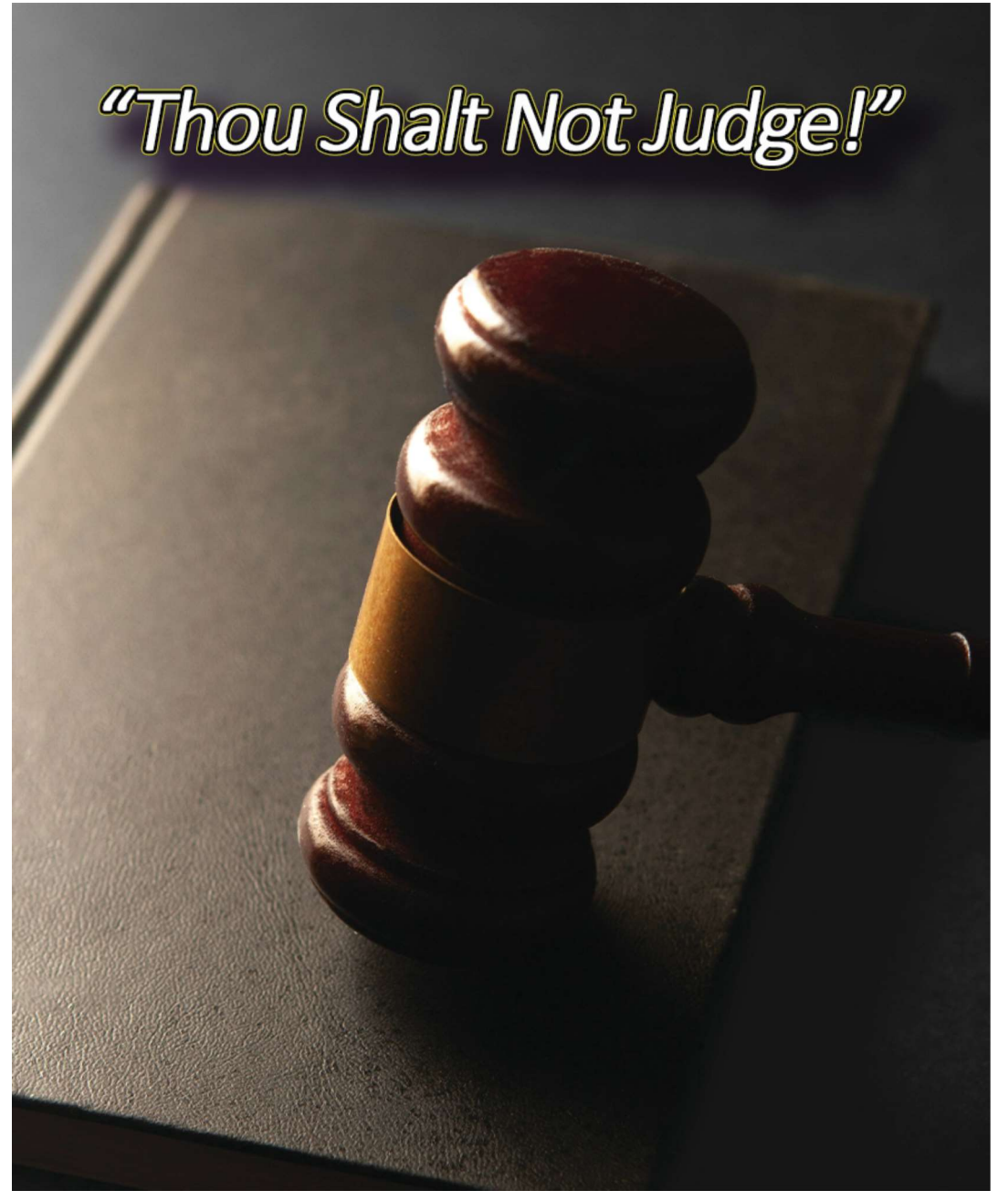


“Thou Shalt Not Judge!”



