

# Judge Not...?

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## Judge Not...?

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*Has person ever told you "Don't judge me?" You as a Christian probably get this all the time that Jesus said "Judge Not and you shall not be judged." Does this mean that we as Christians should not give our opinion about what is right and what is wrong? What does your Bible say about Jesus' statement?*

### **Is Judgment a Bad Thing?**

Many actors and singers tell the public, "don't judge me." Basically they are saying that they want to stay in their sin so "don't give me your opinion on what is right or wrong." They use Jesus' statement of "Judge not" so they can justify what they are doing and stay in their sin.

What is Judgment? Habakkuk 1:12 describes what Judgment is, "*Art thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die. O LORD, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction.*" Judgment is correction. To correct people in their ways and actions showing them the right way.

Is this a bad thing to judge *yourself* or others to take the *right way*? No! Human beings do this all the time. A judge make judgments all day long, it's his or her job. Why does he or she do this? *For the good of society!* One cannot go before a judge, and when the judge makes a decision and then sentences a person to prison, or tells him to pay a fine, or even lets him off due to insufficient evidence or is found innocent, for the *accused* to turn around and say "don't judge me!" If our judicial system worked this way there would be no need for the courts.

The Apostle Paul says, "*But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.*" (1 Corinth 11:32). Judging is correction, so that we are *not* condemned. We use God's judgments and commandments to make the right decision in our lives so we can take the righteous path that leads to life, and not be *condemned*.

The Bible tells us to use *righteous* judgment, "*Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour*" (Lev 19:15). God's commandments, statutes and judgments are the standards we ought to use to judge what is right and wrong in our private lives, to judge what is right and wrong to our fellow Christians, and the public; and our leaders should use to govern our nations.

Solomon said, "Open thy mouth, judge *righteously*..." (Prov 31:9). The Bible says we ought to judge, give an opinion on what is right and wrong. Jesus agrees with Solomon, "Judge not according to the appearance, *but judge righteous judgment.*" (John 7:24). Did Jesus contradict himself? (see below)

Notice what the Bible-Expository notes of DR Constable says about Jesus:

"1. He does not prohibit the civil judgment of the courts upon evil doers, for this is approved throughout the whole Bible.

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"2. He does not prohibit the judgment of the church, through its officers, upon those who walk disorderly, for both he and the apostles have enjoined this.

"3. He does not forbid those private judgments that we are compelled to form the wrong-doers, for he himself tells us that we are to judge men by their fruits. (See Mat 7:15-20.)." So Jesus approves of judgment-of righteous judgment according to God's laws.

We are to judge and discern between right and wrong, using the Bible as our guide and authority. The Apostle Paul said, "Do ye not know that the saints *shall judge the world*? And if the world shall be judged by you, *are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters*? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? ***How much more things that pertain to this life?***" (1 Cor. 6:2-3.) We have to learn to judge ***now - in this life*** - in order to properly prepare for the kingdom of God.

So what did Jesus mean?

### **"Judge not...?"**

"Judge not, that ye be not judged."? Lifted out of its *context* it could mean whatever you want it to mean. The *context* is always left out when people have their own agendas and pet doctrines that they want to share with people, or to try and justify whatever they are doing in their lives.

The word for "judge" is "krino" (Strong's #2919). This means, "Often in the New Testament, ethically, for (1) 'to decide,' 'give a verdict,' 'declare an *opinion*' (Greek *krínō*);" (ISBE under article "judge, Judging").

Thayer Definition for Krino:

- "1) to separate, put asunder, to pick out, select, choose
- 2) to approve, esteem, to prefer
- 3) *to be of opinion, deem, think, to be of opinion*
- 4) to determine, resolve, decree
- 5) to judge
- 5a) *to pronounce an opinion concerning right and wrong*
- 5a1) to be judged, i.e. summoned to trial that one's case may be examined and judgment passed upon it
- 5b) to pronounce judgment, to subject to censure
- 5b1) of those who act the part of judges or arbiters in matters of common life, or pass judgment on the deeds and words of others
- 6) to rule, govern
- 6a) to preside over with the power of giving judicial decisions, because it was the prerogative of kings and rulers to pass judgment
- 7) to contend together, of warriors and combatants
- 7a) to dispute
- 7b) in a forensic sense

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7b1) to go to law, have suit at law" (emphasis added). Clearly it is to give one opinion on a matter of what is right and what is wrong on a *personal* level, between individuals. The context of these passages makes that clear.

Now when Jesus said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." Does this contradict the Apostle Paul when he said, "For if we would judge ourselves, *we should not be judged.*" (1 Corinth 11:31)? One says Judge and you won't be judge. The other says *don't* judge and you won't be judge. Can this be resolved? When one understands what Jesus is saying in this teaching it will all make sense.

