

The Christian's Attitude Toward Judging



Discovering God's Word
Bible Study Series

The Christian's Attitude Toward Judging

Learn to avoid making sinful judgments and how to make right ones

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Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series

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My plea: It is my hope and prayer that you are searching for the truth that is contained in God's word, the Bible. My desire is to help you understand and obey these truths God has revealed in the pages of His word. It is to that end that I write this material. Please observe all of the Scripture references and evaluate whether the conclusions I have drawn are in harmony with God's word. If they are, I ask that you make honest application of those truths to your life and obey God's instructions.

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The Christian's Attitude Toward Judging

Through this study, I want us to consider the Bible's teachings on the subject of judging so that we can have the proper mindsets about making judgments about others – and about being judged by others.

Judgments Must Be Made

The first step in developing the proper mindset (one that is according to God's word) about judgments is to understand that judgments must be made.

"Judge not"

Perhaps you have heard this statement made in response to a judgment you have made about another – or, perhaps you have even made this statement yourself. Often, this response of "judge not" is given by folks who are in sin and do not desire to be corrected by their brethren (or by others in general). This mindset is that no one should make any kind of negative evaluations about their lives!

Matthew 7:1 is the passage they often quote: "Judge not, that you be not judged." Now, these are the words of Jesus – and do contain absolute truth. However, do these words really mean that we must live in a world where everyone must avoid making evaluations about how others are living – and one in which no one can rebuke others for any kind of wrong doing? Does Jesus really desire for everyone to live such private and separated lives from each other? Is there really nothing that is done which is clearly "right" or clearly "wrong"?

Let's consider the entire passage of Matthew 7:1-6 and see if these kinds of ideas accurately represent the truth about Jesus' teaching. "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the

What should the Christian's attitude be toward judging – judging others and being judged? That is, what should our mindsets be toward this kind of judgment?

First, let's establish what it means to judge. Thayer defines the Greek word "krino" (*Thayer's Greek Definitions*, Strong's number G2919) as "1) to separate, put asunder, to pick out select, choose...2) to approve, esteem, to prefer...3) to be of opinion, deem, think... 4) to determine, resolve, decree...5) to judge...5a) to pronounce an opinion concerning right and wrong..." *Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary* defines the word "judge" as: "to form an opinion about through careful weighing of evidence and testing premises...to determine or pronounce after inquiry and deliberation...to form an estimate or evaluation of" (Judge. (n.d.). Retrieved January 22, 2015, from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/judge>). Clearly, then, we are talking about certain decisions or evaluations being made concerning right and wrong – about ourselves and about others.

Now, as we consider the subject of judging, there are some common questions that are asked. Questions like – "Is it always wrong to judge another?" "Are there judgment that must be made about others?" "If we are to make judgments about others, what makes a judgment right or wrong?" "Is it sinful for others to make judgments about how I am living my life?"

speck from your brother's eye. Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.”

A look into this context reveals what kind of judgments are being condemned. Clearly, verse 2 is demonstrating that Jesus forbids making *hypocritical judgments*! Certainly, Jesus is also showing that great care must be involved in making judgments – so that we are not ever guilty of making improper judgments (recognizing that we will be judged accordingly)!

Now, is Jesus teaching that one should ignore the “speck” that is in his brother’s eye? This would *have* to be true in order for the objections we have discussed to be sustained by this passage. Jesus would have to command or imply that the man with the “speck” should just be left alone – and be allowed to live his own life without any interference from others! However, this is not what Jesus says!

Instead, Jesus condemns the hypocrisy of making a judgment about the “speck” that is in your brother’s eye – while you have a “plank” that is protruding from your own eye! For example, it would be hypocritical of the one who is a drunkard to judge someone who consumes a small amount of alcohol on occasion. Both actions are contrary to the Scriptures and need to be repented of. However, God instructs for the drunk to repent of his drunkenness before making judgments about his brother!

