

Do Christians Get to Judge Others?

Matthew 7:1–2: *1 Do not judge so that you will not be judged. 2 For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.*



Jesus plainly tells us in **Matthew 7:1** that we are not to judge others. Ah, if only it were that easy! The fact of the matter is the New Testament gives us many examples of things we are to make judgments about. At first glance, this can sound like a massive contradiction. Don't judge! Wait, do judge, and here is your list! As with any apparent Bible contradiction, all we need to do is understand the two apparently differing views in their appropriate context and we will end up with a harmonious and powerful lesson. The reason that our Christian responsibility towards judgment comes across this way is to remind us of the importance of how we do things. Standing as a representative of Jesus means working to respond to all things the way Jesus did.

Judging others is something most humans do, often without even realizing it. It's a mix of biology, psychology and culture at play. On a basic level, our brains are hardwired to assess and categorize people and situations. It's an ancient survival mechanism that helped our ancestors identify threats or form alliances.

Even though we may have to judge in certain circumstances, let's begin with a solemn warning from Jesus to NOT judge others! Does this go against everything we just said? In the Sermon on the Mount, **Matthew 7:1–5** is a commonly quoted teaching of Jesus. These verses reveal the great danger of making judgments on others with the wrong motivation.

Jesus opens this part of his teaching with a fundamental warning:

Matthew 7:1: *Do not **judge** <2919> so that you will not be **judged** <2919>.*

Judge: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #2919 *krino*: properly, to distinguish, i.e. decide (mentally or judicially); by implication, to try, condemn, punish

People tend to quote this when they are criticized: *You have no right to judge me—I'm going to do what I want when I want. Jesus said you can't judge me!* People who know nothing of Jesus incorrectly interpret this to mean Jesus accepts any lifestyle or ideas.

That is a convenient interpretation—it makes us feel good and makes us feel like what we're doing is okay. But that is NOT what Jesus was saying at all.

Jesus next explains how the way we judge others determines how we will be judged:

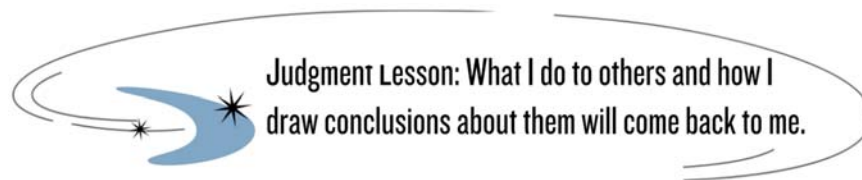
Matthew 7:2: *For in the way you **judge** <2917>, you will be **judged** <2919>; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.*

Judge: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #2917 *krima*: from #2919; a decision (the function or the effect, for or against ["crime"])

For in the way you judge—this word for *judge* is a slightly different form of the word, having the idea of a decision. Jesus is demonstrating how quickly we go from thinking about someone in an arbitrarily negative way to deciding about them.



We will be judged by the *standard of measure* with which we judge others. This should be a red flag (even more than a red flag—a road closed!) when we critique others stemming from our jealousy of them. Or from our being hypocritical, careless, self-righteous, revengeful and so on.



Perhaps even subconsciously, we might judge others in an effort to feel better about ourselves, especially if we're comparing their flaws to our strengths. Appropriate, scriptural judgment has nothing to do with comparisons. We'll see that unfold as Jesus continues his teaching.

Jesus next illustrates the trap of faultfinding:

Matthew 7:3: Why do you look at the *speck* <2595> (a small twig) that is in your brother's eye, but do not *notice* <2657> the *log* <1385> (a giant beam of wood) that is in your own eye?

Speck: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #2595 *karphos*: from *karpho* (to wither); a dry twig or straw

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon: 1) a dry stalk or twig, a straw 2) chaff

Log: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #1385 *dokos*: (through the idea of holding up); a stick of timber

Notice: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #2657 *kataneo*: from #2596 and #3539; to observe fully

The word *notice* here doesn't mean a passing glance. It means "to observe fully." We might know we aren't perfect but are not fully observing and acknowledging that fact. If we're busy trying to find out what others are doing wrong, there's no time left to take that uncomfortable look at ourselves.



Jesus is using hyperbole to make a profoundly important point dramatic enough to remember. When we become faultfinders, our own faults become glaringly obvious before God. By inappropriately judging others, Jesus says this is exactly what we are doing.



