

FBC POWELL, 11-27-16 PM NOTES  
"Who Are You to Judge Another Person"  
Matthew 7:1-6  
#10 in Series, "Answering 10 Questions that Skeptics Ask"

**1 Peter 3:15** "but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.]

Review: "How Do You Know That God Exists?" "How Do You Know That the Bible Is Trustworthy?" "How Can God Know the Future When It Hasn't Happened Yet?" "How Can You Say that Jesus Is the Only Way to Salvation?" "If God Is Good, Why Does He Allow Evil?" "How Can a Loving God Send People to Hell?" "What Happens to Those Who Never Hear of Jesus?" "If God Is Good, Why Does He Allow Suffering?" "How Is the Bible and Science Reconciled?"

Postmodernism—"A worldview characterized by the belief that truth doesn't exist in any objective sense but is created rather than discovered... Truth—whether in science, education, or religion—is created by the specific culture and exists only in that culture. Therefore, any system or statement that tries to communicate truth is a power play, an effort to dominate other cultures."  
—Josh McDowell

"Between such irreconcilable opposites as the church and the world, there cannot be but antagonism and strife. Each treasures and seeks what the other rejects as worthless. Each is devoted to ends that are [in opposition] to the dearest interests of the other."  
—F. B. Meyer

**John 14:6** "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."

"How do we communicate the gospel to a generation that hears with its eyes and thinks with its feelings?" —Ravi Zacharias

**John 7:24** "Do not judge according to appearance, but **judge** with righteous **judgment**."

**1 Corinthians 2:15 (ESV)** "The spiritual person **judges** all things, but is himself to be judged by no one."

I. We Must Recognize Wrong Kinds of Judgment That Are Forbidden (vv. 1-5)

**James 2:13 (NKJV)** says "For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment."

A. Hypocritical Judgment Is Wrong Judgment (vv. 3-5)

**James 1:23-24** "For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was."

**2 Samuel 12:7**, "You are the man!"

B. Presumptuous Judgment Is Wrong Judgment

**Proverbs 18:13** “He who gives an answer before he hears, it is folly and shame to him.”

“It’s a mighty thin pancake that only has one side.”

—Adrian Rogers

**1 Timothy 5:19** “Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses.”

C. Judging of Motives Is Wrong Judgment

**1 Kings 8:39b** “...for **You alone know the hearts** of all the sons of men.”

**Romans 2:16b** “God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.”

D. Condemning Judgment Is Wrong

II. We Must Recognize Right Kinds of Judgment That Are Commanded (V5)

A. We Are to Judge Sin

“Correct him, but not as a foe, nor as an adversary exacting a penalty, but as a physician providing medicines, yes, and—even more—as a loving brother anxious to rescue and to restore.” —Chrysostom

**Matthew 18:15-17** “If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.”

B. We Are to Judge False Doctrine

**Acts 20:28-30** “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.”

III. We Are to Judge With Careful Discernment (v. 6)

**First Baptist Church Powell 11 27 2016 PM**

**Sermon 10: Who Are You to Judge Another Person**

**Matthew 7:1-5**

**Series: *Answering Ten Questions that Skeptics Ask***

**Review:**

This series is offered to enable believers to obey 1 Peter 3:15 “but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.” Skeptics are target group of this series as we focus on how to answer their questions. We have defined a skeptic as, “a person who habitually doubts, questions, or suspends judgments upon matters generally accepted.”

So far in this series, we have sought to answer nine of the most common questions skeptics ask. The nine questions we have dealt with so far are:

1. How Do You Know That God Exists?
2. How Do You Know That the Bible Is Trustworthy?
3. How Can God Know the Future When It Hasn't Happened Yet?
4. How Can You Say that Jesus Is the Only Way to Salvation?
5. If God Is Good, Why Does He Allow Evil?
6. How Can a Loving God Send People to Hell?
7. What Happens to Those Who Never Hear of Jesus?
8. If God Is Good, Why Does He Allow Suffering?
9. How Are the Bible and Science Reconciled?

