

Command #11: Do not judge incorrectly

Matthew 7:1-6 // Scott Torres & Greg Singerle

"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. ² For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. ³ "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ⁴ How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? ⁵ You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. ⁶ "Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

Condensed Version

Read Matthew 7:1-6 and discuss these questions with your disciple(s):

1. Who is Jesus talking to and about in this passage?
2. What does Jesus mean when he says "Do not Judge?"
3. What is the consequence for judging others wrongfully?
4. What illustration does Jesus use in verses 3-5? What do you think is his point?

Study (answers follow below)

1. Meditate on Matthew 7:1-6 and make several observations about the passage.
2. Who is Jesus talking to and about in this passage?
3. What is the main command that Jesus gives in this passage?
4. What comes to your mind when you hear the word "judge"?
5. What does Jesus mean when he says "Do not Judge."
6. What is the consequence for judging others wrongly (v2)?
7. What illustration does Jesus use in verses 3-5? What do you think is his point?
8. Who do you think Jesus is referring to in verse 6? What do you think he means?

Answers:

1. 2. Jesus is talking to the disciples and the crowd who were listening to him teach. He is talking about the religious leaders who were hypercritical with many of the things they taught. He also may have been talking to some of his disciples who struggled with judging incorrectly.
2. Do not judge others.
3. Many people think about legislative judges or one who helps interpret the law for the purpose of bringing about justice.
4. The Greek word translated "judge" is "krino". It can mean "determine, choose, separate, or select" amongst other things. The context where "krino" is used in the NT helps determine the word's meaning. When Jesus says "Do Not Judge" he is telling his listeners not to determine a person's

guilt in a harsh, hypocritical, and superficial way. The religious leaders in Jesus day were unmerciful, unloving, and condemning when they judged others. They were also very hypocritical because they would often do the very things that they would accuse and condemn others for. Finally, these religious leaders would base their judgement on outward appearances rather than search the facts to ensure things were what they appeared to be. Finally, these religious leaders set themselves over others as if their word was the final word on the issue. They acted as if they were GOD!

5. The consequence is that we will be judged by God in the same manner that we judged others. In this case, we would be judged harshly, superficially, and without any mercy. Also, when we “assert our right to judge, we will be judged by the standard of knowledge and wisdom we claim is ours...we cannot plead ignorance of the law in reference to ourselves when God judges us.”
6. Jesus uses the illustration of someone having a significant object (log) in their eye, but acting as if they don't have anything. They in turn try to help others without realizing that those they are helping only a twig. The point of the illustration is that the religious leaders were hypocrites. They judged people of doing things that they themselves doing...and even worst. They had the logs and others had the twigs.
7. Jesus uses this final illustration to refer to the religious leaders. They were the dogs and swine. They were the ones who were dangerous and unclean. Jesus elsewhere referred to them as whitewashed tombs. When Jesus states to “not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs” he is meaning that we should not share the sacred things of God and his kingdom with those who are hostile and blasphemers.

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Worship

“Judge not!” This is one of the commands of Jesus that might be the most misused by people outside *and inside* the church. From those outside it seems to be the one verse people use in defense when confronted with their sin. For those inside the church it seems to be a command contrary to other commands and examples that we see in Jesus and His Apostles. Further, misunderstanding the command can hinder the church from aiding in the sanctification of the believer by thinking it is wrong or improper to confront someone in their sin.

First, the command is not a prohibition against judging, as many interpret it. The command does not say, “do not judge” but it is instruction on how to judge properly (i.e., without hypocrisy), who to judge, and a warning that the judge will be judged in the same manner as he or she judges. In the Greek, the word translated “judge” has several meanings with various degrees of judgment from simply “deciding” all the way to “condemning” or “damning.” Hopefully we agree that we are never to condemn another person. Further, we can agree that we are indeed to decide or discern between right and wrong. So while we are not to judge to condemn, we are to judge to discern between good and evil. We are to judge without hypocrisy. Therefore, before confronting another we are to examine ourselves before God thoroughly. Lastly, who are we to judge? As we will see more clearly in some of the verses below, we are to judge those inside the church and not those outside. “Dogs” and “pigs” are used to describe outsiders (or those “unclean,” as an Israelite would understand), which we all used to be (Ephesians 2:3). Unfortunately, many supposed believers in the church think it is their mission to condemn those not in the church. As a result, many see the local church only as a source of judgment and not a refuge of mercy and grace, the very opposite reason for which Jesus, the Head of the Church, came (John 3:17).