Remember, this is part of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus' audience was likely a mix of Jews casually listening who were familiar with the Law and Jesus' disciples who followed him more closely. They were all used to the judgmental attitude of their religious leaders—the Pharisees—so this admonition against judgment would be a radical new example and standard.

Jesus is basically saying, *Do not do the kinds of things that your leaders are regularly doing—and are proud of doing.* The entire Sermon on the Mount takes all of what his audience had been observing in their leaders, putting it back in the context of how it should have been taught.

If our brother does have a speck in his eye, shouldn't we point it out? Aren't we helping?



Remember what our moms always told us: When we point our finger in judgment at others, we have three fingers pointing back at us! We can smile about that, but that is the principle Jesus is teaching. Our judgments are not to be arbitrary or comparative.

Jesus next illustrates this very reaction on our part in his teaching:

Matthew 7:4: *Or how can you say to your brother, Let me take the speck out of your eye, and behold, the log is in your own eye?*

Jesus is seriously getting our attention with this ridiculous comparison! Here is what he is saying: When we look at someone else's fault and act on it, we are presenting ourselves as holy in the process. *Oh, look, Jonathan, you have a speck in your eye. Let me, the master of judgment, take care of that little, tiny problem you have that I know is not good for you.*

This is not what our judgment is supposed to be. The judgmental attitude of the Pharisees followed those lines. Remember the parable Jesus gave of the Pharisee and the sinner praying in the Temple? The Pharisee says, *Lord, thank you that I'm not like that guy. I follow the Law, I fast and I pray.* The other man, the sinner, says, *Lord, please, please forgive me, for I am a sinner.* Jesus responds that the sinner went home justified in God's sight, but the Pharisee did not. This is the lesson Jesus is teaching. We want to learn what we are supposed to do and what we are not supposed to do.

Jesus continues with his conclusion:

Matthew 7:5: *You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly <1227> to take the speck out of your brother's eye.*

Clearly: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #1227 *diabolepo*: from #1223 and #991 to look through, i.e. recover full vision

This word *clearly* means to *recover full vision*. It is a rare word used only once in the Bible. In literature, that's called a "hapax legomenon," a concept to be studied closely because it is rare and special.

*The Parable of
the Pharisee and the
Tax Collector*
Luke 18:11-14

We can be hypocrites. We need self-introspection to remove that big monster branch out of our eye so we can see fully. We can only recover our full vision by removing whatever obstacles are preventing us from seeing clearly with godly judgment.

We can see Jesus' clear and very sound warning as to what he expects of us as his disciples.



WHEN TO JUDGE AND WHEN NOT TO JUDGE: Judging others can be dangerous territory.

Because we can't judge another's heart, Jesus has given us several questions to ask ourselves:

- What faults might I have that can negatively skew my view of others?
- Because I cannot read anyone's heart, am I judging other's actions appropriately?
- Am I judging based upon clear truth because I have clear sight?
- What is motivating my judgment? Godly principles or anger, revenge, jealousy or self-righteousness?

These five verses in **Matthew 7** are real eye openers. Jesus is making us think about the seriousness of drawing conclusions about others!

How are we supposed to make needed Christian judgments with such a loud and clear warning against judging in front of us?

It is no accident that Jesus gave us this blunt warning years before the true Christian church was established at Pentecost. Once the apostles and early church were given God's spirit as their basis of operation, our responsibilities towards one another would be more clearly defined. The filter for our necessary judgments would need God's spirit and Jesus' words.

But what do we do with the fact that Jesus bluntly told us not to judge?

John 7:24 says, *Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.* This scripture and others written after Pentecost tell us we aren't supposed to incorrectly judge. A lot of it has to do with self-awareness and the intention behind the judgment.

When should we engage in God-honoring, *righteous judgment*?

The Scriptures give us many examples of when appropriate judgment should be exercised, but it comes down to God's spirit moving within us while employing the compassion of Jesus. This is why Jesus spent so much time saying not to judge. Inappropriate judging is a grave mistake.

Let's acknowledge some of the judgments for which we ARE responsible. All of these judgments should be made with careful attention to the the influence of God's spirit in our minds.





As Christians, we should be judging basic earthly disputes amongst ourselves:

1 Corinthians 6:1–3: *1 Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare to go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints?*

(Source: Bible Commentary by David Guzik) *go to law before the unrighteous* Apparently, one Christian believed he had been wronged by another, and sought justice in the local courts. The local judge sat in what was known as the “bema” seat of the civil magistrate, located in the heart of the marketplace. Because Greek culture found a good legal battle entertaining, anyone’s lawsuit soon became public knowledge.

