



“Judge not, that ye be not judged” (Matthew 7:1).

### **Fair Judgment**

**Lesson Subject:** Christians must cast off a judgmental attitude.

**L101. Date:** November 1983. **Text:** Matthew 7:1-6.

**Topic:** Jesus: Teachings of; Judgment: Of Others.

*“Judge not, that ye be not judged”* (Matthew 7:1).

What a solemn word that is! And it is from the lips of Jesus himself. It is repeated by the apostle Paul, *“Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand”* (Romans 14:4). It is repeated by the apostle James, *“Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?”* (James 4:11, 12). That word by our Lord made a deep impression on His disciples.

The principle *“judge not”* must be very important and very needful in the life of the Christian. The Holy Spirit placed it by divine inspiration more than a dozen times in the New Testament. There is a warning implied in the words of Jesus, *“Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man”* (John 8:15).

This study is designed to teach that Christians must cast off a judgmental attitude toward one another.

Jesus used a typical rabbinical method of teaching in this section of His sermon. (1) The truth is presented in verse 1. (2) A justification of that truth is given in verse 2. (3) Illustrations of the truth are given in verses 3-6.

We should come forth from this study repenting and asking God to forgive our sin of a censorious and condemning attitude toward others. To sit in judgment of others is to invite condemnation by both God and man.

## I. THE PRINCIPLE (Matthew 6:1)

“Stop your judgment of others,” Jesus warned. The grammar indicates the command is to stop an action which was already taking place. It indicates we have a natural sinful tendency to stand as if superior to a brother and judge him.

**A. The term judge is used in different applications in the Bible.** There are shades of meaning of the word.

(1) To judge may mean to weigh carefully and form an opinion. *“I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say”* (I Corinthians 10:15). (2) To judge may mean to draw a conclusion. When Jesus had given a parable and asked a man to interpret it, the man gave a right answer and Jesus said, *“Thou hast rightly judged”* (Luke 7:43). (3) To judge may mean to condemn. *“Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?”* (John 7:51). (4) To judge may mean to despise. *“Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth”* (Romans 14:3).

It is in the bad sense of judging so as to condemn that Jesus uses the word, *“Judge not, that ye be not judged.”* The exercise of moral discernment is not forbidden in the command.

**B. We are guilty of unlawful judging when we condemn one another.** What one calls right judging might be seen as being *“a busybody in other men's matters”* (I Peter 4:15). Many things in the life of another person are none of our business. We might presume to judge a brother when God is the only one who should judge him (Romans 14:4). Some judgment we give to others might arise from the awareness of our own failures. *“Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things”* (Romans 2:1, 2).

Much of our human judgment is hasty, rendered without full information, in which we answer a matter before we hear it (Proverbs 18:13). Since our judging one another is unwarranted, it is often unjust (II Samuel 10:1-4).

The great problem with a Christian judging another Christian is that one is out of his area in such acts. Even Jesus said He was not *“a judge or a divider over you”* (Luke 12:14). We are to help one another, not condemn one another.

What would you do if you heard a brother or sister in your church had suddenly fallen in an act of great sin? Here is what God said you should do:

*“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ”* (Galatians 6:1, 2). That is a far cry from the judgmental and condemning spirit which is commonly shown.

#### **D. THE WARNING (Matthew 7:2)**

“With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again” (verse 2). That warning probably has an application of judgment in time by men and judgment in eternity by God.

In time men will return to you what you have given them. Jesus himself said so. *“Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again”* (Luke 6:37, 38). Jesus was speaking of what men will give to you. He was not talking of eternal judgment. He had said the same in the Beatitudes: *“Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy”* (Matthew 5:7).

Jesus said that he who passes judgment on another is in reality judging himself. When the ten apostles condemned James and John because their mother asked for two highest places for them in the kingdom, they were indicating that they wanted high places for themselves (Matthew 20:20-28). If they had not aspired to positions of honor and authority, they would not have cared for James and John to occupy the highest places. By judging their brothers, they condemned themselves.

In eternity, true judgment from God will evaluate all of life. *“Why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me. and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more”* (Romans 14:10-13). Leave the judgment to God; that is the message. *“Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God”* (I Corinthians 4:5).

Human judgment here will be as nothing when compared with divine judgment there. The apostle Paul wrote, *“With me it is a very small thing*

*that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord*" (I Corinthians 4:3, 4).

The fact that we must stand before God to account at the judgment seat of Christ makes us the more careful today. *"Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad"* (II Corinthians 5:9, 10).

Here is how it will be in that day of accounting before God. *"Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire"* (I Corinthians 3:13-15).

Motives and attitudes as well as actions shall be evaluated in that day when God judges us. Absolute righteousness will govern the judgment rendered; the Judge of all the earth shall do right (Genesis 18:25; John 7:24; Romans 2:2).

### **III. THE ERROR (Matthew 7:3-5)**

Jesus pictures a play-actor (hypocrite) who has a wooden beam sticking from his eye trying to remove a speck which the wind has blown into another's eye. How ridiculous! Just so, Jesus teaches, is the brother with an attitude of superiority (which is sinful pride) who stands to condemn and correct another brother. What a tragedy!

Woe to the Christian who looks with dismay upon the faults of another, but does not set his concern on his own shortcomings. A critical Christian is not a loving Christian. The act of carping criticism is a great sin.

Here are the basic truths Jesus is teaching in this passage. (1) Sin blinds to its presence. One can see a little fault in a brother (a speck in the eye), but he does not see the glaring fault (a beam) in himself. How deceitful the devil is. How we must stand watch against him. (2) We try to change others while we are not willing to change ourselves. It is always easier to inspect the fruit of another life than to produce much fruit in our own lives. (3) Self-examination is always first in order: *"First cast out the beam out of thine own eye"* (verse 5). How appropriate to pray. *"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me"* (Psalm 51:10). (4) We can and should help one another. We can see clearly to remove the mote from a

brother's eye if our own eye is clear.

#### **IV. THE FACT (Matthew 6:6)**

Some will not receive spiritual instruction. To remove a speck from another person's eye, you must be close to him and he must be willing for you to minister to him. Some are not willing to accept your ministry. Jesus said it is useless to try to minister to one who does not appreciate your help and will use the occasion to attack you instead.

The Christian should not become involved in that which does not bear fruit for God. The disciple of Christ must exercise discrimination and not give what is holy to those who are irresponsible.

Paul preached the gospel to those who attacked him because of the gospel. One must follow the directive of the Lord Jesus in such cases: *"Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet"* (Matthew 10:14). That is what Paul did at Antioch in Pisidia. The Jews were *"filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming"* (Acts 13:45). Paul said to them, *"It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us"* (Acts 13:46, 47). To do otherwise would have abused the ministry of the gospel.

Have you learned the central lesson in this study? "Christians must cast off a judgmental attitude." To learn this truth is to enter a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ.

#### **QUESTIONS**

1. How does Romans 12:4 relate to this study?
2. What does James 4:11,12 mean to you?
3. How is the term judge used in the New Testament?
4. What warning is there in I Peter 4:15?
5. How does Romans 2:1, 2 teach the danger of judging others?
6. What does Galatians 6:1, 2 suggest in the place of condemning a brother?
7. What is the principle of return expressed in Luke 6:37, 38?
8. What judgment is involved in Romans 14:10-13?
9. How should I Corinthians 4:3-5 keep you from judging others?
10. How can you be free from a judgmental and condemning spirit?