Consider that this is exactly what God desires. First, He desires for an individual to make proper judgments about his own life – and correct his own life. Then, He desires for that individual to help others by making proper judgments about them. This is what Jesus means by first removing the “plank” from your own eye – and then helping your brother remove the “speck” that is in his eye. Neither the “plank” nor the “speck” are approved of God – and judgments are proper in both cases. However, the order matters to God!

Another example of making judgments in this passage is verse 6. Again, Jesus said: “Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.” In this text, Jesus is

appealing to his disciples that they might be wise in their dealings with others. There are some who have demonstrated their unwillingness to accept the things of God (i.e. they are unclean/unholy as dogs and pigs were to the Jews). Therefore, Jesus teaches that wisdom should be used to make judgments about such matters – so that the Christian does not expend all of his/her efforts on someone who had demonstrated a stubborn and rebellious heart!

So, in this same passage that many use to condemn the practice of making judgments about others, Jesus teaches us to make judgments about others – twice! Therefore, to apply Jesus’ words in verse 1 in the way that many folks apply them today means that we cannot even keep Jesus’ instructions in this passage! If verse 1 means that we cannot make any judgments about others, we cannot help a brother/sister to remove the “speck” from his/her life after we have removed the “plank” from our lives – and we cannot make any judgments about who are “dogs” or “swine.” Think about this, brethren – lest we force the Master Teacher to say something He never intended to say!

We must be diligent to rightly divide the word of truth, according to 2 Timothy 2:15. Not only must we rightly divide (accurately interpret) the passage in Matthew 7; but, we must accurately interpret all of the Bible’s teachings on the subject of judging. Since God’s word is perfect and without error, we simply cannot interpret one passage in such a way so as to make it contradict the teaching of another passage. All Scripture must harmonize.

For example, John 3:16 is only one passage that deals with salvation. Yet, it is often quoted as if the Bible says nothing else about salvation (in an attempt to prove that salvation is by “faith only”). John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” However, the Bible also teaches that hearing God’s word (Romans 10:17), believe in Jesus (John 8:24), repentance (Acts 17:30), confessing Christ (Romans 10:9-10), being baptized (Acts 2:38), and living faithful to the Lord (Revelation 2:10) are all necessary for salvation.

So, just as we must look at *everything* the Bible says about salvation in order to come to the proper conclusions, we must consider *everything* the Bible says about judging in order to come to the proper conclusions.

Judgments that must be made about others

In addition to the things we saw in Matthew 7:1-6 (and in addition to the judgments we must make about ourselves and the things we are involved in), the Bible clearly teaches that there are judgments we must make about others – whether they are right or whether they are wrong. Consider a few such judgments.

(1) Judge false teachers. Just after Jesus' teachings in Matthew 7:1-6 about making judgments, consider what Jesus says in Matthew 7:15-20: "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them."

Clearly, Jesus wants us to make judgments about whether someone is teaching God's word accurately – or whether they are attempting to deceive/mislead us! If God had forbidden all judgments to be made about others, we would not be permitted to use our discretion to determine whether something that is said or taught to us is right or wrong! Yet, Jesus *wants* and *expects* us to closely examine (judge) what we hear and are taught so that we will only hold to that which is right!

Other Bible passages instruct us to do the same basic thing. For instance, Paul warned the Ephesians elders about men who would rise up, speaking perverse things and drawing the disciples away from the Lord (Acts 20:28-31). Similarly, Peter warned about false teachers who would speak destructive things which would lead to the ruin of the hearers (2 Peter 2:1-3). Clearly, God wants His

people to make judgments about such false teachers so as to avoid their destructive doctrines and influences!

(2) Judge what is sinful among the brethren. Part of the responsibilities God has given to members of the local church is to make judgments of the other members – so as to only be in fellowship with those who are walking according to God's instructions.

In 1 Corinthians 5, the church in Corinth had permitted a man to remain in fellowship with them who was living in fornication (he had his father's wife). In this situation, Paul said, "For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Corinthians 5:3-5). Then, after Paul expressed that he had made a judgment about this situation and given instructions about a particular course of action, he said, "I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner — not even to eat with such a person. For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? But those who are outside God judges. Therefore 'put away from yourselves the evil person'" (1 Corinthians 5:9-13).

