"Judge Not"

Matthew 7:1-6

3-19-2023

INTRODUCTION: V. 1a, 6

Definition: ***"Judge"*** **-** In context, the word "judge" means to criticize with a hypocritical, nasty, unmerciful, strict, harsh, censorious, and condemning attitude.

Jesus is NOT against judgment;

- He is against hypocritical judgment
- He is against premature judgment (John 7:24)
- He is against dishonest judgment (Matthew 19:18)
- He is against illegitimate judgment

***Don't judge unrighteously!**

I. Before you judge others, COUNT THE COST (v. 1b-2)

II. Before you judge others, CRITIQUE YOURSELF (v. 3-4)

A. Beware of what you see (v. 3)

B. Beware of what you say (v. 4)

III. Before you judge others, CLEAN UP YOUR OWN ACT (v. 5)

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"Judge not" -
Beware of erroneous interpretation.

Our society hates absolutes, especially theological and moral absolutes. Many like to use this passage to provide an easy escape from confrontation. . . and to support compromise (MacArthur, p. 430)

This injunction is not support for the removal of a judicial system (law courts); neither is it evidence for the avoidance of church discipline (Mt. 18:15-17); nor is it proof that we should never be on guard against false teachers (whether on radio, TV, or in a church somewhere). Indeed, in this context Jesus warns, *"Beware of false prophets"* (Mt. 7:15)

The phrase ***"judge not***" also does not mean that you are to be passive, quiet, non-involved in helping others with their problems. There is a big difference between a critic and a friend (a friend will often do the act of judging for the sake of helping; whereas a critic will judge with the motive of hurting).

A criticizer speaks about someone's sin (Ja. 4:11); a friend speaks to someone about their sin.

"You shall not hate your brother in your heart; you may surely reprove your neighbor" (Lev. 19:17).

When you run others down with your mouth, or when critical, derogatory, malicious, harsh, unloving speech comes out of your lips. . . when you backbite, pass on juicy rumors, or tantalizing tidbits of gossip, you are doing the Devil's work for him (He is the accuser of the brethren - Rev. 12:10).

The phrase *"judge not"* does not mean that you are to be gullible, naive, or undiscerning regarding the sin of others.

Definition: ***"Judge"*** **-** In context, the word "judge" means to criticize with a hypocritical, nasty, unmerciful, strict, harsh, censorious, and condemning attitude.
To properly balance out Christ's statement about judging, Jesus tells us in verse 6 that there does come a time to exercise proper judgment.

The believer must have discernment to fulfill verse 6!

You need to detect a dog when you see one; the same goes for pigs.

Paraphrase of verse 6: *"Don't give that which is set apart and valuable to those who will either defile or devalue it!"*

This verse definitely applies to one who would throw his/her sexual virtue out to the animals of the world! Christians must judge (in the good sense of having moral and doctrinal discernment)

Certain sacred truths and blessings are not to be shared with people who are totally antagonistic to the things of God. When the swine realizes that what you throw to him does not satisfy his carnal, fleshly stomach, he may then attack the one who threw it.

Christians must exercise discernment; for not everyone is a sheep. Some people are dogs or hogs, and some are wolves in sheep's clothing! We are the Lord's sheep, but this does not mean we should let people pull the wool over our eyes!" (Wiersbe, p. 30)

To honor God, we must have Holy Spirit-empowered discernment. Jesus commends the church at Ephesus for this (Rev. 2:2 - *"I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:")*

God commands us to *"prove* (test) *all things"* (I Thes. 5:21). If any teaching or practice fails the test, *"abstain from all appearance of evil"* (I Th. 5:22).
To honor God, we must separate over unrepented of moral transgression (I Cor. 5:5-11) and over cardinal doctrinal deviations (Rom. 16:17).

Jesus is NOT against judgment;

- **He is against hypocritical judgment** (to judge someone else for the same sin or lesser sin than you yourself are committing; this is the primary point in this context);
- **He is against premature judgment** (to judge someone based on a surface evaluation without having all the facts)
  John 7:24 Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.
- **He is against dishonest judgment** (to judge someone based on lies, conspiratorial witness, or dishonesty) Matthew 19:18 – "Thou shalt not bear false witness"
- **He is against illegitimate judgment** (to judge based on your rules and standards, not God's).