These *questions* were not meant to be in order of frequency that they are asked, but if I had to guess, one of the most often asked questions by skeptics would be the one this message deals with – “Who Are You to Judge another Person?”

I think a good case could be made for saying that the most often quoted verse in the Bible is no longer John 3:16. Today it is probably Matthew 7:1: “Do not judge so that you will not be judged.” Not only is Matthew 7:1 one of the most quoted verses in the Bible, it is also one of the most misunderstood verses in the Bible. The reason that this verse is so misinterpreted and misunderstood is that the prevalent worldview in this country has changed over the last thirty or so years.

The most common worldview in our culture today is called “Postmodernism.” Matthew 7:1 has become the token verse that postmoderns use to justify their worldview (even though the meaning they assign to this verse is totally wrong). What is postmodernism? Josh McDowell gives a good description of postmodernism. He defines it as, “A worldview characterized by the belief that truth doesn't exist in any objective sense but is created rather than discovered ... Truth – whether in science, education, or religion – is created by the specific culture and exists only in that culture. Therefore, any system or statement that tries to communicate truth is a power play, an effort to dominate other cultures.” [Josh McDowell, *The New Tolerance*. page 208]

In our culture, the worst evil is to say that someone's belief or behavior is wrong. Most interpret that as intolerance and judging.

Matthew 7:1-6 is a part of the Sermon on the Mount. One of the recurring themes in the Sermon on the Mount, as it applies to us today, is that there are two opposing kingdoms. There is the Kingdom of

Heaven, which has the Lord Jesus as its king, and there is the kingdom of this world, which has Satan as its god and king. The problem today is that many in the church have allowed the kingdom of this world's views and values to be accepted as true and accurate. It is so sad that in the church we have made peace in areas we ought to be at war and we are at war in areas we ought to be at peace. We ought to be at war with the world's view of truth as relative and we ought to be at peace, with other true believers, in areas of personal preferences, personalities, and leadership styles.

Years ago, Pastor and Bible Scholar F. B. Meyer wrote, "Between such irreconcilable opposites as the church and the world, there cannot be but antagonism and strife. Each treasures and seeks what the other rejects as worthless. Each is devoted to ends that are [in opposition] to the dearest interests of the other" [Quoted in Erwin Lutzer, *Who Are You to Judge?*, page 15]

The world system we live in has replaced truth with what they call *fairness*. Today, because postmodernism is the prevailing worldview, our beliefs are evaluated not based on whether or not they are true, but on whether or not they seem fair by the world's definition of fairness. One of the most important truths that we hold to is the truth that Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation. Jesus Himself very clearly said in John 14:6 "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." The world rejects that truth because it is not fair. It is not fair to those of other religions or those who say they have no religion.

The same is true in the realm of beliefs about morality. If we say that homosexual behavior is wrong, it is not fair to those who say it is a personal decision or an inborn trait like being blue eyed or left handed. It seems that our national goal is to be inoffensive to everyone. We cannot have any display or activity in a public place that might be offensive to someone who believes differently. It is as if some have found a new right in the constitution – "we have the right to not see or hear anything which we disagree with or which makes us feel bad." It is interesting that the only group that it is OK to offend is Bible believing Christians. It is perfectly appropriate in our postmodern culture to offend Bible centered Christians.

One of the effects of postmodernism is that we have become a culture that has replaced truth with feelings. The common view today is that when what we believe to be truth offends and thus makes those who don't believe feel bad, we should keep what we believe to ourselves. Those in the world, and now many in the church, order their behavior around what feels right. The cry is: "I must do what feels right for me." Someone said that years ago there was a bumper sticker that said, "If it feels good, do it." Today it says, "If it feels good, it is right."

Apologist Ravi Zacharias said, "How do we communicate the gospel to a generation that hears with its eyes and thinks with its feelings?" [Lutzer, page 24]

Is Jesus agreeing with our postmodern culture that we cannot tell others that they are wrong? Are we always wrong to tell another that they are in error or speak the truth even when it may offend? That would be ridiculous because it would contradict much of the rest of Scripture. John 7:24 says "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment." 1 Corinthians 2:15 (ESV): "The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one."