In 2 Thessalonians 3, a problem of idleness had developed in the Thessalonian church. Accordingly, Paul prescribed certain steps to be taken against those Christians who would not be diligent to fulfill their God-given responsibilities. 2 Thessalonians 3:6 instructs: "But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us." 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15

instructs: “And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.”

Both of these passages demonstrate the responsibility that the local church has to withdraw from those who are participating in sin and are unwilling to repent of it! However, please realize that this sort of action cannot be taken without a judgment (or series of judgments) being made about individuals who are living in sin – and implies that brethren *should* be making certain judgments about others!

(3) Judge disputes among brethren. 1 Corinthians 6 deals with another problem that had risen in the Corinthian church. Evidently, there were brethren in the Corinthian church who were taking each other to court. In response to this issue, Paul gives the following instructions.

1 Corinthians 6:1-2 says, “Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters?” 1 Corinthians 6:5 says, “I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren?”

So, Paul’s remedy to the problem of brethren taking one another before worldly courts and disgracing the church of God was to find a wise brother who would be able to judge the matter between them! Therefore, God fully expects that Christians be able to make wise and good judgments about matters that come up between them! Yet, again, this could not be done if God prohibits all judgments from being made!

(4) Judge those who cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine of Christ. Two passages of Scripture give very plain instruction about judgments to be made and action to be taken regarding individuals who cause divisions and offenses among the brethren.

Romans 16:17-18 says, “Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.”

Titus 3:9-11 says, “But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless. Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.”

Both of these passages demonstrate judgments being made. Notice that you cannot “note” (mark) and avoid someone for causing divisions and offenses that are contrary to the doctrine of Christ – without judging that they *had* caused divisions and offenses that are contrary to the doctrine of Christ!

(5) Judge who is an evil person in the world. Finally, judgments must be made concerning those we associate ourselves with – so that we can avoid evil associations.

Consider the wisdom that Solomon penned in Proverbs 1:10: “My son, if sinners entice you, Do not consent.” Similarly, 1 Corinthians 15:33 says, “Do not be deceived: ‘Evil company corrupts good habits.’”

Certainly, God wants His people to be making judgments about those they come into contact with! He does not desire His people to be naïve and believe that the people they put themselves around cannot negatively influence them and tear down their faith! So, He expects Christians to make judgments about the character of others – and how they will be influenced by these individuals.

These are just a few examples of the kinds of judgments we must be making as Christians – some of which must even be made on a daily basis! Clearly, we have seen that a Christian is not only *permitted* to make judgments about others; but, that it is part of the Christian’s *responsibility* to do such!

Some Judgments Must Be Avoided

We have established that there are judgments which must be made – as part of living the life of a Christian. However, the Bible also warns about making the wrong judgments. So, which judgments are proper – and which judgments are not proper? Let's consider some judgments which must be avoided (and then we'll consider some things involved in making right judgments).

Hypocritical judgments

God condemns the practice of making hypocritical judgments. Hypocritical judgments would involve judging others according to a standard that you are not holding yourself to! This is the kind of judgment that Jesus is condemning in Matthew 7:1-6!

Remember that Jesus' point in the text was that we must learn to judge ourselves and make corrections to our own lives before we can rightly judge someone else! It would simply be hypocritical for us to judge someone else as living in sin – when we are living in sin ourselves! Think back to the example I gave earlier. It would be hypocritical for a man to condemn someone else for his consumption of a small amount of alcohol while he is consuming large quantities of alcohol on a regular basis! The point Jesus makes in Matthew 7 is that the drunkard needs to correct his own life *first* – before he can help the other individual correct his/her life!

Consider what Paul writes about making such hypocritical judgments in Romans 2:1-3: “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. But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. 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?”