2 Or do you not know that the saints will judge <2919> the world? If the world is judged <2919> by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts?

Other translations say things like, *are you incompetent to try trivial cases? Or, ...even the smallest matters?*

3 Do you not know that we will judge <2919> angels? How much more matters of this life?

We are supposed to be able to take care of basic, temporal issues amongst ourselves because of this interconnected trust.

The Apostle Paul continues by encouraging the brotherhood to apply their Christian maturity to their daily lives, especially when it comes to temporal things in dispute. Find those amongst ourselves who have the needed wisdom in Christ to help, and HUMBLY work through the matter.

The resolution of these issues doesn’t come from an arrogant answer of, *Oh, I’ve got the answer.* It comes from the humility of understanding, the compassion for each other and that interconnectedness. The Apostle is saying, *You are in Christ; act like it!*



As Christians, we have the responsibility to judge and expose false prophets:

Matthew 7:15–20: *15 Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? 17 So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 So then, you will know them by their fruits.*

Interestingly, Jesus does not tell us to judge each other by our fruits anywhere in Scripture. This applies only to false prophets. You will know them by their fruits because bad fruit comes from a bad tree.

This gets touchy because no one comes into your church wearing an “I’m a false prophet” T-shirt! On this podcast, we’ve called out pretty strongly those who teach the so-called “Prosperity Gospel.” Jesus and the apostles never taught that Christian “fruit”—evidence of God’s holy spirit—is monetary wealth or status.

We want to stay clear on what is appropriate, scriptural, godly and Christlike. When teaching that steps outside of the Scriptures comes from a position of influence, we need to respond to it. If someone thinks differently than we do, we can correct or nurture and develop that thought. But if that person is a person of influence in the church, we need to address any gross misapplication. This is another responsibility of Christians regarding judgment.



As Christians, we have the sober responsibility to judge serious moral issues within the brotherhood:

1 Corinthians 5:1-2: *1 It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife. 2 You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst.*

The Apostle Paul rebukes them—*You have become arrogant and have not mourned.* They were taking this sin lightly. There was no heartbreak over something so disgraceful. We are required to show unconditional love, not unconditional approval and tolerance. Unconditional love works hard toward what is best for those whom we love. This is why Jesus did what he did and taught what he taught.

Immoral activity has no place within the brotherhood because, as the Apostle Paul said, we are now sanctified in Christ. We are set apart. We are not part of that world; we are part of the spiritual growth that comes from following Christ. Humility, biblical clarity, a mournful attitude and mercy should guide our judgments regarding these kinds of moral issues. We cannot be afraid to stand firm, as that is what we are called to do. But, again, it MUST come through humility, biblical clarity, a mournful attitude (not rejoicing in taking someone to task) and mercy.



As Christians, we are called upon to judge who should be shepherding the flock:

1 Timothy 3:1-2: *1 It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. 2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach.*

The Apostle Paul is writing to Timothy about the qualifications of an overseer (a pastor or minister), laying out the process for choosing overseers. When Paul and Barnabas were on a missionary journey, they went to different places, setting up and visiting other churches. They taught each of these churches to be independent representations of Christlikeness. Once set up, each church was its own independent, autonomous group that served God on its own.

Here is the process laid out for them to follow:

Acts 14:23: (KJV) *And when they had ordained <5500> them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.*



Ordained: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #5500 *cheirotoneo*: (to stretch); to be a hand-reacher or voter (by raising the hand), i.e. (generally) to select or appoint

A lot of our Christian friends don't realize that the pattern the apostles laid out was for the congregation to elect their clergy from within their own membership. This is very different from the "top down" management practice used by most church organizations of assigning their leaders.

We went over this in great detail in Episode #1140: "Does My Church Leadership Have it Right?" *Uncovering what biblical church organization and leadership look like.*



Judging who should lead the congregation is a serious responsibility. Following the scriptural guideline of qualifications laid out in **1 Timothy 3:1-13**, **Titus 1:5-11** and other places is part of this critical process. Our Christlike judgment should shine through. This is not "me first"; but rather, putting Christ's principles first.