As you have probably figured out, this word "judge" has different meanings in different contexts. The Greek word used here is translated by ten different English words in the New Testament. It means to separate, distinguish between, determine, or evaluate. In a more negative context, it can refer to censoriousness or sharp, unjust criticism. Depending on the context, this word can be translated discern, evaluate, condemn, censor, select, or determine. The context guides how this word is to be translated.

Let's examine this familiar passage and make sure we are "rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

## **I. We Must Recognize Wrong Kinds of Judgment That Are Forbidden (v 1-5)**

It is obvious (based on the context of Matthew 7:1) that Jesus had in mind a more negative meaning of "judge." In this context, He is speaking of an attitude or approach of censoriousness. That big word means to harshly criticize or condemn. Jesus was speaking about self-righteous, hypocritical, egotistical,

unmerciful condemnation of another. This attitude Jesus is speaking about is especially the approach of self-righteousness persons. If I seek acceptance from God in my own perceived righteousness, then the worse I can make you look, the more it makes me look better.

The poster children for the type of judging Jesus is speaking of here were the Pharisees. These self-righteous people revised God's laws, added their own to them, and judged others to make themselves look more righteous. With that little phrase, "lest you be judged," Jesus was reminding these hearers, who were condemning others, that they were not the final court. They would one day stand before God and give an account of their false judging. In other words, we will be judged by God for our judgmental spirit.

In verse 2, He expounds on this point. To set myself up as the final omniscient judge implies that I am qualified to judge and that I know all the standards. Therefore, I can't claim ignorance when I am judged by God. Do you desire mercy from the Lord? If you render judgment without mercy, then God acts accordingly. James 2:13 (NKJV): says "For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment." Only self-righteous Pharisee types act as the final judge toward others, and in doing so, they set themselves up to be judged by God based on His standards and without the mercy that they withheld from others.

Let's look a little more closely at what kind of judgment is forbidden.

### **A. Hypocritical Judgment Is Wrong Judgment (v 3-5)**

The word translated "speck" in verse 3 refers to a small irritating particle. It could be translated "splinter" or in a wheat producing area, it could be translated "chaff" (small particles of the husk surrounding the wheat berry that was tossed into the wind to blow it away). It was not something that should be left alone; it needed to be gotten out of the eye. The word translated "log" was a large piece of wood such as a rafter or joist. Jesus is using what His hearers would immediately recognize as *hyperbole*. He gives an exaggerated example to make a point. What Jesus is describing is hypocritical judging. Self-righteousness always results in hypocrisy. To justify my own self-righteousness, I have to keep finding flaws in others, but I can't admit or deal with my own flaws because that undermines my self-righteousness. This type of sinful judgment has pride at its root.

A hypocrite is described in James 1:23-24: "For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was." A hypocrite refuses to deal with sin in his or her own life but is quick to judge others in a condemning way. Before we start dealing with sin in others, we must deal with our own sin.

Have you ever noticed that people with hidden or ignored sin in their own life tend to be "speck hunters." As they judge others, it makes them not feel so bad about their own sin. A perfect example is found in 2 Samuel 12 when David had committed his horrible sin with Bathsheba. He hid it and refused to deal with it. God sends the prophet Nathan to confront David. He tells David a story about a man with one little pet lamb and a rich man who has plenty of lambs takes the poor man's one lamb for himself. David goes into a tirade condemning the man in Nathan's story and demanding that he pay dearly for his cruel act and then Nathan drops the hammer and says to David in 2 Samuel 12:7: "You are the man!" Before we deal with the sins, flaws, and shortcomings of others, we must deal with our own sin.

### **B. Presumptuous Judgment Is Wrong**

Proverbs 18:13: "He who gives an answer before he hears, it is folly and shame to him." Adrian Rogers said, "It's a mighty thin pancake that only has one side." Over the years that I have been a pastor, I have had people come to me with horrible accusations against staff members, church leaders, or another member of the body. So many times, when all the facts were gathered, it was a judgment based on presumption, not facts. That tendency to judge based on presumption is behind Paul's admonition to Timothy in 1 Timothy 5:19: "Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses." As we will see, we need to deal with specks in our brother's eye, but it cannot be as a hypocrite when we have a log in our own eye or making presumptions without all the facts.