Examples of Illegitimate Judging:

1) We act as illegitimate judges when we:
Pre-judge motives that only God can see
(Illicit application of the law)

"We must not pass judgment on other's motives. We should examine their actions (*"fruits"* - Mt. 7:20) and attitudes, but we cannot judge their motives -- for only God can see their hearts. It is possible for a person to do a good work with a bad motive. It is also possible to fail in a task and yet be sincerely motivated" (Wiersbe, p. 29)

2) We act as illegitimate judges when we:
Make laws that God has not made
(Illicit legislation of the law)

SEE: James 4:11-12

You cannot pass judgment apart from God's Word. When you do, you are:

1. Setting yourself up above God's Word (*"Law"* - v. 11)

   When we set up additional rules that we think up, we are actually criticizing God's Law, implying that it is inadequate.

2. You are forgetting that God is the Law-giver and Judge (v. 12)

   a. He alone has the authority to establish the Law (*"one Lawgiver"*)

   b. He alone has the ability to enforce the Law (he alone can *"save and destroy"*)

      Did you die for them? When you have saved someone, then you can talk about them.

No believer has the right to "play God" in another believer's life.
Whenever we set up standards and rules for people that God has not set up, we ourselves become judges.
The self-made rules of the scribes and Pharisees actually nullified God's clear commandments (Mt. 15:2, 6).

The Pharisees were extremely judgmental and based their judgments on "appearances" (on the external and superficial) (John 7:24 - "*Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment."*)

Only God's Word can judge! (John 12:48 - *"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"*).

James 4

When we confront a lost person about his need for Christ, we are not judging him! God's Word is!

When we lovingly confront an erring brother -- again, it is God's Word that is doing the judging (Gal. 6:1 - *"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted"*).

Judgment from God's Word (to the person face to face) is not wrong -- it is commanded! (Mt. 18). What is wrong is your criticizing others behind their back.

3. We act as illegitimate judges when we:
   Pass sentences that only God has the right to do
   (Illicit Execution of the Law)

   When we seek to get even or condemn, we are illicit judges.

Whenever a person seeks to "get even" with another person (who did them wrong), they are seizing a prerogative that does not belong to them. God is the only Judge. Retribution is His! (Rom. 12:19-21 - *" Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."*).

EX: How John Hus (the Bohemian R.C.C. priest who got saved) was pronounced a "heretic" for his Biblical views (which differed from Rome) and was committed to the Devil and to Hell by the RCC cardinal. This is judging!

SEE Romans 14:1-12

* What should you do when you don't agree with a fellow-Christian over a disputable matter?

I. DON'T BE HIS ENEMY (vv.1-3)
(He has been received by God)

II. DON'T BE HIS MASTER (v.4)
(He has his own Master - God)

III. DON'T BE HIS CONSCIENCE (v.5)
(He is to be "fully persuaded in his own mind")

IV. DON'T BE HIS MOTIVE (vv.6-9)
(He is to please the Lord, not you)

V. DON'T BE HIS JUDGE (vv.10-12)
(He will be judged by God, so will you!)

V. 12 -

"Every one" - the universality of the Judgment (no one excluded)

"Shall" - the certainty of the Judgment (future tense)

"Give account" - the content of the Judgment (God's ledgers will be opened)

"Of himself" - the personal evaluation of the Judgment
--I will be held accountable for me
--I will be held accountable for you

--I will not be judged for your failings
--You will not be judged for mine

Therefore, we ought to judge ourselves, not others (I Cor. 11:31). We ought to fear the scrutiny of God, not others.

There is coming a judgment for the just (to determine rewards - I Cor. 3:13-15; II Cor. 5:10) and for the unjust (to determine punishment [the degree of eternal punishment] - Rev. 20:11-15).

We are commanded by Christ to *"**judge righteous judgment**"* (Jn. 7:24).

***Don't judge unrighteously!**

I. Before you judge others, COUNT THE COST (v. 1b-2)

God's Law of sowing and reaping (Gal. 6:2) applies to all areas of life, including the matter of judging.

"What goes around comes around"

V. 2

Such judgment is a boomerang. Like Haman, who built gallows for the Jews and ended up hanging on them himself (Esth. 7:10), and like cruel Adoni-bezek, who had ordered the thumbs and big toes to cut off seventy other kings and had his own eventually cut off (Judges 1:6-7).

So God will see to it that you are judged in the same way you judged (Cp. MacArthur, p. 434)

This verse deals with both the kind (quality) of judgment and the degree (quantity) of judgment.