As Christians, we are called upon to know the truth of the gospel and to judge and respond when we see teachings not in line with that gospel:

The Galatian church was being led down a road that mixed the Jewish Law with the gospel:

Galatians 1:6-8: *6 I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; 7 which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!*

The apostle is clearly saying there is one gospel. It is written in God's holy word. Do not veer away from it!

Our judgments in this area should be based on our diligent proving of the gospel.

This becomes a serious, personal responsibility:



2 Timothy 2:15: *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.*

We must be willing to defend the gospel. Once again, the key factors as we exercise this privilege are humility and God's grace. When we look at what we are supposed to judge, we see they are serious and significant issues. Judging in these matters still comes down to acting with humility while using godly, scriptural principles.



WHEN TO JUDGE AND WHEN NOT TO JUDGE: While judgment **DOES** play an important role in our Christian lives, we need to always be aware of our approach and demeanor when faced with making it happen. Judging can have value when **it comes from a place of genuine care or concern to guide, protect or uplift.** Let's remember to leave our ego at the door while we invite the humility of Christlikeness to come in and rule our hearts.

Having what Jesus taught us about the dangers of judging as a foundation gives us a way to build God-honoring judgments into our lives.

How do we make sure that all of these judgments we are responsible for are being followed through in the most appropriate way?

Being sure of what we are doing is always subject to the way our human hearts and minds are wired. While this can be frustrating, we have access to the massive relief that Jesus provided when he showed us the dangers of inappropriate judgment. It is SO important to keep these principles in focus.

1. Jesus warns: Do not judge.
2. The Christian is given the responsibility to judge in certain circumstances.

In order to make sense of this contradiction, we need to put all of this together.

Interestingly, the Matthew 7 verses used the theme of your eye and your brother's eye:

Matthew 7:3-5: *3 Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, Let me take the speck out of your eye, and behold, the log is in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.*



Why is Jesus using *your brother's eye* and *your own eye* over and over? Jesus was building on something he said earlier in the Sermon on the Mount. He often used the teaching technique of introducing an idea and then building on it later. Let's go back to the **Matthew 6** portion of the Sermon on the Mount for more context.



In **Matthew 6:19-21**, Jesus warns us not to store up earthly treasure because it's all temporary with no ultimate value. Think of all the Egyptian kings buried with precious gold and jewels destined for the afterlife that just sits in the sand and dust with their skeletons.

Our efforts and energy will go where our treasure is, so Jesus tells us it is better to store up precious heavenly treasure:

Matthew 6:19-23: *19 Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; 21 for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. 22 The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear (meaning, single, as in not having double vision), your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!*

In this previous part of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus discussed light and darkness and said the eye is the key to determining which is in us. Here, Jesus is telling us that our eye, as the *lamp of the body*, cannot be



totally relied upon. In **Matthew 7**, he told us the faults in our own “eye,” our own perceptions and prejudices, need to be “observed fully” and introspectively examined so we can “recover full vision” regarding our brother.

We know a sister in Christ who went through a medical condition with literal double vision. Her doctor recommended physical therapy. It was a long process that initially had little to no improvement, but she kept at it, and over time, her brain rewired her eyesight to see clearly again.

This a beautiful picture of exactly what Jesus is saying. Our eye needs to be full of light. In **Matthew 7**, the light is blocked by the “log,” preventing us from seeing clearly. Earlier, in **Matthew 6**, Jesus talked about clarifying our “double vision” by improving our focus to a singular vision that glorifies God.

How do we change our faulty vision? We focus our eye with a singular vision—not on judging others; but rather, fixing our eyes on Jesus:

Hebrews 12:1–2: *1 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us (referring to the wonderful examples of all the faithful men and women in the Bible), let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

We might call this having “sanctified eyesight.” Our focus is single-minded and set apart for Jesus and the principles he taught.

Learning how to judge appropriately requires clearly focusing on how Jesus lived. For example, in **Matthew 23**, Jesus warned the scribes and Pharisees and called them hypocrites, but he died for them despite passing judgment on them for the evil they had done. Ultimately he left them to God’s judgment.

Now the next step:

Hebrews 12:3: *For consider (contemplate) him who has endured such hostility by sinners against himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

It is not enough to just focus on Jesus; we have to really look inside ourselves to see where we need to change, giving ourselves space to grow and develop that single-minded focus.

Often, our judgment of others is driven by insecurity, prejudice or feelings of superiority. Fixing our eyes on Jesus and contemplating his non-judgmental approach can refocus our eyes!

