

THE BIBLE VIEW

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How Dare You!

Bill Brinkworth

One of man's natural tendencies is to judge others by his own measuring stick, usually himself. Paul, in Romans 2, strongly addresses this weakness.

"Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. ... 3 And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?" Romans 2:1-3

Most of the time when we judge others, we have or have had the same problem ourselves. It seems that those that have had the biggest problems, or are still having them, complain the loudest of another's weaknesses. It is the ex-smoker that criticizes the loudest about another's smoke he is inhaling. An older man grumbles to a son about his child's late hours of coming home, forgetting how his father used to rebuke him in his younger, carousing days. One that recently lied on his income tax form somehow is not convicted when he judges a worker that just lied to him. On and on our hypocritical judging goes.

God, however, knows the truth, and He remembers (Rom. 3: 3). For the born-again child of God, there is no eternal judgment for sins. All his sins are paid for and no longer remembered (Hebrews 10:17). All Christians, however, will be judged (Mat. 12:36, Gal. 6:7, Eph. 6:8, Col. 3:24 ...) for what they did or did not do for the Lord. It is called the Judgment Seat of Christ (II Cor. 5:10), and it will involve reward or loss of reward (Rev. 22:12).

For the unsaved person, sadly the extent of their eternal judgment will be decided at the White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15). That fearful condemnation will be at the end of Christ's 1,000 year reign on this earth. At that judgment, the lost will be judged according to their works (Rev. 20:14).

In light of our future day of judgment before an Almighty God who knows everything about us, (including real intents for doing something, what we did when no one else saw us, and all other dark secrets), our judgment of others seems so insignificant and embarrassing, on our part. How could we dare judge others with all we have done wrong? We need to stop judging others, and leave that to the One who knows all.

“Reputation is what man thinks of us. Character is what God knows of us.”

To Judge, Or Not to Judge

Bill Brinkworth

One of the most abused verses against a discerning or a reproving Christian is Matthew 7:1. As soon as the one being rebuked senses a little conviction about their wrongdoing, the verse is usually misquoted (“Judge not, or you will be judged”) to thwart the reproof. When the Bible verse (even if it is misquoted) is heard, the Christian, who is usually only trying to share what the Bible says about the subject, silences his discussion, as he does not want to appear to be in error or sin also.

What does the Bible really say about judging?

“Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete (“mete” means measure), it shall be measured to you again.” Mat. 7:1, 2

We learn here that if we are harshly or unjustly critical of others, we will be judged accordingly. Rather, we should try to help or restore those in sin.

“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” Gal. 6:1

When I was younger, I remember my mother’s rebuking me for being critical of others. She pointed out that what I was most critical of was what I had the most problem with myself. I carefully observed that many times in my life, when I had been critical, she was right. The following Bible verses shed some truth on what my mother had taught me:

“And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? 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?” Matthew 7:3-4.

Matthew Henry, an 18th century Bible commentator, said eloquently about the previous verse: “We must not sit in the judgment-seat, to make our word a law to everybody. We must not judge our brother; that is, we must not speak evil of him ... We must not judge rashly, nor pass such a judgment upon our brother as has no ground, but is only the product of our own jealousy and ill nature. We must not make the worst of people, nor infer such insidious things from their words and actions as they will not bear. We must not judge uncharitably, unmercifully, nor with a spirit of revenge, and a desire to do mischief. We must not judge a man’s state by a single act, nor of what he is in himself by what he is to us; because in our own cause, we are apt to be partial. We must not judge the hearts of others, not their intentions; for it is God’s prerogative to try the heart, and we must not step into his throne; ...” Most of the time it is not our business to judge.

Sometimes our judgments are prejudiced or wrong. Many times I have made a judgment against a person or a situation, only to find out later that I had only half of the story. Usually, it was the wrong half!

“He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.”

Proverbs 18:13

Although we are not to judge people, we are to judge doctrine. *“But he that is spiritual judgeth all things ...” I Corinthians 2:15.* Is the Bible contradicting itself? Of course not! God is the ultimate judge of people; but we, with the help of the Holy Spirit illuminating the truth of the Word of God, should be able to tell right from wrong. This is the type of “judging” we need to do.

After Jesus said, in the previous verses not to judge, He tells us in the following verses in which areas we are to discern. People twist the truth around to shut out the Holy Spirit’s conviction. Liberals many times have unbiblically knowledgeable Christians so afraid to stand up and discern what is not of God, that they do not stand at all. One of the reasons so much sin is going on in this world today, is because Christians are afraid to speak out.

According to the Scriptures, we are to:

Discern what is clean and unclean.

Discern what is of God, and what is not. Ungodly people are to be discerned and kept away from: *“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.” Matthew 7:6* The dogs and swine spoken of here were understood by the Jews to be ceremoniously unclean and lowly creatures. Jesus gave them a graphic picture of what He thought of the ungodly and blasphemers.

Discern false teachers.

If their lives do not line up with the Scriptures; they are wrong.

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Matthew 7:15

The first ones to holler, “Don’t judge me,” are many times the false preachers. The ones that are doing unbiblical things or living unbiblically need to be exposed. We are to discern, warn, and stay clear of those wolves!

Discern false teaching.

If the teachings are not from the Word of God, then they are not of God; and they will not produce anything good.

*“Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them ...”
Matthew 7:16-20*

We can easily discern what is of God, and what is not of God; because if it is not of God, it will bring forth rotten spiritual fruit. A preacher I know warned his congregation of a television evangelist of the past. He urged people not to support the man; as the preacher was not teaching biblical doctrine. Many members got upset and left the church over that matter. It was years later that the preacher’s “prophecy” came true, and the television evangelist was exposed and jailed. Because his doctrine was wrong, his spiritual fruit was also bad.

Discern that not all that say they are Christians are Christians.

*“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. 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? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.
Matthew 7:21-23*

The wrong-doers and Holy Spirit-convicted would certainly like to shut off any discernment against their wrong doing; but as the above verse tells us, Jesus lets the truth be known. Not every one that says he is a Christian is one. If the world were to recognize this, and purpose to really live for God, there would be fewer godless religions, and the church doors of those religions soon would close.

We are to discern: determine right from wrong. The next time Matthew 7 is hurled at you, and you are only discerning a spiritual matter in a spirit of helpfulness and not hindrance, continue to show them what the Lord wants them to discern. If we do not tell them the truth according to God's word, who will?

“When looking for faults; use a mirror and not a telescope!”