



JUDGE NOT LEST YE BE JUDGED Matthew 7 Part 2

Last week I spoke about how there are definite times in our lives when we are supposed to make judgments about things. This morning, I want to look at instances in the Bible that show us definite times we are NOT supposed to pass judgment on others.

Ten cases when it is wrong for us to judge:

1. When we are controlled by self-righteousness - Be careful about thinking that you have it all together spiritually. When you do, you are on shaky ground. It is when we think that we have it all together that we are often close to coming apart spiritually. In this chapter, Jesus is asking us to focus on ourselves, our own short comings, and our own sins. Most of us are familiar with the account of Jesus speaking a parable in Luke 18 to "some who trusted in themselves." The more I walk with Jesus, the more I am learning that I cannot trust in myself. I am realizing that when I trust in anything or anyone other than Him I am on shaky ground.

⁹ Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: ¹⁰ "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' ¹³ And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, **'God, be merciful to me a sinner!'** ¹⁴ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." (Luke 18:9-14, NKJV).

Jesus is telling us that God opposes the proud but He gives grace to the humble. Pride is our greatest enemy. Remember how I've told you all over and over that pride is what made the beautiful Lucifer turn into the Devil.



2. When we haven't confessed and repented of our sin first - It is our tendency to see our own weaknesses in the lives of others. In reality we need to get our own lives in order before we can even think about helping someone else with their problems. In Romans 2:1-3, Paul says, *"Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things."*² *But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things.*³ *And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God?*



3. When we hold others to a standard we have no intention of keeping - Some sincerely hold those around them to a higher standard than they hold themselves to. Don't be a phony. Start off by holding yourself to the only standard that matters. What is the only standard that matters? ²¹ *To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.* ²² *"He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."* (1 Peter 2:21-22, NIV).



4. When we use worldly external superficial standards - The standards of the world do not matter. What matters are the standards of God. In James Chapter 2, the brother of Jesus tells us that we will have the tendency to make judgments according to the things of the world such as wealth and appearance. He warns us **NOT TO DO IT!** Let's remember again that story that I love to tell over and over. It proves that God is not impressed by form, but by the substance of the heart. Remember when Samuel was commissioned by God to go anoint a new king. He went to the house of Jesse. He explained to Jesse why he was there.

⁵ *Samuel replied, "Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me." Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.*⁶ *When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed stands here before the LORD."*⁷ **But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."**⁸ *Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, "The LORD has not chosen this one either."*⁹ *Jesse then had Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, "Nor has the LORD chosen this one."*¹⁰ *Jesse had seven of his sons pass before*

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Samuel, but Samuel said to him, "The LORD has not chosen these." ¹¹ So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse answered. "He is tending the sheep." Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives."¹² So he sent for him and had him brought in. He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; this is the one." (1 Samuel 16:5-12, NIV). God help us each to listen to His voice so that we look not at the outward appearance but at the heart. God is interested ONLY in matters of the heart.

5. When we have not taken the time to learn all the facts - We get into all kinds of trouble when we jump to conclusions. It leads us to believe one side and not another. It leads us to make assumptions that are wrong. Remember in Acts 11 when we studied about the vision that Peter saw of the great sheet coming down from heaven. Let's look again at the passage and we'll learn how important it is to get all the facts before we make a judgment about something.

The apostles and the believers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. ² So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him ³ and said, "You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them." ⁴ Starting from the beginning, Peter told them the whole story". (Acts 11:1-4, NIV). Peter then went on to tell them about the vision of the sheet being let down from heaven with the unclean animals. God spoke to him and told him to "kill and eat."

Peter didn't want to believe what God was telling him and then once he believed, no one else would believe him. They finally heard all of the facts and they settled down. Peter continued the story, ¹⁵ "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. ¹⁶ Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' ¹⁷ So if God gave them the same gift he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could stand in God's way?" ¹⁸ When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life." (Acts 11:15-18, NIV).

I think we can learn from this to hold back on our judgments. We should be very careful to listen to the whole story. Proverbs 18 speaks to this. Verse 13 states: "To answer before listening—that is folly and shame. Then in verse 17 we read, "In a lawsuit the first to speak seems right, until someone comes forward and cross-examines." You've got to hear both sides of every story. Let's always get the whole story before we make a judgment.

It may not be useful to judge someone else's behavior based on your own motives for behaving that way.

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6. When the matters involved are issues of motive - Do you really have the ability to look into someone else's heart? Can you know the motives of another? NO. We can't even know for sure the motives of our own hearts. In 1 Corinthians 4:1-5 Paul was "conscious of nothing against himself," but he's saying even though he might have a clear conscience about something he's saying or

doing, he might actually be hurting someone without knowing it.