"Thou Shalt Not Judge!"

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Mark 10:22

And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.

John 6:66

From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

In neither case did Jesus chase after the people who chose to walk away. He allowed them to leave of their own free will. Jesus shared the truth with them, and they chose to walk away. He let them go. We must be willing to do the same when we share the truth with people only to see them choose to walk away from it. Regardless of how much the rejection hurts us, we have to stand firm on Scriptural ground.

Never, ever let anyone else tell you what the Bible says. Read it, study it, pray for understanding and know for yourself what it says. It is easy for someone to cherry-pick verses from the Bible and use them out of context to support his own position. As Christians, it is our responsibility to know what the Bible actually says and to understand it within context. We must know the truth in order to recognize a lie. If we say we believe something, we need to know why we believe it. And then we need to live it.

It is so very important that every believer spend time alone with God, studying His word on a daily basis. The written word of God is the ONLY source of truth we have left in this world. If you are going to share the Gospel message with the people God places in your path, you have to know and understand what it says. The stakes are far too high to allow anything to stifle your testimony. Our purpose in this world is to share the truth of Jesus Christ with others. God has already judged behaviors and lifestyles that separate people from Him. He has made it clear in His word. Refusing to believe what He says will not save anyone from the consequences of rejecting His word.

The most loving thing a person can do is share the Gospel truth with people who are walking on the path to hell. How much do you have to hate a person to let them continue along that path without at least trying to throw them a lifeline, a message of truth from the written word of God?

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Conclusion

Do not just immediately go silent the next time you are talking with someone and he hurls the all too familiar phrase, "The bible says, 'Thou shalt not judge!'" View it as an opportunity to plant a seed in that person's heart and seize the moment. In a non-confrontational manner, calmly ask the person to elaborate on that. Where does it say that? What is the context of that passage? What exactly does it mean not to judge? Patiently wait for him to answer one question before asking another (as long as you are in no danger of being physically assaulted). Be willing to interact with the person on this matter and shine a light on any errant statements he makes about God, Jesus, and the Bible. Hopefully, as he tries to provide answers, he will begin to realize that he has merely been regurgitating a phrase he has heard countless times but never really questioned or understood. Whether he actually reaches that realization within his own heart is something that you may never know. Even so, it is extremely important that you, as a Bible-believing Christian, share the gospel with the people God places in your path and that you are able to defend your faith. Often times, people like to put Christians on the defensive as if we bear the burden of proof and must provide all the answers. Learn to ask questions and allow the other person to provide answers. This can go a long way towards helping them examine their own heartfelt convictions versus mere social mantras they have adopted as their own over time. Your goal here is not so much to "win the argument" as it is to plant a scriptural seed in the heart of a person who is lost and in need of the salvation that only Jesus can provide.

That having been said, there are people who are clearly not interested in anything more than the sound of their own voice. Nothing you say will have any effect on them. You have to recognize when you have encountered a "dog" or "swine" and simply walk away. You will not be able to reach such a person, even for the planting of a seed. Understand that even Jesus allowed people to walk away from Him.

Introduction

Christians and non-Christians alike are quite familiar with the Biblical-sounding admonition, “The Bible says, “Thou shalt not judge!”” This is the go-to response of a person who does not want to hear that what he is doing is wrong in the eyes of God. He prefers to indulge himself and he does not want any backlash from anyone about it. Time and again, he hurls this rebuke at those who hope to help him view his actions through the lens of Scripture. He wants them to shut up and has found that this is a rather effective method of achieving that goal. Sadly, many Christians simply do not know what to say when an unbeliever (or straying believer) launches this "defense" at them like a rocket. They walk away questioning themselves, a bit shaken in their own beliefs. The unrepentant person stands a little taller, feeling emboldened and morally superior for having set that judgmental Christian straight.