### **C. The Judging of Motives Is Wrong**

1 Kings 8:39b: "...for You alone know the hearts of all the sons of men." There is never an excuse or reason for judging another's motives for what they say or do. Neither you nor I know their heart. When I have examined myself, and gotten all the facts, I must judge their words and actions, but not motives. Romans 2:16b: "God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus." I am to examine my own motives and really, I don't always know my own motives; I must trust God to reveal them because only God knows our motives.

### **D. Condemning Judgment Is Wrong**

We have (as we will see in a moment) a responsibility to rightly judge the actions, attitudes, and words of fellow believers, but we do not have the right to condemn a person. To put it another way, we have the responsibility to confront, warn, and declare actions, words, or attitudes as sins that need repentance, but we do not have the responsibility or the right to eternally condemn another person! Jesus is the only one who has earned the right to judge in this final sense. He will do it sitting on a great white throne (Revelation 20:11-15), and that throne is not a duplex! There is room only for one. Only He is wise enough, all-knowing, and good enough to pronounce eternal judgment.

## **II. We Must Recognize Right Kinds of Judgment That Are Commanded (v 5)**

Notice something that is often overlooked in this example that Jesus gives. He gives all these cautions and then in Verse 5, He clearly tells us to remove the speck in our brother's eye. This area of judging is full of challenges. We must avoid hypocritical judging, presumptuous judging, motive judging, and condemning judging, but on the other hand the Bible is crystal clear that we are to call sin, sin, and we are to confront other believers when there is sin in their lives. Those who judge wrongly are wrong, but so are those who ignore sin and the loving confrontation of sin. Let's look at two areas where we are to properly judge others.

### **A. We Are to Judge Sin**

To fail to confront sin in a brother or sister in Christ is the opposite of loving them. Refusing to warn a person about their sin is as unloving as refusing to warn them about a disease they might have. One of the early church leaders, Chrysostom (347-407 AD), put it this way speaking of a believer with sin in their life: "Correct him, but not as a foe, nor as an adversary exacting a penalty, but as a physician providing medicines, yes, and – even more – as a loving brother anxious to rescue and to restore." [Quoted in John Stott, *Christian Counter Culture* page 180]

In Scripture, the whole concept of church discipline is based on right judging. In Matthew 18:15-17:

If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

My purpose here is not to do an in-depth study on church discipline, but to point out that it is a form of right judging. You will notice that it involves going to a brother who is bringing reproach on Christ and the body of Christ (His church) and confronting their sin. It is with the right attitude (to restore a brother) and gets witnesses to avoid corrupt judgment. Certainly not all confrontation of sin in another believer involves church discipline, but with the right attitude, this loving judgment ought to be the norm in the church.

## **B. We Are to Judge False Doctrine**

We not only have the right to judge false teachers, we have the responsibility to do so. This is the responsibility of every believer, but it is the duty especially of the elders or shepherds of the flock. When Paul met with the elders of the church at Ephesus he warned them to judge false doctrine. Acts 20:28-30: “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.” Paul is obviously talking about false doctrine and false teachers. Doctrine is the foundation that everything is built upon. True, biblical doctrine (teaching) must be protected at all costs. Without a strong biblical doctrinal foundation, a church is being built on a foundation of Jello. When false doctrine (false teaching) is found in the church, it must be judged and rooted out whatever the cost. I’m not talking about non-fundamentals that even Godly Bible scholars disagree on (fine points about the second coming of Christ). I’m talking about the fundamentals of the faith and especially the Gospel.

### **Conclusion**

We are within biblical bounds and in fact are under biblical command to judge, discern, speak against, and confront false teaching, sinful attitudes, and sinful actions that violate Scripture. This is not the kind of judging Jesus was referring to in verse 1. What Jesus was forbidding was self-righteous, hasty, unmerciful, prejudiced, hypocritical judging.

“Who are you to judge another person?” If it is the right kind of judging, you are simply an obedient disciple of Jesus.

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