

Judging

Introduction. When you are talking with someone, if you make the statement that this or that is wrong, some will react and say, “Stop judging me” or “You shouldn’t judge people.” We are going to examine judging in this lesson to see our responsibility before the Lord.

I. *Judging Is Sometimes Forbidden*

- A. Hypocritical judgment is forbidden (Matthew 7:1-5; 23:1-4; Romans 2:1-3).
 - 1. When we exempt ourselves from the standard by which we judge others, we stand condemned due to hypocrisy.
 - 2. In contrast, we must be living examples of what we teach to others (Romans 12:1-2).
- B. Judging by evil speech is forbidden (James 4:11-12).
 - 1. Slander judges another based on one’s own law, hence making it equal to God’s.
 - 2. Slander involves the condemnation of another through deception, lying or gossip (Proverbs 10:18-19; 11:9).
- C. Judging others in the realm of opinion or liberty is forbidden (Romans 14:1-5, 13-14).
 - 1. This command is not given with respect to matters of doctrine and necessity.
 - 2. However, we must recognize there are areas of opinion or individual liberty.
 - 3. Failure to respect this distinction leads to factionalism.

II. *Judging Is Sometimes Commanded*

- A. Righteous judging is commanded (John 7:24).
 - 1. What does it mean to “judge righteous judgment?”
 - 2. It means judging not according to mere appearance (John 5:30).
 - 3. Righteous judgment involves doing the will of God (1 Corinthians 5:12-13).
- B. Judging between good and evil is commanded (Hebrews 5:14).
 - 1. How can we identify what is good (Ephesians 2:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22; 2 Timothy 3:16-17)?
 - 2. How can we identify what is evil (Matthew 7:21-23)?
- C. Judging between truth and error is commanded (Ephesians 5:11).
 - 1. The religious world often abuses Matthew 7 to condemn discerning of error and its teachers (Matthew 7:15-20).
 - 2. Sadly, some brethren have begun to sound like the denominations in this regard (2 Timothy 2:15-18; 2 Peter 2:1-3).
 - 3. What is too difficult to understand regarding doctrine?

- a) The literal nature of the creation account?
- b) The truth concerning moral issues such as clothing, gambling, tobacco or alcohol?
- c) The will of God relating to divorce and remarriage?
- d) The organization and work of the church?

Conclusion. Some judging is clearly condemned. We must refrain from judging which is hypocritical, factional or slanderous. However, some judging is clearly commanded. Let us love and abhor what is proper (Romans 12:9).