseen by a plurality of elders (1 Pet. 5:1-3). Deacons are to serve and minister to the needs of the congregation, but do not have an authoritative role (1 Tim. 3:13).
- d) **The plan of salvation-** Believe, Heb. 11:6; Repent, 2 Pet. 3:9; Confess, Rom. 10:9; Immersion, Acts 22:16; Remain faithful, Rev. 2:10

2) USING YOUR BIBLE IN THE WORLD

Share the following verses with someone who does not attend this congregation at least twice this month:

Ecclesiastes 12:11-14

11 "The words of the wise are like goads, and like nails firmly fixed are the collected sayings; they are given by one Shepherd. **12** My son, beware of anything beyond these. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

13 The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. **14** For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil."