

Judging With Righteous Judgment

The ability to reason from observable evidences to reach a conclusion is God-given. We refer to this ability as man's freewill to choose. The ability to reason manifests itself every time we make a judgment about anything. Therefore, with this ability comes grave responsibility. It is so serious a responsibility that there are admonitions in scripture warning us to judge with righteous judgment. Jesus warns, "*Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment*" (John 7:24). Jesus' statement implies that mankind will make judgments from time to time. These judgments are to be made upon whether or not something is acceptable to God.

Peter and John challenged the Sanhedrin of their day to judge if it was right to obey God rather than man (Acts 4:19). Paul asked the Corinthian brethren the rhetorical question, "*Do not ye judge them that are within?*" (1 Corinthians 5:12). He then instructs Christians not to go to law against one another but to let brethren judge in any legal dispute that may arise (1 Corinthians 6:1-8). In 1 Corinthians 10:15, Paul continues by saying, "*I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say.*" He then charges the brethren to judge whether it is correct for a woman to pray to God unveiled (1 Corinthians 11:13). It is undeniable that men can and do make judgments. Hence, those who would be righteous must judge with righteous judgment.

Jesus warns us about making judgments that are unrighteous. He said, "*Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you*" (Matthew 7:1-2). Man's judgment is tainted by prejudice when he measures others by a standard he does not apply to himself. Jesus' warning is that the measure with which you judge others is the measure He will use to judge you. Whatever we require of others, we must apply to ourselves.

Paul penned, "*Wherefore thou art without excuse, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judges another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest dost practise the same things*" (Romans 2:1). Man is left without excuse before God when he sets standards for others higher than for himself.

The failure to judge righteous judgment hinders the cause of Christ. It causes non-Christians to view Christians as hypocrites, and it causes Christians to turn away from truly judging sin and error.

Adapted From Glen Young