Let’s take a look at a couple of examples from Scripture to better understand this command of Jesus: Paul rendering judgment on a man in the Corinthian Church (1 Corinthians 5); and Jesus with the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11).

Questions:

1 Corinthians 5

1. When Paul learned of the situation, what did he do?
2. Was the man in the situation a believer?
3. What was Paul’s fear if the man was not judged properly?
4. What was Paul’s desired outcome of the judgment?
5. Who are we to judge? Who are we not to judge?

John 8:1-11

6. The Pharisees were always trying to trap Jesus and this was one of their more devious traps. What was the trap?
7. How did Jesus avoid the trap?
8. What do you admire about Jesus from these verses?

Answers:

1. He pronounced judgment on the man and told the leaders of the Corinthian church to do the same. They were to remove the man from their assembly – practice church discipline – and deliver the man over to Satan.

2. It does not say definitively. The important thing was that the man identified as a believer and if you identify as a believer, then you are held accountable to Jesus' commands and judged accordingly. Harvest's membership statement affirms this stance.
3. That sin, when not dealt with appropriately, grows and spreads like gangrene. Paul was concerned that a little leaven (sin) leaven's the whole lump (the church body). If the situation was not dealt with, others would see it as tacit approval and more and more people would begin engaging in their own sinful practices.
4. That the man would be saved. Whether we are dealing with a true believer or not, our heart's desire in pronouncing judgment and undergoing any necessary church discipline should be for that person to be saved and/or returned to the fellowship.
5. Verses 12 & 13 clearly state that we are to judge only those inside the church and not those outside. God will judge those outside.
6. Seemingly Jesus had only two choices – let the woman go or condemn her to be stoned. If he let her go, the Pharisees would have their “proof” the Jesus was not the Messiah and turn the people against Him because He did not uphold the Law of Moses. (They did fault Jesus for not following their man-made traditions but adultery was a sin that was clearly dealt with in the law, which stated that those found guilty were to be stoned. Leviticus 20:10) If Jesus condemned her to be stoned, the Jews would report Him to the Romans for having had a person executed, for which the Romans would execute Jesus. (We know when the Pharisees had Jesus before Pilate, they knew that Roman law prohibited them from capital punishment. John 18:31)
7. By practicing what he taught in Matthew 7. Here we see Jesus following two of the principals he taught in Matthew 7 –do not judge hypocritically and do not condemn. He told those who were without sin to cast the first stone. He was saying to “first remove the log from your own eye...” Finally, He did not condemn her. (But Jesus did clearly tell her to stop living the way she was.)
8. I admire Jesus because: He is never afraid - He sees a trap coming and walks right in and out of it; His desire for me is to experience the love, grace and mercy of God; even when I am exposed and guilty before Him, He does not condemn me; He is full of mysteries – what was He writing in the dirt?; He will not allow anyone to sway His opinion of me; In the end I will stand in His presence uncondemned while the wicked will be blown away like chaff in the wind; If Jesus is for me, it does not matter who or how many are against me!

Obey

1. When it comes to the issue of judging, what standards of godly living are you holding others to that you are not obeying? Or, what negative attitudes and judgements do have toward other Christians that you need to repent of and be forgiven for?
2. When judging others (for the purpose of helping them walk with Jesus), what criteria and questions do you ask yourself? A few to consider are: Is the issue they are struggling with a blatant sin that is spelled out in scripture? Am I committing this same sin? Is my concern to help those I am judging driven by compassion and love or jealousy, superiority, revenge, or egotistical pride? Would those closest to me agree that I am driven by compassion and love for those I am judging? Have I prayed thoroughly through the issue I am judging others for?

Train

1. Study Matthew 7:1-6 yourself, ask your disciple(s) to study it, then discuss it and pray about it together.
2. Be sure to model humility when it comes to judging and being judge. Bring others in on the controversy and concerns others may have with you. It will help them see how one is to process and respond in a godly fashion. Also, don't shy away from helping others by confronting them of clear and blatant sin. Do this in humility, with love, making sure you are not guilty of the same sin.
3. Tell those you are helping disciple there is a time when choosing to stay away from those who are hostile and antagonistic is a good thing. Encourage them not enrage or engage those are this way towards Jesus and the kingdom of God.