

Judging Without Being Judgmental

Does the Bible really say not to judge? Let's talk about judging without being judgmental.

Introduction

There is an epidemic raging across the world and we're not talking about a virus or disease. People around the world are making quick judgments with fewer facts more and more. People are listening to sources of information that are less and less reliable. Politicians are going to say almost anything to get your vote and maintain power and stature. News media are going to keep feeding into fear and disharmony to keep people listening and watching so they make more money selling their news stories. People are jumping to conclusions without any facts about a matter. In short, the world is getting more and more judgemental.

As Christians, we are supposed to not be judgmental. We are to judge righteously and make determinations and take appropriate action. We are not supposed to judge by appearance, but by what we see as results. This is difficult when we are living in a world that wants to cancel anything they do not believe or agree with. Jesus judged without being judgmental. He is asking us to do the very same thing.

Let's start with one of Jesus' instructions while teaching the disciples.

Judging by Appearance

There is a verse that many people often misquote because they don't understand what Jesus is trying to teach. Let's read Matthew 7:1-2.

Matthew 7:1-2

(1) "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. (2) For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Many people read verse one and think, "I'm not supposed to judge anyone unless I want to be judged." That is partially true. Verse two clearly says that we will be judged in the same manner and with the same measure as we judge others.

No one wants to be judged. We all are sinful and none of us are perfect. Our sins and mistakes are embarrassing. We do not want anyone to know them. Pointing out other people's sins and mistakes can distract others from our own mistakes and sin. It takes the focus off of us and puts it on someone else. This is human nature and Jesus knows that. This is why Jesus goes on to say in Matthew 7:3-5.

Matthew 7:3-5

(3) "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? (4) How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? (5) You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

We will be judged the same way we judge others. We must be more concerned with evaluating our own mistakes and sins and do something about them than pointing them out in other people.



Judging Correctly

There is a time for evaluating people and situations and making judgments. We can observe, ask questions, and help point out things in other people's lives but we must do it in love, not out of selfish desires.

Jesus is recorded in John 7:24 saying:

John 7:24

(24) Stop judging by mere appearances, but instead judge correctly.

He says this to the crowd at the temple after healing a man on the sabbath. All the crowd saw was that Jesus worked on the sabbath, which is unlawful, by healing the lame man that day. The crowd did not know all the facts and did not see the good Jesus was doing.

There is a correct way to judge or evaluate a matter. The key is to do it selflessly in love and desire for restoration. Judgment should not be used to tear someone down or condemn them. Let's read Matthew 7:15-20.

Matthew 7:15-20

(15) "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. (16) By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? (17) Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. (18) A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. (19) Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. (20) Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

We are supposed to make judgments and evaluate situations and people. It is possible to correctly look at a person or situation and point out sin and mistakes, in love, and then help correct the situation or bring restoration to the person.

The key thing Jesus tells us to do is watch the fruit. What is being produced by the person's actions or words? What is the outcome of this situation? This is not to say that the method in which something is done is not relevant as long as the outcome is good. How we do something and say something is just as important as the message we are trying to speak or the action we are trying to take.

Fruit is birthed out of the heart. If our heart is pure and we are doing our best and following what the Lord asks and equips us to do, our fruit will be good. That good fruit is what we are to be judged by. If the fruit we produce is bad, it comes from an impure or selfish heart. That fruit cannot withstand honest evaluation or judgment.

Be sure you are looking through clear eyes and you have removed the plank from your own eye before you point out the speck in someone else's eye.

Judge Others Like You Want To Be Judged

Ultimately, you must treat others as you want to be treated and judge others as you wish to be judged. This is part of loving others as you love yourself. Jesus is quite clear in Matthew 7:12.



Matthew 7:12

(12) So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you. This includes judging others and passing along judgments. This also includes spreading gossip and rumors when you do not have the facts. Worst yet, it includes false testimony or making up lies about someone, when you do not know the truth. No one likes it when this happens to them, and when making judgments about people or situations, you should not either.

Back in Matthew 7:2, we read that you will be judged the same way you judge others and with the same measure. If you judge others with no grace, you will not receive any grace either. If you judge out of your heart with love, you will be judged from the heart with love. If you are quick to forgive, you will be quickly forgiven.

Patience is a key ingredient in making a judgment call about a person or situation. We all want the chance to explain ourselves or what we are doing. Give others that same opportunity. Be patient with them just as you want others to be patient with you. Be patient with yourself, too. None of us are perfect and we must not expect ourselves to be perfect.

Conclusion

Judging without being judgmental is a heart issue. We must be patient as we observe and inquire when judging situations or people. Remember fruit comes from the heart. You must have Christ in your heart to bear good fruit.

You must guard your heart and not allow the schemes and ways of the devil and the world to enter in. When Jesus is filling your heart and you are putting on the whole armor of God every day, your heart will produce good fruit and you will be an example to others. You will be treating others with love, grace, and forgiveness that can only be found in Jesus Christ.

The Bible doesn't say to not judge. It says we must judge appropriately in love with grace and forgiveness. We do not judge on appearance, we judge on results and the heart those results are birthed in.