1 Peter 2:21–25: *21 For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in his steps, 22 who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in his mouth; 23 and while being reviled, he did not revile in return; while suffering, he uttered no threats, but kept entrusting himself to Him who judges righteously;*

Jesus heard the words that were spoken, but he did not speak and retaliate—*leaving you an example for you to follow in his steps*. We marvel that while he was suffering, he did not utter any threats—*he did not revile in return*. He is our example. We can learn to do this. It is about contemplating Jesus' life so that a change can be made in ours.

Further:

24 and he himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by his wounds you were healed. 25 For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

One way we stray like sheep is by not removing the branches of faulty perception that continue to block our vision. We have these big old tree branches growing out of our eyes, and we can't see past them. *By his wounds you were healed*—the healing process involves learning to see properly in order to judge responsibly, and thus stand as a representative of Christ. Live healed!

As we've mentioned, judgments obviously need to be made. The problem comes most often when we lead with judgment. We see the circumstance, and we start with judging. This is not what Jesus or the apostles are teaching. Instead, approach whatever circumstance with Christlike humility, wisdom and character. Let the judgment follow along. Because we are leading with a Christlike character, our vision will be clearer—not perfect, but clearer.

Now we can more easily identify the sinful, human patterns of arbitrary judgment that are so toxic. We need to get away from toxic things that will kill us:

Romans 2:1–3: *1 Therefore you have no excuse, every one of you who passes judgment <2919>, for in that which you judge <2919> another, you condemn <2632> yourself; for you who judge <2919> practice the same things. 2 And we know that the judgment <2917> of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. 3 But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment <2919> on those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment <2917> of God?*

Condemn: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #2632 *katakrino*: from #2596 and #2919; to judge against, i.e. sentence

You condemn yourself—this is a bit harsher. This *judge* or *condemn* means to “judge against” or “to sentence.” There is a finality to it. Just like Jesus said, *You will be judged by the way you judge*, Paul is saying, *You are going to condemn yourself*.

Paul is blunt. When we judge others in a careless and self-unaware way, we bring a harsh sentence upon ourselves, and we give God a panoramic view of our faulty character! It says to Him, *This is just what I am*. We want to be Christlike and say, *This is what I am striving to become—in spite of who I am*. There's the difference!

One practical way to help us with our judgmental attitudes is to practice empathy. Put yourself in the other person's shoes, considering their challenges and background. Maybe this shift in perspective can help us soften our judgment.

One of the issues in passing judgment on another is when we presume to know their motivation. Even if outwardly the person appears to be doing the right thing, we judge their motives as being sinister—we say they have “ulterior motives.”

Ulterior: existing beyond what is obvious or admitted; intentionally hidden

If we are accusing others in this way, we probably have a few secret motivations of our own that need to be brought out into the light and examined. We probably have big old tree branches!

When we start judging somebody else’s motives, what have we become? Something we have no right to become. We have to back off and only judge appropriately in a Christlike fashion.



WHEN TO JUDGE AND WHEN NOT TO JUDGE: Appropriate and godly Christian judgment is firmly and clearly based upon following the inspiring and principled pattern that Jesus set for us. With his example clearly established in our line of sight, we can readily compare our natural and faulty mindset with a God-honoring example.

Now, we just need to make the necessary changes as we follow Jesus regarding our judgments.

We need to see it, embrace it and then work on it. If we pay attention to the standards the Bible sets and Jesus's example, then we can truly be excited to apply what we are learning!

Now that we have identified a sound biblical basis for when and how to judge, what should we be walking away with?

There are many takeaways from this lesson on appropriate judgment. The final result, though, is simple, as it has two main components.

1. Knowing what I know now, how do I perceive those around me when potential judgments arise?
2. How am I distinctly changing my approach to judging others to be more Christlike?

Let’s reread:

Matthew 7:3: Why do you look at the *speck* <2595> that is in your brother’s eye, but do not *notice* <2657> the *log* <1385> that is in your own eye?

Remember, that word for *notice* means “to observe fully.”



Lesson 1:

We have to observe fully the big old branch that is obscuring our vision so we can help the brother who has a little twig in his eye. How do we practice the concept of full observation?

Here is a principled example of how we are to “notice” the brotherhood. First, we remember where we came from and work on elevating our character as disciples:

James 1:21–25: 21 *...in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.* 22 *But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.* 23 *For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks <2657> at his natural face in a mirror; 24 for once he has looked <2657> at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.*

James is saying that if we are just hearers of the word, we can go to the mirror, look at ourselves and see ourselves for what we truly are and what we need to work on. But then we don't do it—we don't follow through with the work.