God will disclose the motives of men's hearts at the end, and then all of our motives will be exposed. We can't know the motives of another so stop trying to figure them out. We can't determine these things because our own hearts are "desperately wicked." (Jeremiah 17:9) Let's get into the habit of attributing the best motives to others. Assume the best in others when they do something. I remember once allowing a farmer to plant potatoes in one of my fields. He asked me what I would charge and I told him nothing. He crossed his arms and looked at me suspiciously trying to figure out what I was trying to get out of him. All I wanted was the joy to see my field being planted and being productive. We get into all kinds of weirdness when we try to second guess every action someone does for us.

7. When the matters are issues of conscience - Don't judge others in matters that are not black and white, but "grey matters." Paul explains in Romans 14 that believers have many different ideas of what is right and wrong in peripheral matters. Some at that time believed it was wrong to eat meat and others did not. Some felt it was right to worship on a particular day, but wrong to do so on another day. Paul says, DON'T CONDEMN EACH OTHER ON THINGS THAT DON'T MATTER (Faber's paraphrase).

He goes on to tell us that Jesus is the ultimate master that we all should live to please. Often, Paul says, it is the "weaker brother" who thinks he's more spiritual, but in fact he is the weaker brother. So what am I talking about here? Don't look down on the legalistic person. Paul says, "Jesus is the ultimate master and we're going to live for him." Here are some of the things I would categorize in the "grey area" category.

A person might say:

1. "I don't celebrate Christmas. It's pagan." Well I do, and I enjoy Christmas trees.
2. "I don't watch TV. Maybe you shouldn't either." I don't watch TV because I find it horrifically boring.
3. "I don't celebrate Halloween." But, maybe it's a good thing to go down to the church for Trunk or Treat. Otherwise kids may never hear the gospel.
4. "I only home school my kids, and you should too or you are bad." I home schooled my kids part of the time and part of the time I didn't. I prayed and did what God told me to do. You pray and do what He tells you to do.
5. "I don't drink alcohol and neither should you." I would answer that the Bible doesn't prohibit the enjoyment of alcohol. It prohibits drunkenness. If you can't drink without being a drunk then don't drink. Don't push it on others and don't pull it from others. It is a personal choice.
6. "Self-Defense with guns is wrong for Christians." Some feel it is wrong for a Christian to defend themselves with weapons. I don't feel that is a Biblical position, but if someone wants to live that way (like our Amish friends) then let them do so and don't judge them.

Paul says these matters of conscience will all come before the Lord Jesus. Don't wander into the weeds on these things. It is a spiritual waste of time.

8. Wrong to judge when we attempt to explain God's providence to others - Sandy and I had a friend with cancer and many well-meaning Christians told her: "you're not praying with faith. God cannot and won't heal a prayer that has no faith behind it." It's that same person who says to another, "I know why you're going through these things. You have unconfessed sin in your life".

These are lies from the pit of hell. You can't begin to explain the providence of God to others. Jesus covered this when He told the story in John 9. They asked him, "Rabbi, is this person in this condition because of his sin or the sin of his parents." They were wrong with both options. Jesus basically said, this happened to him in order that the greatness of God might be revealed. The same thing happened with Job. Job's friends blamed him for his suffering. What happened in Chapter 42? God said He was angry with the three who had accused Job of wrongdoing. Job prayed for them and God forgave them. It is not for us to judge others as to why certain things are happening to them in their lives.

9. Wrong to judge when we have self-seeking motives - John 12 says: They made him a supper there, and Lazarus was there at the table. Mary (sister of Lazarus) then anointed the feet of Jesus". Judas sounds more spiritual than all the others when he comments that the oil could have been sold to feed the poor, but he had self-seeking motives. Judas wasn't concerned with the poor. He was a thief and wanted to steal the money. We also have self-seeking motives when we put others down to feel better about ourselves.

10. Wrong to judge when we give up on the unsaved - This is really important. It addresses how we need to be careful because we can easily feel superior to the blind, the perverted, the wicked, and the lost around us. When Jesus was rejected by a Samaritan village in Luke 9:51-56, His disciples asked, "Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to destroy them." Jesus answered, "the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them."

We need to be very careful about looking at the unsaved with anything but compassion. How did God treat you? Jesus is telling us to have compassion on the sinner. Stop looking at their sin. Love the sinner. Notice, the need for accurate self-judgment. Judgment begins in my life with me and in your life with you. When we become preoccupied with the sins and faults of others we become blinded to our own greater sin.

How do we examine ourselves and how do we truly help others in sin?

1. With the Word of God - If you are moving through your life without the cleansing of the Word you are flying blind. Hebrews 4:12 tells us that the Word discerns the motives and intents of the heart. Do you want to see yourself rightly? James Chapter 1 (the Mirror of the WORD) will reveal who you are. The Word searches you out. The Word exposes your real motives.

2. How do we help a brother or a sister? First, let's attribute the best of motives to each other's actions. First take the log out of your own eye and THEN help your brother or sister with that speck in his or her eye, and do it with total humility and love (See Matthew 18:4).

Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. ² Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. ³ If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. ⁴ Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else,.....

⁷ Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. ⁸ Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. ⁹ Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. (Galations 6:1-4, 7-10, NIV).

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