Notice the context, "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?"

"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?" (vv.3-4).

Jesus is speaking about sight. In Matthew 6:22-23 he speaks of the "eye" as the light of the body, and " But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great *is* that darkness!" He is speaking of *spiritual* vision.

The Pulpit Commentary suggest this to be "A Jewish proverbial saying, *e.g.* Talm. Bab., 'Bab. Bathra,' 15b, Rabbi Jochanan (third century A.D.)... it has been used so recently (Matt 6:22) of *the spiritual sense* that it is more natural to *take it so here.* In this case the *thought of the passage is of faults existing in a man's spiritual sense hindering his spiritual vision.* The censorious man sees any fault, however *small, readily enough in others, but does not see the much greater fault which he himself as a matter of fact has—his own censoriousness. This censoriousness is not a slight, but a great hindrance to his own spiritual vision, much more to his being of use in removing hindrances from the eye of another.*" (emphasis added).

Here Jesus is telling us that, "In explaining the passage it is well to remember that the obstruction to sight is of the same material in both cases. The man with a great *beam* in his eye, *who therefore can see nothing accurately, proposes to remove the little splinter from his brother's eye, a delicate operation, requiring clear sight...*" (Vincent Word Studies, emphasis theirs and mine).

Clearly Jesus is speaking about a fellow brothers faults, and that how can one help his brother with his *tiny* faults which people always look for in others, *yet* we have huge faults of our own, an cannot help our brother because of our own *spiritual blindness.* The Apostle Paul also said, "And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, *and doest the same,* that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? " (Rom 2:3).

Now in verse 5 Jesus describes just *what kind of judgment* this is, "***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."

What is a hypocrite? In this context, "a person who claims or pretends to have certain beliefs about what is right but who behaves in a way that disagrees with those beliefs" (Merriam

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Webster Dictionary, under "hypocrite"). Jesus and Paul are speaking of judging *hypocritically*, **not** about judging anything at all!

Jesus then says in verse 5, "...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.*" He is still saying to judge, but *righteously not hypocritically*. We must see what our faults are, repent of them, do the right thing, when we do that, *we can see clearly* what is right and wrong, then we can help our brother with his faults as well. Jesus said, "...judge *righteous* judgment" (John 7:24). That is what he is telling his followers in these passages, not to judge hypocritically, but use the right kind of judgment, God's judgment!

The Apostle Paul stated that the church was *judging* from "within" correcting one another's fault with "righteous judgment" as Jesus instructed, "For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? *do not ye judge them that are within?*"

"But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." (1 Corinth 5:12-13).

Jesus continues about judgment 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." The New Bible Commentary says, "But in v.6 indicates that there is also a *right kind of judgment* which the disciple is called upon to exercise (cf. also vs.15-20)." (p.913, emphasis added). How is one suppose to know whether to not cast the holy things of God to swine and dogs unless you make a wise judgment of who is holy and who is not? Who is a dog and who is not? One must exercise right judgment.

So do Jesus and Paul contradict one another when he said, "For if we would judge ourselves, *we should not be judged.*" (1 Corinth 11:31)?

Jesus said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." We judge ourselves, correct ourselves with God's judgments, righteous judgments as Jesus instructed his church to do. If one does this he will not be judged. But does this mean not judged at all? No! It means you will not be judged by *unrighteous judgment*. You will be judged righteously. The Apostle Paul said we all shall be judged, "For we must *all appear before the judgment seat of Christ*; that every one may receive the things *done* in his body, according to that he hath done, *whether it be good or bad.*" (2 Corinth 5:10). If we judge righteously we will be judged righteously and receive the things done in this life. If it's done right we will receive "good" things. So what Jesus meant was, "Judge not, [unrighteously] that ye be not judged [in the same manner]"

Samuel wrote of how God judges, "Therefore the LORD *hath recompensed me according to my righteousness; according to my cleanness in his eye sight [receiving good things].*"

"With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful, *and* with the upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright.

"With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the *froward* thou wilt shew thyself *unsavoury.*" (2 Samuel 22:25-27).

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### What judgment ye judge

As noted above, the Apostle Paul said, "And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? " (Rom 2:3). How can one escape the judgment of God when one practices the same sins that he or she is condemning others for?

Jesus spoke of how people will be judged and said, "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." (Matthew 7:2). Ezekiel says, "...I will judge thee according to *thy ways*..." (Ezekiel 7:8). If a Christian judges righteously as Jesus said, God will judge you the same way. Isaiah states this is how Jesus will judge his followers in the Kingdom, "But with *righteousness* shall he *judge the poor*, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth" (11:4). The poor and the meek are his followers (Matt 5:3, 5).