When we use such hypocrisy in judging others, we are actually condemning ourselves before

God! Instead of practicing such hypocritical judging, we must develop the proper habit of self-evaluation (applying God's instructions to our own lives *first*!) Then, when we are living lives that are right before God, we will be in a position to help others make their own lives right (by making the proper judgments). Now, please understand that I am not saying that we must be perfect (i.e. never commit any sin) before we make judgments about others (for, we all falter from time to time and should be working to make improvements). However, we must never be guilty of turning our eyes away from our own sin and focus on the sins of others. We must address our own sins *first*!

Rash judgments

God condemns the practice of making rash judgments. Rash judgments involve rushing to judgment without gathering the proper facts and patiently coming to the proper conclusion(s).

Consider what is said in Proverbs 18:13: “He who answers a matter before he hears it, It is folly and shame to him.” There are many times in which folks come to certain conclusions before the whole story has been heard and before they have gathered all of the facts! In fact, it is not uncommon for folks to base their conclusions/judgments on the hear-say of others! So, they draw conclusions about others on the basis of what may or may not be accurate information.

The Christian must be diligent to consider every matter before making final judgments about them – and acting on those judgments. Proverbs 15:28 says, “The heart of the righteous studies how to answer, But the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil.” Now, this is not just true about our words; but, also about how we respond to any situation! The righteous will be diligent to consider the proper response to each situation; while the wicked will not exercise such diligence! James wrote, “So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath” (James 1:19). Christians must be patient to hear and study out every matter before reaching a final conclusion!

Consider an example of a rash judgment that was made in the New Testament. In Acts 21, Paul

arrived in Jerusalem and greeted the elders in the Jerusalem church. Because of some false accusations that had been spread in the city about Paul, they suggested that he perform a Jewish custom to demonstrate that he was not hostile toward the Law of Moses. However, while Paul was in the temple, some Jews accused Paul of bringing a Gentile into the temple and defiling the temple (notice verse 28). Then, notice the commentary that the author gives about this situation in verse 29: “For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.”

All of this proceeded to cause a great riot in the city of Jerusalem that was violent toward Paul, that would leave Paul arrested, and that would result in Paul appealing to Caesar in Rome! Now, let’s consider some of the “missing pieces” – and why this judgment by the Jews was a rash judgment. First, consider that they had only “*supposed*” Paul had brought Trophimus into the temple (because they had seen Paul in the city with him previously). Second, notice that the text does not even say that Trophimus was in the temple! Again, they had only supposed Paul took him there! So, as it stands in the Acts 21 record, the judgments that were made against Paul were quite a leap!

We must certainly be very careful so as not to be guilty of making rash judgments about others – before we have gathered all of the necessary information! Then, we must also be careful so that we do not *spread* any of the rash judgments we have made (i.e. through gossip)!

Judgments according to appearance

God condemns the practice of making judgments according to outward appearance. Similar to the previous point, these would be judgments that are made without having gained all of the necessary facts or information, simply according to how things *appear* from outward appearance.

Consider the events in John 7:19-24 regarding an encounter between Jesus and the Jews, regarding Jesus’ healing on the Sabbath: “‘Did not Moses give you the law, yet none of you keeps the law? Why do you seek to kill Me?’ The people

answered and said, ‘You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill You?’ Jesus answered and said to them, ‘I did one work, and you all marvel. Moses therefore gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, so that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath? Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.’”

Many of the Jews desired to catch Jesus in sin so that they might have reason to kill Him. As a result, they would often look upon Jesus’ works with that in mind (putting any sort of “negative spin” on them as they could). In John 7, we have a case-in-point. When they saw Jesus healing on the Sabbath, they were quick to accuse Him of doing wrong. However, they were not judging with right judgment – as they themselves would circumcise on the Sabbath (according to the instruction in Leviticus 12:3). Therefore, Jesus said that they needed to look beyond the physical appearance and make righteous judgments!

