

THE JUDGING OF OTHERS

By Keith Greer

One day I received a call in my office. A lady was seeking help for some type of money problems. I began to ask her some questions about herself and her background. All of a sudden she got upset and quoted a scripture to me: "Judge not, that you be not judged." {Matthew 7: 1}

Does this passage forbid all types of judging? Can I make a personal judgment in some situations? Let us examine the text of Matthew 7:1-5.

Is pointing out "constructive criticism" forbidden by these verses? Please read Mark 6:17,18; Acts 18:25,26; Galatians 2:11-14. In each of these cases some judgments were made. Did they sin by so doing?

What about church discipline? Does not some judgments have to be made here? Please read 1 Corinthians 5:6-11; Romans 16:17,18. God commands us to keep the church pure. Ephesians 5:27.

What about exposing error or the false teacher? Some judgment must be made to determine that error has been taught! Should I remain quiet in the face of error so I'm not guilty of "passing judgment"?

What about exposing error or the false teacher? Some judgment must be made to determine that error has been taught! Should I remain quiet in the face of error so I'm not guilty of "passing judgment" on others? Please read Galatians 1:6-9; 2 John 9-11; 2 Peter 2:1-5.

In all three of these cases notice that I have said nothing concerning judging motives. This we cannot do. God alone judges the hearts of men, not me. Yet, since the Bible clearly instructs, and gives some examples, this type of judging is not under consideration in Matthew 7:1-5.

If Jesus is forbidding all judging, please explain verse six: "Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces. " {Matthew 7:6}

How do we determine who are "dogs" and "swine", without making some judgments? "Therefore by their fruits you will know them. " {Matthew 7:20} Does one have to "judge" to determine the fruits?

"Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment. " {John 7:24} Is Jesus contradicting Himself in Matthew and John? Never! We must then conclude not all judging is forbidden by this text.

What kind of judging is forbidden in our text? Judging when one is "blind" to his own faults! Proper "introspection" is needed first.

"And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and

look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. "{Matthew 7:3-5}

It always is easier to see the faults of others but be blinded to our own. We must correct our own faults, or at least be working on them, before trying to correct the course of a brother. Do we seek to help our brother or just "put them in their place", to make ourselves look better?

What can help me make proper judgments of others? Attitude of love, John 13:34,35: Attitude of consideration, Philippians 2:2- 5; Attitude of Compassion, Matthew 14: 14; Attitude of Forgiveness, Luke 23:34; Attitude of self-examination, 2 Corinthians 13:5.

Please read and consider Matthew 7:2. Give sober attention to the meaning of that verse. Would you like to be judged by some of our brethren, using the standard of judgment they have used to "judge" some of our actions? Scary thought isn't it? ***