James wrote: "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. For he shall *have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy*; and mercy rejoices against judgment" (James 2:12-13). If you are not merciful and forgiving toward others, God will not be merciful toward you in your day of judgment.

All of us need to remember these words of Jesus Christ: "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matt. 6: 14-15). Of course forgiveness is given to those who *repent* and ask for it (see Luke 17:3). Do you want to be forgiven your sins and mistakes and be judged with mercy? Then when someone comes to you and asks to be forgiven and repents of their faults and mistakes, be merciful as God has mercy on you when you repent and ask God for forgiveness. If not God will resurrect all that one has done in this life and condemn you for not being forgiving to others as God has shown you forgiveness (see Matthew 18:23-35).

Especially as we are merciful to others, God Almighty and Jesus Christ will be merciful in judging us. Jesus promised in the Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt. 5:7). God says: "For I am merciful" (Jer. 3: 12). Anyone striving to do his Creator's *will* can count on the mercy of God.

Many patriarchs, prophets and kings in past ages have experienced the incredible, almost unbelievable mercy of their Maker. Almighty God forgave Abraham of his foibles in the flesh; He forgave David, upon real repentance, of the capital sins of adultery and murder; He forgave even the wicked king Manasseh when he finally came to himself.

There is no sin bigger than the mercy of God, so long as the real desire to repent is present within the sinner. Read Psalm 136.

You can be sure that God, in judgment, will take everything possible into account on your behalf. Never take yourself out of the realm of His mercy. God will never leave you or forsake you. Guard against ever forsaking Him and His way of life.

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Don't you want to hear the words: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy lord"? How will God judge you?

### **Cast the First Stone?**

Of course you have heard, "cast the first stone if you are without sin" Of course people get this from John 8:7. The woman caught in the sin of Adultery, and Jesus said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." Does this mean we are *not* to judge?

When one examines this scripture one notices certain things, notice, "And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, "They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.

*"Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?"*

"This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with *his* finger wrote on the ground, *as though he heard them not.*

"So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." (vv.3-7).

First, how strange that these Pharisees brought *only* the woman to Jesus - after all they did say they caught her in the very act of adultery - the law of Moses required that both the man and the woman were to be stoned to death (Lev 20:10), *so already the law is not being followed.*

Second, Motives! Jesus is confronted by men having an *agenda* to simply test Jesus (v.6). Keep in mind these are the same group of people (Pharisees) that later plotted to kill Jesus for raising a man from the dead - so are they to be trusted? Imagine if Jesus took their word, which wasn't worth much, and said stone her - he would have *not followed the law of Moses correctly* as the man involved should also be brought forward for death. So knowing these men were out to trick Jesus and seeing that they weren't following the law of Moses correctly - how could he condemn her. The motive was not justice, or righteous judgment, but to accuse Jesus of sin. So the intent here was *not* for justice, but for an evil plot against Jesus.

Third, notice that Jesus does *not* say "don't stone her" or "don't judge her," he basically says go ahead, cast the stones, IF there were any "without sin among *you*." Them-the judges, what was their intent? Justice? No! They were willing to put a person to death for their own personal agendas to accuse Jesus of sin. Jesus said that the one who is going about this *without sin (not in a sinful way/having no other agenda but justice)* can be the first one to cast a stone. All of them dropped the stones, they knew what they were doing was not right, it was *perverted* justice.

You see, Christians ARE to judge, the key is that judging is to be done in a righteous manner - with all fairness.

If only John 7:24 would be the bible verse most remembered when it comes to the issue of judging. It would definitely reduce the number of skeptical comments Christians receive about judging.

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At the end of the whole episode when the woman was left alone, Jesus says, "Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?"

"She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, *Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.*" (vv.10, 11). Jesus could not condemn her because this was all a set up to accuse Jesus of sin, *not* for justice; it was a *kangaroo court from the beginning*. But Jesus also said "go and *sin no more.*" Jesus told her to do the right thing, don't sin any more, that is making a "righteous judgment."

So Christians are to give opinions and judgments on what people should do and how people should conduct themselves according to the laws of God, "righteous judgment." We are to do it in this life. This life is practice for the coming Kingdom of God. In the Kingdom, "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them:" (Rev 20:4). The Resurrected saints will be given judgment, and thrones to rule. To carry out the law in its fullness. Today Christians are limited, since the sentence for many sins in the Bible is death. and the death penalty can *only be carried out by the government*, the saints of God will not be given that power to punish evil until the Kingdom comes. Today we show the brethren and the world God's judgments of what is right and what is wrong so one can know the way to life, and NOT be condemned.