Certainly, looks can be deceiving! Again, we need to get all of the facts before we reach a proper conclusion! For instance, we may only have seen a part of the whole situation. We may only be basing our conclusions about a person on a small part of who they are (i.e. how they dress, how they wear their hair, or some other physical characteristic). We may not have the right understanding of the context in which a thing is done. There are many ways that the outward appearance may not give the whole story. So, we must be careful to avoid making judgments on physical appearance – and determine to make righteous, God-approved judgments!

All false judgments

We must be careful to avoid every false judgment! Consider just a couple other types of false judgments quickly.

(1) Judgments made from improper motives. Sometimes folks make false judgments about others because they are holding a grudge, they are envious, etc. So, they misconstrue the things that

are done (whether intentionally or unintentionally) so that they appear to be wrong; when, in reality, they may be perfectly right. For instance, the Jews had been guilty of this with Jesus (in John 7) and Paul (in Acts 21). In both cases, the Jews had such animosity toward these individuals that they were incapable of making a righteous judgment about the things they were doing – and reached false conclusions in both situations!

(2) Judgments based on the wrong standard. Sometimes folks make judgments about others that are based on measuring their actions by any number of improper standards. For instance, the only proper standard we can measure others by is God’s word. However, many judgments are made by measuring others by their own opinions, traditions, cultures, or any number of things!

Judging With Righteous Judgment

Now that we have seen some judgments which must be avoided, let’s consider how we can judge with righteous judgment. Remember, in John 7:24, Jesus instructed: “Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.” Again, there are some judgments which must be made; so, we must learn how to make them properly.

Use the right standard

All of the judgments we make must begin by appealing to the proper standard. The only standard that is always right and will make our judgments pleasing to God is His word! So, every judgment we make must be according to God’s instructions for making righteous judgments – and we must evaluate others based on what His word teaches!

After all, this is the standard we will each be judged by on the Last Day! For instance, Jesus said, “He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him —the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day” (John 12:48). Judging others by our own human ideas simply is not acceptable to God!

Use the right motivation

A second essential part in making righteous judgment is to judge using the right, God-approved motivation. We have already seen the error that happens whenever an individual judges using the wrong motivation. However, using righteous motivation in judging others will enable you to properly evaluate all of the facts and draw right conclusions.

Certainly, our judgments must be made with love toward others. In fact, one of the main reasons we must even make judgments of others is due to love and concern for their souls (see James 5:19-20 and 2 Timothy 2:24-26)! So, we must do all things with love in our hearts for the one(s) we are judging, loving them as we love ourselves (Matthew 22:39) and judging them as we want to be judged (Matthew 7:1; Matthew 7:12). Notice 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, particularly, to learn about the characteristics involved in love!

Use wisdom

A third essential element to making right judgments is to use the wisdom God gives in drawing your conclusions (read James 3:13-18 to learn more about the wisdom that comes from God). As you use God’s word as the standard for evaluation, you must also allow His word to guide you in how you must respond to that information.

Certainly, you must use wisdom to gather all of the facts and to make the proper decisions regarding your response. In Matthew 10:16, for instance, Jesus instructed His twelve apostles to be as “wise as serpents and harmless as doves” whenever they would go out to preach! In the same way, we must be using the wisdom that comes from God to properly deal with situations and not cause harm for the Lord’s cause! Also, since this wisdom we need comes from God, we must be diligent to seek after it by prayer and study of His word!

Use boldness

A fourth essential element in making right judgments involves the boldness we should use once we have made the correct judgments. That is, after we have appealed to God’s word, evaluated our

motivations, and used God-given wisdom in coming to the right judgment; now, we must be bold in carrying out the judgment.

For instance, if we know the right thing that God wants us to do with the judgments that have been made, we sin if we do not do them (James 4:17)! Sometimes, this will involve correcting those who are sin. Sometimes, this will involve teaching. Sometimes, it will involve rebuke (either public or private). Sometimes, this will involve cutting ties with some we love. It may involve any number of things; but, we must be bold enough to do what it is God wants us to do – as the result of the righteous judgments that have been made.