Here is what he says about those who are doers of the word:

25 *But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed...*

James has more to say about judging.



READ JAMES 4 ABOUT SPEAKING EVIL ABOUT ONE ANOTHER AND JUDGING OUR BROTHER.

James 4:12: (Good News Translation) *God is the only Lawgiver and Judge. He alone can save and destroy. Who do you think you are, to judge someone else?*

Focusing on Jesus and contemplating his example but not changing into doers of the word is an exercise in futility. We need to carefully and honestly look at ourselves to discern our motives in judging someone else. What are the branches in our own eyes? Is it that big old branch that blocks me from being able to discern another's situation carefully? What part of “me” is in the way? What prejudice or experience in my life has led me to judge this individual with less than Christlike integrity?



Lesson 2:

We take that elevated maturity in Christ from that full self-observation, and we learn to pour it out onto others:

Hebrews 10:22–24: 22 *let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.* 23 *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; 24 and let us consider <2657> how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds.*

Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds means “to observe fully” how to stimulate one another. Instead of looking at someone and thinking we know what they are thinking or how they need to be corrected, we should instead consider how we can contribute to their lives in a way that brings love, goodness and Christlikeness.

How do we lift up others using our new maturity in Christ? In part, by not leading with judgment in our interactions with them. Judgment follows only when it is needed. We need that sanctified thinking and approach so we can do things in a Christlike fashion.

A few more verses to refocus on looking to God as our source for all goodness:

Matthew 7:9–12: *9 Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? 11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him! 12 In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.*

Jesus says even imperfect fathers give good gifts to their children, so why would God, our Father, not give good gifts to us? Jesus only spoke the words God gave him, so this teaching comes from God.

Verse 12 describes the “Golden Rule.” It is a profound way to lead with high-level character, letting judgment only follow when it is appropriate.

Isn't it ironic how Jesus was so emphatic about how to treat people, and yet he was judged literally to death for not meeting the expectations of how the Messiah should arrive and what he was there to do?



Finally, it is important for Christians to recognize the role of Christian liberty.

We are called upon to NOT judge another's conscience in matters of preference or maturity:

Romans 14:2–4: *2 One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only. 3 The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him. 4 Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.*

The brotherhood of Christ is diverse. We all think and act differently. We should embrace the differences without pushing our own way of seeing things. Let's respect Christian liberty and appreciate each other's individuality without trying to change each other.

We already saw in **1 Corinthians 6** that the faithful followers of Jesus are involved with the judgment of the world and angels in the future kingdom, but for our discussion about the here and now, do Christians get to judge others? Yes, but only in specific circumstances and with the right heart attitude.

Do we “get” to judge others? No!

Rather, am I required to judge others based on certain scriptural principles and putting things in a Christlike fashion, approaching it with humility, scriptural principle, godly wisdom and mercy? Yes!

Asking, do I “get” to judge others leads with our fallen humanity. Jesus showed us we don’t “get” to, but sometimes we are required to. There is the difference.

Our kind understanding and loving treatment of others in these matters is just as important as matters of serious principle and morality that require judgment. Why? Because it is all about Christlikeness.

No matter what the circumstances are, before judging others we must use the opportunity to make sure that there is no log in my eye causing faulty vision. I must ensure that I have a single, clear vision, focused on our Lord, so that I can see through this godly vision and godly eyesight with godly mercy and scriptural compassion to do the right thing. Judgment follows in an appropriate way.



WHEN TO JUDGE AND WHEN NOT TO JUDGE: While judging others is a very serious task that requires our highest spiritual integrity, there is also a blessed side to the whole matter. Whenever we apply proper judgment with a proper attitude, we will inevitably be living as an example of Christlikeness.

This glorifies God—and THAT is the bottom line!

We give glory to our heavenly Father by walking in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus.

Judgment? Yes, it’s necessary at times. Should we seek it out? No. If the necessity to judge comes to us, we need to apply the principles given to us by the inspired writers of the New Testament so we can accomplish the task in the most Christlike way possible.

This is how Christian judgment should look according to the word of God.

**So, do Christians get to judge others?
For Rick, Jonathan, Julie and Christian Questions...
...Think about it!**

All scriptures cited are from the NASB1995 translation unless otherwise noted.





