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Judging Others



.... I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. Jude 1:3 NIV

Reviewed by: Dr. Lambert Duncan

Judging Others

Matthew 7:1-2 (NIV), “¹*Do not judge, or you too will be judged. ²For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.*”

James 4:12 (NIV), “*There is only one law giver and judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you – who are you to judge your neighbor?*”

On August 28, 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave his famous “I have a dream” speech. In this great speech he said, “I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.” In this statement by Dr. King, he touched on something that we are all guilty of, “judging others.” Whether it’s someone’s behavior, ideas, performances, abilities, doctrines or decisions, we all judge others and rightly so. However, Dr. King in his speech implies that a specific criteria used in judging others is preferred over another. According to this speech by Dr. King, he looked forward to the day when blacks would no longer be judged by the color of their skin but judged by the content of their character, meaning, performance, abilities, etc. For some, the idea of judging others is wrong and should never be done for any reason. However, those that believe judging others is wrong and should never be done are actually hypocrites and not aware of it. The fact is, they are judging others all the time.

Judging may be defined this way: 1) “To form an opinion or estimation of after careful consideration.” 2) “To form an opinion or evaluation.” 3) “To form an opinion about through careful weighing of evidence and testing of premises.” In light of these definitions, if we are honest with ourselves, we must admit that we judge others all the time. Consider the hair stylist or barber shop we go to, don’t we judge them by the quality of their job? Of course we do, if they didn’t do a good job we would judge them to be a lousy hair stylist or barber. Consider the neighbor that staggers home every night from the local bar. Aren’t we judging that neighbor when we call that neighbor a drunk or alcoholic? Consider the auto mechanic we take our car to for repairs. If we take our car to be repaired for the same problem that does not seem to get fixed after several visits to the mechanic, don’t we judge this mechanic to be a poor mechanic? Of course we do. This type of judging we all do is normal and necessary; otherwise, we are forced to ignore everyone’s actions and/or performance and accept whatever they give us or do for us as ok.

But there is a judging of others that is forbidden by Jesus himself in Matthew chapter seven. With this in mind, I’m always amazed at how folks who know nothing about the Bible, but

somehow know about Jesus' words found in Matthew chapter seven, verses one and two which says (NIV) - *"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."* It seems to me that folks conveniently know and use the words of Jesus only when you're pointing out their error or sin based on God's Word. For some strange reason, nobody seems to object to being judged as a great, God-fearing person do they?

The judging of others Jesus forbids is self righteous judgment that causes us to think we're better than others when in fact we're not. Instead, we should remember that we too are not perfect. In addition, we should not be hypocrites, trying to tell others of their sin while we're doing the same thing. However, the context of Matthew chapter seven calls us to make judgments about others. Consider verse six; (NIV) *"Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs.."* How can we fulfill the directive given by Jesus, "Do not give dogs what is sacred" without first making a judgment to determine who the dogs are? Consider the second directive in this same verse, *"Do not throw your pearls to pigs."* How do we determine who the pigs are without making a judgment? The fact is, we can't; we must make judgments in order to be obedient and make the right determinations.

Consider verses 15-16, (from Matthew Chapter 7) we are told, ¹⁵ *Watch out for the false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.* ¹⁶ *By their fruit you will recognize them...* How are we to determine who is a "false prophet" if we do not make a judgment based on their fruit like Jesus said we should? Nowadays, Christians are called "judgmental" if we follow biblical principles on judging and dare to call sin sin. In my opinion, if the Christian makes their judgments based on God's Word, and not their own standards and are not hypocritical or self righteous in their judgments, they are in line with biblical principles and teachings.

The perfect case and point can be seen in the Christians response to same sex marriages. When the Christian says to the gay community, in love of course, that God does not condone homosexuality or same sex marriages, based on biblical teaching, they're called judgmental. However, since God's Word also says lying and stealing is a sin, why is it that the Christian can tell someone that God does not condone lying and stealing without being called judgmental? Or, why is it ok for the Christian to say God does not condone the sin of murder and not be called judgmental? In my opinion, we now live in a day where a certain group of individuals have resorted to calling Christians judgmental because they point out their sin(s) based on biblical teachings and principles. There is nothing in scripture that forbids Christians from making judgments based on biblical standards. In fact, Christians are told to make judgments all the time. Consider 1 John 4:1 (NIV), it says *"Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, **but test the spirits** to see **whether they are from God**, because many false prophets have gone out into the world."*

How is it that we are told to “test the spirits to see whether they are from God” and yet be told that we as Christians are judgmental when we call error error?

In closing, it should be noted that the apostle Paul made a judgment concerning the faith of “Hymenaeus and Alexander”. In 1 Timothy 1:19-20 (NIV), Paul said, “¹⁹some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith. ²⁰ Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.” Like Paul, we as Christians have a responsibility, we must tell the truth in love to everyone. It is a trick of the enemy that makes us believe we are wrong for telling it like it is; the devil is a liar!! However, we must always stay away from self-righteous, condescending, hypocritical judgments. But we must call the behavior and actions we see what the Bible calls them. If the Bible says it’s sin, that settles it, it’s sin and we are free to call it just that, this type of judging is the Christians responsibility.

If we follow the reasoning that has become so prevalent in our society that leads Christians to believe they can’t call sin sin without being guilty of wrongful judgment, we are in deep trouble. Think about it, how can we allow a known/proven pedophile to call Christians judgmental because the Bible says his/her actions are sin? Or how can we allow the rapist to accuse Christians of being judgmental when they say rape is sin? I could go on and on here, but I won’t. It’s clear that if we continue in this line of reasoning, eventually we will have people committing all sorts of sinful acts that no one dare say anything about for fear of being labeled “judgmental”. The fact is, the folks that label Christians “judgmental” when they call sin sin do so for one of two reasons:

1. They are ignorant to the plain teaching of the Bible on the subject.
2. They themselves are guilty of the sin in question and want to continue to practice it. They call Christians “judgmental” in hopes of getting the Christian to be quiet about their sin.

Whichever the case, Christians should continue to, in love, call sin sin.

God Bless,
Pastor D. M. Duncan

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