The written word of God is the standard by which all the human race will be judged. It is our instruction manual for how we are to live the lives that God has given us and how we are to interact with the people and world around us. Does it *really* require that we go through life making no judgments whatsoever? Are we to just blindly assume that everything everyone says is equally valid and everything everyone does is equally acceptable? One person’s actions are no better or worse than another’s. Since none of us are God, we should never say anything to another person about his actions. Is that how the Bible tells us we are to live?

If that were so, we would live in a totally lawless society, a chaotic culture where anything goes because to speak out against another person's actions would be "judging." A society without judgment of any kind cannot survive. Mankind would quickly descend into depths of depravity from which there could be no recovery. People would kill whomever they chose. They would steal whatever they wanted. They could cause any harm they wanted to other people without fear of consequence. You would not be able

to avoid putting yourself in dangerous situations with dangerous people. To do so would require you to make a judgment about them and their actions and the Bible says, “Thou shalt not judge!” We would literally destroy ourselves out of existence. It is not reasonable that Jesus was instructing us to go through life making no judgments at all regarding others. To say otherwise takes Jesus' words out of context and implies that He approved of, even promoted, a totally amoral society where there is no right or wrong. That is not at all in alignment with Jesus' teachings and Scripture as a whole.

Ephesians 5:3-7

- 3) But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;
- 4) Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.
- 5) For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.
- 6) Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.
- 7) Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

1 Timothy 4:1-2

- 1) Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;
- 2) Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

How many times and how many ways does God have to say something before you believe it is true?

29) Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,
30) Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,
31) Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:
32) Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

9) Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,
10) Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.
11) And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Galatians 5:16-21

16) This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.
17) For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.
18) But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.
19) Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,
20) Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,
21) Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Who Judges What Is Sin?

God has already judged what is right and what is wrong with regard to His creation. He has written it down for us so that we can know without a doubt what is acceptable in His sight. Christians do not set the standards. God has already done that. As Christians, we are to recognize those things that God has deemed as sinful and we are to avoid such behaviors. We are to follow God's instructions, His plan, and His order for our lives. In doing so, we live our lives in accordance with God's will. Being human, we are guaranteed to fail at times. Many, many times. There is no avoiding that. We are all born with a sin nature and we will sin. There is a difference, however, between **struggling** with a sin and **embracing** that sin.

Struggling with a sin involves recognizing that that particular behavior is a sin against God. Battling against the temptation to partake in that sin is an internal conflict between your spirit and your flesh. After you have given in to the temptation that taunts you, shame washes over you. You feel guilt for what you have done. You may tell yourself that that was the last time you would give in. Next time, you will stand strong. You will defeat temptation next time. You may even tell God the same thing as you confess your failings and seek His forgiveness for your transgression. Next time rolls around and you fail again. The cycle repeats. I wish I could say this battle will end but I don't think that's true until your time in this world ends. When you think you have defeated one temptation, another comes along to take its place. Temptation is a favorite tool of the enemy to thwart the will of God for your life. Whether the temptation involves pride, gossip, food, greed, unforgiveness, anger, sexual sin or any number of other sins, the struggle with temptation will plague the life of every Christian.

Embracing a sin produces a completely different dynamic. Embracing a sin involves refusing to acknowledge that whatever behavior you want to engage in is even a sin to begin with. Instead of feeling guilt or shame for partaking in that sin, you revel in it. Instead of seeking God's forgiveness for your sin, you try to put His stamp of

approval on it. You see nothing wrong with what you are doing. You gravitate towards other people who share your love of that same sin. Their participation is taken as confirmation that nothing is wrong with what you are doing. You claim that you were “born this way,” as if that is a license to flaunt behavior that is offensive to your Creator. You reject God’s authority by refusing to view your actions through the lens of Scripture. You begin to twist His word to accommodate your favorite sins. This happens far too often in pulpits and congregations throughout this country. If you embrace your sins long enough, you may reach the point that you denounce God entirely, refusing to acknowledge that He has any authority over you or your actions. Embracing sin is not an internal battle against that sin, it becomes a battle against God. It is your heart eagerly welcoming sin in defiance of your Creator. Embracing sin is prideful rebellion against God Himself, elevating your will above His will.