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Other notes related to Jesus' warnings about hypocritical judgment

Here is a clear judgment that Jesus tells us to make:

Matthew 7:6: *Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.*

(Source: Bible Commentary by Matthew Poole): The precept doubtless is general, directing the ministers of Christ to administer the holy things, with which they are intrusted, only to such as have a right to them, and under prudent circumstances, so as the holy name of God may not be profaned, nor they run into needless danger.

Jesus fulfilled this in his own ministry. He did not offer the “good news” of the gospel to those outside of God’s chosen people except on certain occasions where he was demonstrably received with respect.

He also did not plainly explain the gospel to the average Jewish audience:

Matthew 13:34–35: *34 All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables, and he did not speak to them without a parable. 35 This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: I WILL OPEN MY MOUTH IN PARABLES; I WILL UTTER THINGS HIDDEN SINCE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.*

Jesus lays out an important principle behind his judgment:

John 12:46–50: (NRSV) *I have come as light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me should not remain in the darkness. 47 I do not judge anyone who hears my words and does not keep them, for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. 48 The one who rejects me and does not receive my word has a judge; on the last day the word that I have spoken will serve as judge, 49 for I have not spoken on my own, but the Father who sent me has Himself given me a commandment about what to say and what to speak. 50 And I know that His commandment is eternal life. What I speak, therefore, I speak just as the Father has told me.*

Jesus is just in his judgment:

John 5:28–30: (NRSV) *25 Do not be astonished at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice 29 and will come out—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. 30 I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek to do not my own will but the will of Him who sent me.*

We are warned to NOT judge (scrutinize) others or ourselves:

1 Corinthians 4:1–5: (NRSV) *1 Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God’s mysteries. 2 Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy. 3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. I do not even judge myself. 4 I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. 5 Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive commendation from God.*

A few chapters later, Paul encourages appropriate self-judgment:

1 Corinthians 11:28–32: (NRSV) *28 Examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink **judgment** <2917> against themselves. 30 For this reason many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. 31 But if we **judged** <1252> ourselves, we would not be **judged** <2919>. 32 But when we are **judged** <2919> by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be **condemned** <2632> along with the world.*

Judged: Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance #1252 *diakrinō*; to separate thoroughly, i.e. (literally and reflexively) to withdraw from, or (by implication) oppose; figuratively, to discriminate (by implication, decide), or (reflexively) hesitate:—contend, make (to) differ(-ence), discern, doubt, judge, be partial, stagger, waver

Study QUESTIONS

Ep.1377: Do Christians Get to Judge Others

<https://christianquestions.com/doctrine/1377-judge-others/>

See:



1. Matthew 7:1-5
 - a. verse 1: What is Jesus' warning?
 - b. verse 2: What is the message here?
 - c. verse 3-5: Explain this illustration:
 - What about logs and twigs? What does "notice" mean?
 - What is the danger in judging without fully observing our own prejudices?
 - Answer the "When to Judge and When Not to Judge" questions on page 4.
2. Thoroughly define some of the judgments we are responsible for:
 - a. 1 Corinthians 6:1-3
 - b. Matthew 7:15-20
 - c. 1 Corinthians 5:1-2
 - d. 1 Timothy 3:1-2, Acts 14:23
 - e. Galatians 1:6-8, 2 Timothy 2:15
3. How do we keep our eyes on the principles Jesus used in judgment?
 - a. Matthew 6:19-23: How do we keep our eyes "clear," with single vision? What is to be our focus?
 - b. Matthew 7:3-5: How do we recover full vision and allow light into our eyes?
 - c. Hebrews 12:1-2, 1 Peter 2:21-25: What are the next steps?
 - d. Have your perceptions of others changed when you focus on the way Jesus looked at others?
 - e. What are the biggest "trees" you find in your eye? How have you changed your approach to judging?
 - Lesson 1: What is the difference between being a "hearer of the word" and a "doer of the word"? Which are you? (James 1:21-25, 4:12)
 - Lesson 2: How do we use what we learn from fully observing our own motivations to bless others? In what ways can you benefit others in your fellowship without leading with judgment? (Hebrews 10:22-24, Matthew 7:9-12)
4. What role does Christian liberty play in our judging? (Romans 14:2-4)
 - a. What is the most important part of our dealing with all others in the brotherhood?
 - b. Do you find this difficult at times? Why or why not?
 - c. What must we keep before us at all times to ensure mercy and scriptural compassion with our brethren and also with those around us in the world?