

Judge Not Lest Ye Be Judged *Romans 2:1-4*

Sermon-in-a-Sentence: God's grace and mercy should lead us to humility and repentance, not to pride, self-righteousness and a spirit of entitlement (that we have the right to judge others with impunity—that we are somehow exempt from God's punishment).

How are we to respond to the declaration of God's wrath being revealed from heaven because of man's rejection of God and His truth (Romans 1:18-32)? We can argue that God is a loving and merciful Heavenly Father whose highest priority is our happiness and so He would never, or at least rarely, condemn anyone for their lifestyle and behavior, if it makes them happy. Paul argues that God's tolerance, patience and kindness to us is not a license to have a critical, judgmental spirit toward others. Rather, it should lead us to humble repentance from our own sin.

The most oft quoted Bible verse today is Matthew 7:1 – "Judge not, that ye be not judged." This is the theme verse for total anarchy—every man does that which is right in his own eyes. This verse is completely taken out of context and used to condemn anyone, especially Christians, who dare to speak out against any behavior. In today's society everyone is expected to not only tolerate and accept any and all behavior but also to happily and wholeheartedly support and endorse it!

Matthew 7:1-6, 15-16a

- It's clear that Jesus expects us to discern and recognize those who are spiritual "dogs" and "pigs" (referring to those who reject the Gospel and treat the things of God with utter contempt), who are not worthy of that which is sacred and of eternal value, and to recognize those who are false prophets and teachers.
- What Jesus is condemning is the self-righteous, hypocritical judging of others.
- We avoid being hypocrites by first removing from our own lives that which is displeasing to the Lord so that we may then carefully, lovingly, gently help a brother to deal with that with which he is struggling in his own life.
- "...followers of Christ should not be critical or condemning in their attitudes toward others. A judgmental, critical spirit differs radically from love. Believers' special position with Christ does not give them license to take God's place as judge. Those who judge in that manner will find themselves judged likewise by God. As God will have mercy on the merciful (5:7) and forgive those who forgive (6:14-15), [so] he will condemn those who condemn [others]..." (*The Life Application Commentary*)
- The difference between judging and discerning is the motive and spirit of our heart—are we motivated by love in a spirit of genuine humility or by pride and self-righteousness? Do we truly desire the blessing of God in the life of the person we are judging or are we simply seeking to lift ourselves up by putting that person down?
- "Jesus declared as unacceptable excusing personal sin while holding others accountable for similar behavior. When you perceive a fault in others, your first impulse may be to confront

or reject that person. But ask yourself first if your awareness of the failure mirrors your own life. Your effort to help will be in vain if the person can point out the same fault in you. Practice your own remedy before you ask others to do it."

- "Many have taken this metaphor to mean that Christians should never correct anyone — one's personal sins before God are too great to even consider dealing with others' sins. However, Jesus' point was that while we all have sin in our lives (some as small as a speck; some as large as a log), we are responsible to both deal with our own sin and then help others... Jesus revealed incredible understanding of human nature. How easy it is for us to overlook our own sins yet easily spot sin in others. How true that the sin we most clearly see in others is also present in us. Believers should first deal with their own sins, but they also must correct and guide erring brothers and sisters." (*The Life Application Commentary*)
- Could it be that those who speak out the loudest about not judging others are doing so because they do not want to deal with the sin that is present in their own lives?
- What Jesus and Paul were teaching is that we first need to deal with the sin that is in our own lives so that we may help others to deal with the sin that is in their lives. (Galatians 6:1-3)
- "Jesus tells us to examine our [own] motives and conduct instead of judging others. The traits that bother us in others are often the habits we dislike in ourselves. Our untamed bad habits and behaviors are the very ones that we most want to change in others. Do you find it easy to magnify others' faults while excusing your own? If you are ready to criticize someone, check to see if you deserve the same criticism. Judge yourself first, and then lovingly forgive and help your neighbor." (*The Life Application Commentary*)
- To whom much has been given, much will be required. We may be tempted to think that God is looking the other way concerning our sin and therefore feel entitled to stand in judgment of others. And in fact, we may be outspokenly critical of others in order to direct the attention away from our own sin. We need to be careful to not presume on the grace and mercy of God.

Remember: "When you point your finger at someone else, the other three are pointing back at you!"