While we are all born into this world with a sin nature, it is how a person handles the sins in his life that reveals the true condition of his heart. Jesus said, “...for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.” (Luke 6:45). He further illustrated His point by saying. “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.” (Luke 6:46-49, emphasis added)

The world we live in is God’s creation. We are God’s creation. God set the standards and order for His creation from the very beginning. The commandments and rules that He has given us to live by were given to us not to deprive us of anything or as a “Thou shalt not” checklist that we must satisfy in order to gain salvation. Not at all. They were given to us as a means of protecting us. There are reasons God instructed us in His word not to do certain things. He did this as a means of protecting us from the natural consequences of certain actions. In addition to His guidance, God also gave each of us the free will to choose whether to obey Him or to obey the lusts of this natural world. We cannot rebel against God and then blame Him for the resulting consequences.

As Bible-believing Christians, sharing the full gospel message including Jesus’ call for repentance **is our business**. Calling out satanic deception presenting itself as “Christian love” **is our business**. The single most important thing a Christian can do in his lifetime is to share the true Gospel of Jesus Christ with a lost and dying world. **Not only is it our business, it is our assignment.**

People are getting so caught up in the desires of this world that they lose sight of the fact that they are walking on the path to destruction. God has given us ample warning where certain lifestyles lead, and somehow large numbers of professing Christians pretend that none of that applies to them. God’s word applies to all of us. We are the ones who need to repent and bring our hearts into submission to Him and His will for our lives. It is not now, nor will it ever be, the other way around.

The following passages highlight the reason Bible-believing Christians need to stop cowing down and instead boldly proclaim the full gospel message to the people they encounter in their lives. The importance of sharing the full Gospel message cannot possibly be overstated.

Matthew 7:13-14

13) Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

14) Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

Romans 1:26-32

26) For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:

27) And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

28) And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

the teachings of Christ, yet they continue to present themselves to the world as Christian denominations. The United Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church (USA) are two major offenders that come to mind. If it is offensive to you that I say that, imagine how offended God must be by what they are doing to His creation. They are preaching “another gospel,” not the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They are embracing sin rather than preaching the repentance of sin as Jesus commanded. They are the ravenous wolves in sheep’s clothing that Jesus warned about in Matthew 24.

Bible-believing Christians cannot pretend that the current teachings of the United Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church (USA) are anything other than an affront to Almighty God. They package their message as one of love while leading people straight to hell. God has not changed His word. He has not changed His order and plan for His creation. Homosexuality was an abomination to God when He wrote the book of Leviticus. It is still an abomination to Him today. Yet both the United Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church (USA) ordain practicing homosexuals and transgender people as church leaders. Give that some thought.

It makes no difference how many degrees decorate a person’s wall, how many letters follow their name or how many people hang on their every word. If what that person teaches does not squarely align with the clear teachings of the Scriptures, **that person is wrong**. When Christians see that happening and call it out as wrong, **we are not judging them. The Bible has already judged them.**

We have a responsibility to the One who died and rose again to give us eternal life to speak the truth in the face of lies. We have an obligation to stand against the deceptions infiltrating our society today. The stakes could not be higher. Real people are on a direct path to a real, eternal hell. It is not “loving” to encourage them to continue on their way. Somehow, homosexuality and transgenderism have reached sacred status in American society today. Refusing to not only accept those lifestyles, but failing to promote them as well is cause for cancellation and removal from the mainstream. I mention these lifestyles in particular because they are the primary ones our society demands that we accept under the umbrella of “Christian love.” These are not the only rebellious lifestyles separating people from the salvation that only Jesus provides.

What Did Jesus Say?

Let's look at Matthew 7 to see what Jesus said on this matter.

Matthew 7:1-6

- 1) Judge not, that ye be not judged.
- 2) For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.
- 3) And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?
- 4) 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?
- 5) 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.
- 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.