In other words, the word "judgment" points to the criteria we use for evaluating others; whereas the word "measure" points to the cost we demand others to pay (if you show no forgiveness, you will receive none - Mt. 6:14-15; if you show no mercy you will receive none).

God's judgment will be without mercy upon the one who shows no mercy (Ja. 2:13 -*"For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment."*).

ILLUS: The parable of the unforgiving servant - Mt. 18:21-35

The word *"measure"* points to the price you demand someone to pay for violating a law are standard.

How much you demand will be how much is demanded of you!

The Bible teaches the principle that: the more demands you hold against others, the more demands God will hold against you.

The stricter you scrutinize others will determine the strictness of God's scrutiny of you.

"Grudge (gripe) not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned; behold, the Judge standeth before the door" (Ja. 5:9)

II. Before you judge others, CRITIQUE YOURSELF (v. 3-4

A. Beware of what you see (v. 3)

Jesus, having been a carpenter for 30 years while on earth, uses a most fitting illustration.

"Mote" - a wood chip, splinter, or a speck of saw dust.

"Beam" - a large heavy log or wooden plank

The interrogatives "why" (v. 3) and "how" (v. 4) are employed by Jesus to quicken the conscience. Questions have a way of probing deeper than any statement ever could.

What Jesus is saying is this: "What you see in others would require a pair of tweezers to remove; whereas, what you fail to see in yourself requires a hydraulic fork-lift tractor!

It's so easy to detect a mouse living in someone else's home, but to forget a rat lives in your own.

It's so easy to sense pride in someone else's life and to forget that your head is so big it won't fit in the mirror.

It's so easy to criticize a brother/sister or a church for not caring enough about you, but to fail to see how little you have done to show your love for them.

Husbands, it's easy to see how your wife does not submit to your headship, but difficult to see how you don't love her as your should (you see insubordination on her part, but it never crosses your mind how loveless and apathetic you are at home).

Wives, it's easy to see how unloving he is and yet fail to recognize how rebellious you are.

Wives, it's hypocrisy to demand that your children respect you, if you don't respect the authority of your husband.

Husbands, it's hypocrisy to demand that your children obey you, if you don't obey Christ and love your wife!

If we spent half the time looking at our own faults that we spend looking at the faults of others (EX: our spouse, co-worker, classmate, brother, parent, etc.), we would be revolutionized, revitalized, and revived!

B. Beware of what you <u>say</u> (v. 4)

Question: Why would anyone with a 2 x 4 beam in their eye even be concerned about the microscopic speck in someone else's eye?

Answer: To make themselves look good. To cover up the fact that they themselves have an "eye problem."

III. Before you judge others, <u>CLEAN UP YOUR OWN ACT</u>

While it is easy to "see" (v. 3) and "say" (v. 4), it is not so easy to <u>do</u>! (v. 5)

Rather than seeing what is wrong about others and talking about it, Jesus commands you to do something in your own life first!

"Hypocrite" - play actor; one who pretends to be a doctor when he himself is a critical patient; one who pretends to be qualified to give care, when he needs it the most!

"First. . . then" - Practicing righteous judgment is good and proper, so long as you prioritize your need for such "house cleaning" first.

As Christians, we should practice saw dust removal. But only after we have removed the studs in our lives.

"Then shalt thou <u>see clearly</u>" - Can you imagine what a mess someone would create who tried to do minor eye surgery on someone when he himself is blind?!

When we attempt to straighten someone else out when we ourselves are bent over with sin, not only are we unable, but such an attempt will be received with contempt!

EX: One reason why your children do not respect your advice is because they can see right through your hypocrisy.

EX: One reason why you are ineffective as a witness for Christ is because your life speaks so loud, they cannot hear what you are saying.

We can do more damage than a speck of sawdust can if we cannot see clearly and approach the problem with patience, sensitivity, genuine concern, and God's control.

One practical reason for dealing with our own hang ups is so that we can do a good job at helping others with theirs.

The blind cannot lead the blind (SEE: the same context in Luke 6:37 and 39-42).

CONCLUSION:

Beware of 2 extremes when you look at yourself:

1) "Shallow examination" (too quick a glance - leading to forgetfulness) (James 1:22-25)

2) "Chronic introspection" (too long a stare - leading to discouragement)
(II Cor. 2:7, 11)

It's time to <u>clean house</u>! It's time for <u>spring cleaning</u>! It's time for a <u>full examination</u>!