

"We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone."

1 Thessalonians 5:14 (NASBI995)



The Code of Others: Judgement & Hypocrisy

Given that Jesus already rebuked the psuedo-righteousness of the Pharisees several times in His sermon (see 5.20; 6.1-2,5,16), it may be that He had them in mind when issuing His warnings regarding judging others in 7.1-5. After all, the Pharisees were quick to point out the sins and faults of others while they themselves were nothing more than "whitewashed tombs" (23.27-28). But it may be that our Lord wasn't thinking of the Pharisees at all, knowing how much of a temptation this would be for His followers. Those who "hunger and thirst for righteousness" can easily find themselves looking down in disdain on others who are struggling to reach the same standard.

Do Not Judge? (Matthew 7.1-2)

It is sad that many have interpreted Jesus' words in Matthew 7.1 to mean, "do not suggest or imply that anyone else is wrong or in error." Clearly, that was not Jesus' intention for He had already pointed out error in His sermon (6.1-2,5,16; etc.) and would go on to refer to some as dogs and pigs (7.6) as well as warn against those who are false teachers (7.15). What must be understood is that the term "judge" has a variety of meanings. Sometimes it means "discernment", a form of judgment which is essential for believers lest we be lead away by false teachers (cf. 1John 4.1). But other times "judge" means "being judgmental" or even "condemning". This form of "judging" is also rebuked by Paul in Romans 14.10-13 because it is born from pride rather than love for others. The "judging" we do must never be a way of exalting ourselves, but rather should be done for the benefit of others.

Marietta church of Christ

8150 Driggers St.
Jacksonville, FL 32220

Times of Worship

Sunday:

9 am - Bible Classes / 10 am - Worship / 5 pm - Worship

Wednesday:

7 pm - Bible Study/Worship

Evangelist: Devin Barber

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“If a Christian’s attitude is right, provision is made for him to face another brother with his fault (see Matt. 18:15ff.). Indeed, spiritual leaders will not ignore open sin in one of their Christian brothers, but will try and restore him—gently, and aware of their own weakness (Gal. 6:1).” (D.A. Carson)

The danger of being judgmental.

Our Father hates pride. *“Pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverted mouth, I hate”* (Proverbs 8.13). As C.S. Lewis wrote in Mere Christianity, *“As long as you are proud you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on things and people: and, of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you.”* A judgmental attitude smacks of pride and arrogance. The proud person has replaced God with himself; he now sits in judgment on his fellow man... and he is not merciful, but ruthless! Such a person should live in terror of the judgment for only the merciful will receive mercy (5.7), only the forgiving will obtain forgiveness (6.12,14-15).

How to actually help your brother (Matthew 7.3-5)

No better example of this ridiculous behavior can be found than king David. The man who had seduced a married woman, then conspired to have her husband killed was ready to “judicially” execute another man over the life of one sheep (2Samuel 12.1-7). Our Lord is NOT saying that we shouldn’t be concerned with specks, even if they are in other people’s eyes. If you’ve ever had a speck in your eye you may very well be grateful to the one who helped you remove it. Jesus’ point is how can we possibly see well enough to provide help, when there is something much larger protruding from our own eyes? How could we possibly obsess over the “speck” in others, but ignore our own “plank”?

All around us are men and women who need help seeing the sin in their lives. They need to see this sin so that they can repent and have a relationship with their God (John 16.8; Luke 24.47; Acts 2.38; etc.). Even in the body of Christ there are those who need to be warned of their sinful behavior and turned back toward God (1Thess. 5.14; James 5.19-20).

They will not be helped by me standing in judgment of them, all the while ignoring my own faults. But if I prayerfully tend to my own failings, I will find myself in a better position to aid them (Galatians 6.1-3; Titus 3.2-3). *“The righteousness of the kingdom warns, but it does not attack. Citizens of God’s kingdom, struggling with their sins and beset by weaknesses, need a brother—not a ‘judge’.”* (Paul Earnhart)

A judgment to be made (Matthew 7.6)

Vs. 6 may seem out of place at first, but it would seem to provide balance to what Jesus said in vs. 1-5. We must not be judgmental of others, but we must be discerning. Even when it comes to the gospel, there is a place for discernment. The “holy” things Jesus spoke of might refer to sacrificial food which belonged to the priests (Leviticus 2.3). Dogs do not care how “holy” the food is, they will devour it even as they would rotten meat. Pigs care nothing for pearls, they would only trample them on their way to the mud pit. Jesus’ point? Don’t be judgmental, but don’t assume that all men are going to love the treasure you possess, the gospel. Jesus said something similar to His disciples when He sent them out to preach: they were to deem some places “unworthy” based on their reception (Matthew 10.11-14) and were to be “shrewd as serpents” in their conduct (Matthew 10.16).

Jesus’ words aren’t just practical, they are essential lest we miss opportunities to share the gospels with those who would receive it. The apostle Paul lamented the lost condition of his people and longed for their salvation (Romans 9.1-3; 10.1), but he also had experienced their rejection of the gospel and of himself. Thus, he labored among the Gentiles (Romans 1.5) rather than casting his pearls before swine. Some judgments must be made, even if they are ones we wish we didn’t have to make.

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Article taken from; builtbyhim.com