Notice that the very passage that starts with Jesus saying, "**Judge not, that ye be not judged**", goes on to **actually require making a judgment**. No, this is not a contradiction, and it is not an error. Let's look at the parallel passage in Luke for further insight into Jesus' intent.

Luke 6:37-42

- 37) Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:
- 38) Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For

with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

39) And he spake a parable unto them, **Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?**

40) **The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master.**

41) **And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?**

42) **Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.**

Jesus was not condemning all judgment against the actions of others. That is not at all the message and context of His words in these passages. He was warning against calling out the sins of others while excusing your own sins. He was warning against **hypocritical judgment**. As humans, none of us are going to live sinless lives. If that were even possible we would not need Jesus. Recognizing the difference between **struggling with a sin** and **embracing a sin** is key here. How you handle the sins in your own life makes all the difference. This doesn't mean wait until you have achieved sinlessness before speaking to another person about his sins. None of us will achieve sinlessness on this side of eternity. What is meant here is if we have known sin in our lives and we excuse that sin rather than repent of it, we are in effect embracing that sin. If we then call out another person for a sin in his life while excusing and embracing our own known sin, we are being hypocrites. This is what Jesus was illustrating with "**the mote that is in thy brother's eye**" and "**the beam that is in thine own eye**." When dealing with other people and their sins, you have to use scriptural discernment. That requires making a judgment about the known sin in your own life and dealing with it before approaching someone else about their sins.

Jesus also made it clear that whatever measure we use to judge others will be applied to each of us in judgment. If you judge another with mercy and grace in your heart, you will receive the same. If you judge another with hatred, malice, or contempt

16) Having a good conscience; that whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

We are not to shrink back from opposition, but rather to proclaim truth in the face of it.

Romans 1:16

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

2 Timothy 4:2-4

2) Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

3) For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

4) And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

Notice that verses 3 and 4 describe the time we live in right now. Churches across this nation spread messages that are clearly against the written word of God, yet they preach it in Jesus' name. They focus on a form of "love" that is not Biblical, completely ignoring Jesus' call for repentance. It appears that a vast number of professing Christians are treating the Bible as though it were a rough draft submitted to them for editing and approval rather than the authoritative word of God. They are pretending that prideful rebellion and sexual perversion are completely normal, acceptable lifestyles in the eyes of God. They seem to believe that God has conformed to the will of man. That may be the case with their "god," but it is absolutely NOT the case with the Living God of the Bible.

Major denominations have embraced current social dictates, elevating them above sound Biblical doctrine. So much so that their teachings are no longer compatible with

19) If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

Jesus knew the world that hated Him would hate those who follow Him. All four of the Gospels record His warnings. He did not warn us of this impending hatred as a means of saying, “Be quiet and don’t tell anyone what I’ve told you. Just go along to get along.” Not at all. He gave us these warnings to prepare us for the hostility we will face as we attempt to share the Gospel message with the world around us. Jesus wants us to stand against the lies and endure the hostility. He wants us to proclaim the truth and persevere through faith in Him.

Among Jesus’ last words on this earth was a command to spread the Gospel message to all the world.

Matthew 28:19

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Mark 16:15

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

Luke 24:47

And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

The Bible continues to instruct us to share the message of salvation with a lost world.

1 Peter 3:15-16

15) But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

in your heart, you will receive the same. Never lose sight of the fact that Scripture is the standard by which we will all be judged and "with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." The most loving thing you can do for someone who is straying from God or who is not yet saved, is to speak the truth to them in love. If they are wise, they will respond in a way that will return them to a right relationship with Jesus, or in the case of an unsaved person, they will recognize their need for Jesus, seek Him and be saved.

