



A Systematic Expository Study of the Word of God

Special Study:

CAUTION AGAINST UNCHARITABLE JUDGMENT **Matthew 7:1,2; John 7:24**

“Judge not.” This is Christ’s command to every Christian. He cautions every child of God on the common practice of judging and condemning one another. It is not acting on the principle of love when anyone turns the family or the Christian community to a law court and appoints himself a judge or magistrate over all others in his family, in God’s family or in his community. The true child of God possesses a new heart and a new spirit. A critical spirit that makes someone to criticise and condemn everyone and everything around him is not the Spirit of Christ. Love is of God and the perpetual state of mind that watches for others’ faults while overlooking his own faults is contrary to fairness, kindness and love. Demanding very high standard of love from others while he himself demonstrates low moral standard is unchristian; it is unscriptural. After removing the beam in our eye, we can help our brother remove the mote in his eye (Matthew 7:5). After examining ourselves, after genuine repentance, and transparent righteousness in our own lives, we can correct and counsel our fellow brother (Colossians 3:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:14,15).

EXPLANATION OF UNRIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT

Matthew 7:1; Luke 6:37; John 7:24,51; Leviticus 19:15; Deuteronomy 1:16,17; Isaiah 29:20,21; Romans 14:10-13; John 8:26,44-47.

“Judge not, that ye be not judged.” **“Judge not”** is Christ’s command but what is the meaning of this command? If we do not understand what Christ means by this we shall not be able to properly obey. Does it mean that we must never see, evaluate, correct any wrong thing others do? Does it mean that we should not hold to any standard of behaviour, be indulgent and tolerant, accepting whatever anyone does as right? Does it mean to cover up sin and wrongdoing, leaving everyone to his own conscience and never correcting anyone? No. We must take all the words of Jesus together and not interpret one part to contradict another part.

In this same chapter, He says, **“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”** (Matthew 7:5). To do that, we have to see and point out **“the mote”** as wrong. Christ says, **“Give not that which is holy unto the dogs”** (Matthew 7:6). To obey this command of Christ, it is necessary to observe and form an opinion about the character of others. Furthermore, He says, **“Beware of false prophets ... Ye shall know them by their fruits”** (Matthew 7:15-20). The false prophets come **“in sheep’s clothing”** and they appear innocent, harmless and friendly. If we do not examine and judge their fruit how can we disapprove their character and know them as **“ravening wolves, inwardly”**? In His teaching on dealing with offences against us (Matthew 18:15-17), He also teaches us not to be neutral when others do wrong (Luke 17:3,4).

“Judge not” What does that mean? **“Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment”** (John 7:24). These are the words of Jesus, our Saviour and Lord.

EXAMPLES OF UNLAWFUL JUDGMENT

Matthew 7:1,2; Genesis 38:24-26; 2 Samuel 12:1-7; Job 22:1-10; 32:3; 42:7-10; Ezekiel 16:52; John 8:1-7,9-11; Acts 28:1-5; Romans 2:1-3,17-24.

Life is full of unlawful judgment in our daily interaction with one another. Men judge and condemn one another and they increase hatred and condemnation in the human family. The Lord is calling us to live by the law of love. Our priority in life should be to live in righteousness and grow in grace and holiness each day. We should be more strict and firm with ourselves and compassionate and tender towards others rather than demanding much from others while we are lenient with ourselves. Those who demand perfection from others while they tolerate imperfection in themselves will always be guilty of unlawful judgment. **“Examine yourselves”** and judge yourselves (2 Corinthians 13:5). **“For if we would judge ourselves, we**

should not be judged" (1 Corinthians 11:31). It is unwise to correct and counsel others to be righteous and holy, so eager that they get to heaven while we ourselves excuse our sin and unrighteousness, on our way to hell!

Examples are many, even from the Bible, of people who carelessly and rashly judged others. Christ cautions us against (1) **hypocritically judging** others, condemning in others what we excuse in ourselves. (2) He warns us of **hastily judging** others, condemning others before the facts of the case are known. (3) His words rebukes us for **presumptuously** judging others, jumping to uncharitable conclusions on the basis of unconfirmed rumours. (4) He forbids **unfairly judging** others, ignoring everything that is favourable to our brother and not giving him a fair hearing. (5) Christ's teaching restrains us from **unnecessarily judging** others, condemning our fellow brother on something the Scriptures are silent about. (6) He teaches us against **unmercifully judging** others, instructing us that those who have received mercy must also show mercy and refrain from judging. (7) He reproves us for **officially, and officiously judging** others when no one has made us a leader, ruler, judge or magistrate over them.

EXHORTATION ON UNBIASED JUDGMENT

Matthew 7:1,2; John 7:24; Proverbs 31:9; Zechariah 8:16; John 5:30; 1 Samuel 3:11-14; 1 Corinthians 5:1-3,11-13; 6:1-10; 11:27-32; Revelation 2:14-16,20-23.

The same Christ who said, "**Judge not**" also said within the same paragraph, "**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.**" He commands us to be clean first and to be pure from pride and spiritual blindness first before attempting to judge, correct and guide our brother to live righteously. He also said, "**Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.**" He does not want us to be hasty, rash or superficial. No, we must not be shallow or careless with others' character or life; we should be thoughtful, slow and kind, considering facts scripturally before arriving at any conclusion. "**Judge righteous judgment**"

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