

"Judge not, that ye be not judged" - Matthew 7:1

Whenever someone voices a criticism about the religious beliefs and/or practices of another, this verse quickly comes to the mind and out of the mouth of the individual who feels that such criticism should never be engaged in. Just as the thief on the cross is the most popular thief in town, this passage seems to be the most popular verse of scripture in town and one of the few that many people are able to quote. According to some, "judge not" means "criticize not." Before we examine the context and give the significance of this statement, let's take a look at the consequences of this position.

1 - It manifests a misunderstanding of what is involved in judging. Judging is not always a negative or critical action, i.e., speaking against someone or something. Oftentimes judging involves that which is positive and taking a stand in favor of something (read carefully Acts 15:19; 16:15; 1 Cor. 10:15; 11:13.) Thus if we are never to judge anyone or anything it would mean we could not only never take a negative position but we wouldn't be able to take a positive one either.

2 - Such a position contradicts numerous passages that tell us to judge and how to do it. See Jo. 7:24; 1 Cor. 6:2.

3 - It is inconsistent with the conduct of Christ and the apostles. Controversy, in which they were critical of various beliefs and conduct, was a consistent part of their lives (Matt. 23; Acts 6:7; 17; 1 Cor. 5:3; Gal. 2:11-f.)

4 - This "judge not" = "criticize not" interpretation of our text involves a person in a self-contradicting and inconsistent position. If it is wrong to be critical of ("judge") the beliefs and practices of others, then those who are critical of people who are being critical are themselves guilty of "judging" because they are being critical and thus are doing the very thing they are accusing others of doing.

The Context: The sentence immediately following the Lord's "judge not" statement begins with "for" and thus explains the statement just made. The following verses make it clear that it is a particular kind of "judging" that Christ is saying we are not to engage in. It is significant that in the context there are at least two statements which indicate that we are to "judge": Vs. 5 tells us that it is appropriate to seek to remove the mote out of a brother's eye and vs. 6 tells us not to give what is holy to dogs or cast pearls before swine. How can we engage in removing someone's "mote" (fault) without making a judgment that they have such? Likewise, we must make a judgment that certain people are "dogs" and "swine" (that is, they have no appreciation for truth as animals have no regard for what is valuable) and thus unworthy to have truth given to them.

The Meaning: Jesus is condemning the attitude that is manifested in trying to straighten out faults in another's life without first seeking to remove those in mine; such is hypocrisy, vs. 5. Can we "judge" (make a determination) that someone has a "mote" (fault) and then seek to remove it? Certainly; the latter part of verse 5 says so. But to do so thinking "I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican," Lk. 18:11; or that I am something when I am nothing, Gal. 6:3; or not "in a spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself, let thou also be tempted," Gal. 6:1, I am in violation of what Jesus is teaching. Let us not judge by appearance (Joshua 22:9-29) or on the basis of our subjective opinions (Rom. 14; 1 Cor. 8) or inconsistently (Rom. 2:1,21) but let us judge righteous judgement, Jo. 7:24.

- by David Smitherman

"We Will Not Sit Down"

God sent Samuel to the house of Jesse to anoint a king for Israel from among his sons. Jesse made several of his sons to pass before the aging prophet. "And Samuel said unto Jesse, The Lord hath not chosen these." He then asked Jesse if these were all his sons. Jesse said, "There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep". To which the prophet replied: "Send and, fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither" (1 Samuel 16:11).

This last statement indicates something grand and noble about Samuel; God sent him on a mission, and he would not rest until it was accomplished. It would also be a grand and noble thing today, if those of us who seek to serve the Lord manifested the same attitude toward our duty to

God. Too many of us have sat down before the job was finished and as a result the day is far spent and much work is yet undone.

Oh for servants of the Lord like Samuel who refuse to take their ease until His work is done!

- *by Earl Kimbrough*

What's The Difference?

... Between the atheist who would not dream of financially supporting the church and the Christian who will not financially support the Lord's church?

... Between the skeptic who does not believe the Bible and the negligent Christian who never reads it?

... Between those who do not believe in Bible classes and those who choose never to attend a class?

... Between the atheist who does nothing to build up the Lord's church and the Christian who finds fault with others but does nothing himself?

... Between a man of the world and a person in the church who lives like a man in the world?

... Between a man of the world who lives for self and a person in the church building who lives for self, not God?

These are tough questions for Christians who live in a tough world. The fact is, Christians make no difference until they are different.

- *selected*

Q & A's About Giving

WHEN?

- Every "first day of the week" (1 Cor. 16:2).
- This includes those Sundays when you are away on vacation, etc. Make sure your contribution is still given - given here, where your responsibility remains even when you are gone.

HOW MUCH?

- "as God hath prospered" (1 Cor. 16:2). Are you "better off" now than a year ago? 2 years ago? 5 years ago? Are you giving in proportion to your increased prosperity?
- It must be according to a predetermined plan, not just a last minute "grab" for loose change. We are to "purpose" in our hearts before we give (2 Cor. 9:7).
- Give liberally (2 Cor. 8:2).
- Give bountifully, not sparingly (2 Cor. 9:6).
- To be blunt, the \$5 or \$10 contribution you were giving years ago is probably not nearly enough. You make more, and are expected (by God) to give more.

IN WHAT MANNER?

- "not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7).
- Give yourself totally to God first, then giving generously of your money will be easy (2 Cor. 8:1-5).

WHY?

- The work which is financed by this giving is the most important work in all the world.
- Your increased generosity allows us to support more gospel preaching, here and elsewhere. There are always preachers in need of our help.
- it is a sign of your love - for God and others (2 Cor. 8:24).
- The bottom line ... it is a command of God (1 Cor. 16:1,2; 2 Cor. 9:7). Failure to give, or failure to give a sufficient amount, is a sin - one that can condemn the soul to hell as surely as any other.

HOW DOES YOUR GIVING MEASURE UP?

- You answer this question!!!

- *by Greg Gwin*