In Matthew 7:1-6, Jesus talks about four different types of people (a brother, a hypocrite, dogs and swine) and clearly expects the listener to know the difference. He clearly expects the listener to judge, to distinguish between them and recognize the difference. In Matthew 7:3,4, and 5, Jesus talks about a brother and addressing sin in the life of a brother. A brother is someone with whom you have some measure of kinship, whether biological, familial or spiritual. The overall context of this passage indicates that Jesus is referring to spiritual brothers rather than merely blood relatives. He clearly expects those listening to know how to determine who is a brother and to deal with that person in a way that differs from the way they deal with the "dogs" and the "swine" mentioned in verse 6. To know the difference requires making a judgment.

Jesus' direction in Matthew 7:6 carries with it the expectation that you recognize when the person you are dealing with is not merely a straying brother but an unbeliever, an enemy of the gospel. This requires that you make a judgment. You do not deal with this person in the same way that you deal with a brother. While only Jesus truly knows a person's heart, how one handles the sins in his life provides significant visual clues about the overall condition of his heart.

A brother is one type of person, a fellow follower of Christ. A person who would be considered a dog is a completely different type of person. In our society today, dogs are valued and often viewed as beloved members of the family. That was not the case in New Testament times. Dogs were scavengers and were viewed with scorn. Morally corrupt people or people who behaved like ravenous scavengers were referred to as dogs. A dog does not value the same things a follower of Christ values. A dog will feast on garbage, consuming whatever lies in his path. It makes no difference to a dog whether they are consuming meat that has been sacrificed to God or the decaying

carcass of an animal that has been killed and left to rot. They will devour it all the same with no regard for the source of it. That is their nature as scavengers. In comparison, a person who would be considered a dog will fill himself spiritually with whatever he comes across, having no regard for the source of it. He will make no distinction between what is holy or unholy, clean or unclean, pure or putrid. To such a person, the holy meat of the word will be regarded just the same as lies from the pit of hell. He makes no distinction between the two and has no regard for one over the other. You would not give anything that is holy or sacred to such an individual and expect them to reverence it. Proverbs 26:11 compares a dog to a fool, "As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly." Jesus expected those to whom He was speaking to recognize such a person and to deal with them differently than they would deal with a brother. By extension, that same expectation applies to believers today. Jesus' instruction literally requires making a judgment about another person.

Similarly, swine were viewed as ritually unclean animals. The wicked and unclean people in a New Testament society would be called swine as an insult. Swine wallow in filth because that is where they are most comfortable. That is where they are the happiest. They do not want to be taken out of their filthy environment and cleaned up. They are completely satisfied eating slop, spoiled food and wallowing in filth. There is no indication they want anything else. If you threw physical pearls into their pen, they would not regard them as anything of value and would walk all over them until they disappeared beneath the mud and muck. Just as swine (the animal) would have no appreciation for anything pure and clean, a swine (person) would have no appreciation for anything of God or words of Scripture. A person who could be likened to swine is equally happy wallowing in his own spiritual filth. This is where he is most comfortable and he has no desire to leave or be cleaned up. If you bring him biblical pearls (words of scriptural wisdom) he will not regard them as anything of value. In fact, he will likely detest them. Just as he will have no regard for the pearls, he will have no regard for the person bringing the pearls. His hostility for the word of God can quickly become hostility for the person bringing the word and could easily escalate into a physical attack, as Matthew 7:6 warns. Again, Jesus expected those to whom He was speaking to recognize this type of person and to deal with them differently than they would deal with a brother. Again, by extension, that same expectation applies to believers today. And yet again, Jesus' instruction literally requires making a judgment about another person.

Why Not Just Mind Our Own Business?

The world we live in today tells us that it is “unloving” to not accept every chosen lifestyle as equally valid and acceptable. We live in a culture where “inclusivity” extends to everyone and every belief system except the Living God of the Bible and those who follow Him. We live in a world that beats us up with delusional depictions of a manufactured Jesus, rather than one willing to submit to the real Jesus. We are called “bigots” for adhering to Biblical teachings. We are held in contempt by a secular society for believing the written word of God is the final authority. This is no surprise. Jesus provided plenty of warning about this very thing.