Also, please realize that, sometimes, carrying out righteous judgment may even be offensive to others! Yet, if others are offended by God's word and by God's ways, we must be bold enough to offend them! For instance, in Matthew 15, Jesus rebuked the scribes and Pharisees severely for their hypocrisy (read Matthew 15:1-11). Then, in Matthew 15:12, Jesus' disciples came to Him, saying, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?" Yet, Jesus, unapologetically, said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch" (Matthew 15:13-14).

Judgments Will Be Made About The Christian

Before we close this study on the Christian's attitude toward judging, we must recognize that the Christian will be judged. Up to this point, we have primarily been considering judging others. However, we need to briefly consider this point about being judged so that we can each accept this truth and learn to properly deal with these judgments that are made about us.

By his brethren

The Christian will be judged by his brethren. And, when these judgments are made properly, this

is a wonderful thing (though it may not *feel* like it at that time). However, we must appreciate the fact that our brethren are attempting to help us correct the error we may be involved in – so that our souls will not be in danger of Hell fire! They are simply fulfilling their God-given responsibility toward us in doing so (i.e. James 5:19-20)! We should be thankful for the love and concern they are demonstrating for our souls at these times!

Therefore, we should *expect* and *desire* for our brethren to make judgments about the ways in which we are living, determining whether we are living in ways that are pleasing to the Lord or not! We should *not* become defensive or angry with them when they make these judgments! Rather, the judgments should be viewed as constructive (and, they should be offered in that way)!

These judgments by our brethren are part of God's purpose for the local church (particularly) – in that it gives us a sense of accountability while we are living on this earth! Of course, we are ultimately accountable to God. However, accountability with our brethren is also a wonderful thing – as it helps us to prepare for the Day of Judgment! This accountability should help us to live life in a way that is pleasing to God and live by His instructions!

By the world

In addition to being judged by our brethren, we should also expect to be judged by the world. Unfortunately, the world will often judge us according to an improper standard (see 1 John 2:15-17). So, we must always remember this fact whenever the world offers judgments about us!

Therefore, if we are living properly (i.e. in a way that is right with God), we will be judged in such a way that makes us enemies of the world. Sometimes, this will result in persecution, in evil things being said about us, in harmful things being done to us, etc. (see Matthew 5:10-12; John 15:18-21; 2 Timothy 3:12). Yet, sometimes, this will result in others seeing our good works and glorifying God (Matthew 5:16). So, as long as you are living in a way that pleases God, do not become discouraged by the world's judgments! Remember that the world did not properly judge Jesus or His apostles – and know

that it will not properly judge you (if you live according to God’s instructions)!

By God

Ultimately, the Christian will be judged by God – and should be living in such a way to prepare for this Day of Judgment! Ultimately, human judgments (even by our brethren) can be (and often are) wrong. But, God’s Judgment will not be wrong! Therefore, we must do everything that we do in view of the final Judgment God will render to us!

Romans 2:5-11 says, “But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who ‘will render to each one according to his deeds’: eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness — indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God.”

Conclusion

Has this lesson described your attitude toward judging? We have observed that the Christian must make certain judgments, the Christian must make the proper judgments concerning himself and others, and the Christian must respond properly to the judgments of others to prepare himself for God’s final Judgment!

Study Questions

What does it mean to judge?

1. Judgments Must Be Made

Discuss the context of the “judge not” statement made in Matthew 7:1-6.

Do judgments need to be made about others? Discuss.

2. Some Judgments Must Be Avoided

What are hypocritical judgments? Why should they be avoided?

What are rash judgments? Why should they be avoided?

What are judgments according to appearance? Why should they be avoided?

Discuss other false judgments that must not be made.

3. Judging With Righteous Judgment

Discuss the importance of using the right standard in making judgments.

Discuss the importance of the right motivation in making judgments.

Discuss the importance of using wisdom in making judgments.

Discuss the importance of boldness in making judgments.

4. Judgments Will Be Made About The Christian

Discuss the judgments made by brethren about you.

Discuss the judgments made by the world about you.

Discuss the Judgment of God about you.