

Bite Size Bible Study

Judging #184

By Pastor Lee

“Don’t judge, so that you won’t be judged. ² For the way you judge others is how you will be judged — the measure with which you measure out will be used to measure to you. ³ Why do you see the splinter in your brother’s eye but not notice the log in your own eye? ⁴ How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the splinter out of your eye,’ when you have the log in your own eye? ⁵ You hypocrite! First, take the log out of your own eye; then you will see clearly, so that you can remove the splinter from your brother’s eye!

Mat 7:1-5 CJB

Therefore you have no excuse, whoever you are, passing judgment; for when you judge someone else, you are passing judgment against yourself; since you who are judging do the same things he does.

Romans 2:1 CJB

“Don’t judge, and you won’t be judged. Don’t condemn, and you won’t be condemned. “Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

Luke 6:37 CJB

To Judge or Not To Judge

If someone uses only these scriptures to decide whether to judge or not to judge, they often opt to not judge anything. But is that what these scriptures are telling us?

A careful reading of these verses shows that what they are talking about is hypocritical judging, usually accompanied with condemnation.

Brothers, suppose someone is caught doing something wrong. You who have the Spirit should set him right, but in a spirit of humility, keeping an eye on yourselves so that you won’t be tempted too.

Galatians 6:1 CJB

Jesus through Matthew, Luke and John, is not telling Christians not to judge, but not to judge hypocritically or self-righteously.

We are to be a merciful community. We are to compassionately correct inappropriate behavior. We are not to condemn others but to explain God’s teaching gently and with compassion for their situation. We are to self-examine and correct our own behavior as well.

Even in the Old Testament times they were told to judge righteously; i.e. according to the Torah or Law. Moses explained how he handled judging in Exodus 18:16 CJB

*Whenever they have a dispute, it comes to me; I judge between one person and another, **and I explain to them God’s laws and teachings.***

The dictionary defines judging as to “form an opinion or conclusion” or “to give a verdict on”. I think the first one is the better definition for this discussion. To give a

verdict seems to imply punishment and I don’t see that as what the Bible is teaching us about judging.

Judging others – helpful or hurtful?

There can be Judgment that can be helpful or hurtful. Whether we’re judging others, or feeling judged, at its core, a judgment is an opinion or decision based on thoughts, feelings and evidence. We make hundreds of them every day.

Anna Hinson, a corporate image consultant, says; “Within the first seven seconds of meeting someone, our brain makes 11 different decisions about them including their intelligence, socioeconomic status, education, competence and trustworthiness.” This is a subconscious process people cannot control. Our job is to let those decisions be corrected and modified as we learn more about the person and his/her circumstances.

There can be positive judgments, also. If you saw someone give food to a homeless person, you would instinctively make a positive judgment about his or her character. Judging only becomes a problem when we make unnecessary, hurtful or unfair judgments based on little evidence or circumstance.

When someone makes you question your character, intelligence, beliefs, decisions or preferences in a way that causes shame, it can make you feel judged in a negative way. They might not intend it, but the feeling of judgment is still hurtful. If we are judging someone else in the same way it creates the same feelings in them.

Empathy should precede Advise. Receiving far more advice than empathy makes people feel judged.

People often believe talking about what you are doing wrong and how they would handle the situation differently is helpful. In reality, it makes you feel inferior. It’s better to begin with acknowledging the person’s struggles and conclude with concise advice that includes God’s love for them.

Jesus said:

Stop judging by surface appearances, and judge the right way!” John 7:24 CJB

He also tells us to judge by the one who sent us. Since he has sent us we should judge like Him.

but if I were indeed to pass judgment, my judgment would be valid; because it is not I alone who judge, but I and the One who sent me. John 8:16 CJB

Let’s continue being merciful in judging; helping ourselves and others to correct our behaviors with compassion and gentle speech, using God’s teaching.