Matthew 10:22

And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

Matthew 24:9

Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

Mark 13:13

And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

Luke 21:17

And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.

John 15:18-19

18) If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

Just a few verses down from the favored “go to” rebuke, is another passage from that same Sermon on the Mount containing Jesus’ instructions to His followers.

Matthew 7:15-23

- 15) Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.
- 16) Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?
- 17) Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.
- 18) A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.
- 19) Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.
- 20) Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.
- 21) Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.
- 22) Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?
- 23) And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Jesus’ words in this passage require that believers use biblical discernment with regard to the genuineness and intentions of the people they encounter in ministry. He instructs His followers how to recognize false prophets, the “**ravening wolves**” who present themselves “**in sheep’s clothing.**” Jesus said, “**Ye shall know them by their fruits.**” As we saw in Luke 6:45, a person’s outward actions reflect what is in his heart. Christians are instructed by Jesus to pay attention to the outward actions of others and to use that information in determining the type of person they are dealing with. Jesus did not tell His followers to blindly follow anyone and everyone. In fact, He warned against that very thing in Matthew 15:14 when He said, “**Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.**”

When Jesus' disciples questioned Him about signs of the end of the world, the first thing Jesus said to them was, "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many." (Matthew 24:4-5) Just a few verses later, Jesus warns again, "And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many." (Matthew 24:11) Further down in that same chapter, during the same conversation with His disciples, Jesus continues to warn them against being deceived, saying, "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together." (Matthew 24:23-28)

Jesus' warnings to His disciples required that they make judgments concerning the people around them and the messages they bring. He did not tell them to go along with anything and everything they are told. They are instructed to pay attention and recognize when a message is false. Jesus' warnings do not apply solely to His disciples. They apply to us as well. We are expected to take Jesus' words to heart and heed His warnings as we navigate through this world. God fully expects us to recognize the difference between what is of Him and what is not. This requires using discernment and making a judgment.

Malachi 3:18

Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked,
between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

1 Kings 3:9-10

9) Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people,
that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy
so great a people?

10) And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing."

Creator gave us the ability to judge between right and wrong, to be wise or unwise. He expects us to use this endowment in such a way as to honor Him, living lives that are pleasing to Him.

11) And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

Not only are they to refuse fellowship with people participating in certain behaviors, but they are to **call out their sinful indulgences**. He did not tell them to keep quiet when they encounter people participating in “the unfruitful works of darkness.” He did not tell them to mind their own business and he certainly did not tell them to affirm the other people in their sins. No. Paul instructed them to “reprove them.” That is to call out their ungodly behavior for what it is.

Calling out ungodly behavior is something that many Christians in America will not do. We have allowed the screaming voices of ungodliness and rebellion to drown out our own attempts at Biblical reproof. We hesitate a lot of times because of our own sinfulness. We lose sight of the fact that while we struggle with sin, we are dealing with people who have embraced their sins. They are in very dangerous territory. By embracing their sins and living in rebellion against God, they are walking down a path of eternal destruction. If they do not bring their hearts into repentance and seek the forgiveness that only Jesus can provide before they pass from this world, they will suffer eternally in a literal hell, separated from God, conscious and aware. That is not a fate that any genuine Christian wishes upon another person.

Lastly, take a closer look at verses 15-17:

- 15) See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,
- 16) Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.
- 17) Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

There is no hidden message here. This passage means exactly what it says. Followers of Christ need to know “what the will of the Lord is” and “walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.” God has written it down for us, in black and white. By studying His word, we can know His will. By using our God-given ability to judge, to distinguish between what God has judged as right and what He has judged as wrong, we can walk in accordance with His will. If we are unwise, we will not. Our

John 7:23-24

23) If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken, are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day?

24) Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

You may want to ask those who use Jesus’ words in Matthew 7:1 as a shield covering their rebellion if they have ever read Jesus’ words in John 7:24.

Galatians 1:11-12

11) But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

12) For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Keeping that in mind, look again at what Paul says in Ephesians 5. This entire passage requires making judgments of others based on their actions. Paul instructs the people of Ephesus to be “followers of God” and to stay away from “fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness... filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient.” To do what Paul instructed required them to assess the behaviors of the people around them, recognize ungodliness and not participate in certain actions. He made it clear that they cannot participate in certain behaviors and be “followers of God” at the same time. He gave a stern warning in verses 5-7:

5) For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

6) Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

7) Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

People choosing to live lifestyles of disobedience to God should not expect anything from Him other than His wrath. Paul wanted the people of Ephesus to know this and to put this information into practical use on a daily basis so that they would be counted among the “followers of God” instead of “the children of disobedience.” Being “followers of God” requires that we make moral judgments so that we know what we should partake in and what we should avoid. There is no way to be a “follower of God” without making moral judgments.

Paul did not stop there. Go back to his instructions in verse 11. Read that carefully.

- 3) But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;
- 4) Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.
- 5) For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.
- 6) Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.
- 7) Be not ye therefore partakers with them.
- 8) For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:
- 9) (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)
- 10) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.
- 11) And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.
- 12) For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.
- 13) But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.
- 14) Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.
- 15) See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,
- 16) Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.
- 17) Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.
- 18) And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

Paul named a few types of people, specifically whoremongers, unclean, and covetous men (idolaters), before declaring in no uncertain terms that such people do not have, “any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.” Did the Apostle Paul wrongly judge these people? No. Not at all. Paul did not preach anything taught to him by man. Paul preached that which was revealed to him by Jesus Christ.

What Did The Apostle Paul Demonstrate?

Let's take a look at the Apostle Paul's interactions with the people of Athens, a city that fully embraced idolatry.

Acts 17:16-34

- 16) Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.
- 17) Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.
- 18) Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.
- 19) And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is?
- 20) For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean.
- 21) (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.)
- 22) Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.
- 23) For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, To The Unknown God. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.
- 24) God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

- 25) Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;
- 26) And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;
- 27) That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:
- 28) For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.
- 29) Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.
- 30) And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:
- 31) Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.
- 32) And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter.
- 33) So Paul departed from among them.
- 34) Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

Consider Paul's testimony in Athens, a "city wholly given to idolatry." Paul "disputed... daily with them that met with him." He "preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection."

Paul "stood in the midst" of the men of Athens and told them about the Living God. In doing so, he completely denounced all their gods, false gods, to whom they had demonstrated their devotion through the setting up of altars. He did not bite his tongue to avoid being called judgmental. He did not affirm their beliefs in any of their false gods. He did not avoid the conversation altogether because he himself had sinned. No,

Paul boldly preached Jesus to the people of Athens. Some people mocked him, some believed him. The response of the crowd did not change Paul's message in the slightest. He shared the gospel message with people who worshipped false gods, people who were idolaters. He did not apologize for the message He brought to them. Paul preached the gospel message, left and continued his journey to Corinth.

We need to follow Paul's lead. He was not intimidated by idolaters and their false gods. He declared the absolute truth of Jesus Christ, and then went on his way to tell the next city about Him as well. While in Corinth, Paul received reassurance from the Lord by a vision. Jesus told Paul, "**Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.**" (Acts 18:9-10) Notice that Jesus did not tell Paul to hush up, don't judge, and affirm people in their sins. Jesus told Paul to speak and not to keep quiet about the Gospel. His instruction to Paul extends to us as well. As followers of Christ, we are to, "**Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace.**" Just as Jesus assured Paul that He is with him, we need to always remember that we have the Holy Spirit living inside of us. As blood-bought children of God, we are never alone or separated from Him.

John 14:17

Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

Turn to Ephesians 5 and look at what the Apostle Paul told the people of Ephesus. Paul connected the dots between sound Biblical teachings and the day-to-day living of the Christian life. He instructed the people of Ephesus in the practical application of God's word to their daily lives.

Ephesians 5:1-18

- 1) Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;
- 2) And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.