

# Judge Not

“Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgement you judge you will be judged

And with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at

the speck in your brothers 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; Hypocrites!! First remove the plank from your own eye,

and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.”

(Math 7:1-5)

To judge another person in the manner of which we have just read about in these words by Yeshua has

been the Biblical pattern in the Torah for many years, starting with Leviticus 19:18, where scripture

exhorts us to love our neighbour as ourselves. However we can not love our neighbour as ourselves if we ourselves are blatantly found to be judging them. This is also found in other ancient Jewish literature such as the ancient Apocryphal book of Tobit, where the saying is “**What you hate, do to no one.**” Tobit 4:15. The truth is the same in the New Covenant as it is in the Tanakh, we can not judge another mans servant. Now if we are truly born again, we belong to Yeshua, and this is why we are told not to judge. We can also find similar things in the Torah saying “**What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour.**” Shabbat 31A.

Now while this is all very true, there is still an area in which we are actually called to judge!! Which can bring us into much confusion? For instance Yeshua said “Do not judge according to appearance, but “**Judge with righteous judgement**” (John 7:24). This tells us that there are some things of which we are expected to judge? But what should we judge? And what is more to the point, how will God judge?

Divine judgement is expressed and explained in four ways, from the book of Romans

- 1) **Truth (Romans 2:2) at the time taking in all necessary means from an objective standard of conduct.**
- 2) **Deeds (Romans 2:6) Relying on your own conduct to judge others.**
- 3) **Light (Romans 2:11-15) the light they enjoyed must be taken into consideration when judging their secret thoughts and motives.**
- 4) **The Gospel (Romans 2:16-22) by which the thoughts and motives are motivated.**

Now having established the Biblical account of how divine judgement works, we can easily see that there is a clear difference between Judging and discerning. In trying to

clarify the difference we can read in James who answers the question **“There is one Lawgiver who is able to save and destroy; who are you to judge another?”** (James 4:15) Clearly here James is giving a warning about criticism, which is the greatest blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. We can contrast this with Paul who says **“Judge among yourselves, is it proper for a women to pray to God with her head uncovered.”** (1Cor 11:13) Paul here explains in this case the whole reason for judging oneself, as well as just how an outcome might end, knowing just what the mind of the Lord is.

In 1Cor 11:31 Paul invites us to judge ourselves, so as not to suffer the righteous indignation of a Holy God. Clearly there are some occasions where we must judge or make a clear discernment, especially about sin and those who we find are wrapped up in it. In 1Cor 11:23-30 we are clearly told to make such judgements for the sake of the whole body, because just as with Achan in the book of Joshua 7:26, his sin could conceivably bring judgement onto the whole church. So therefore Paul reminds us to consider this when we take Communion.

In the book of 1Peter 4:17, we are warned that judgement will begin at the house of God, so its not surprising that God wants us to judge ourselves. But suppose we do and find that someone is sinning, what have we then to do? Well the answer is found in Mathew 18:15-22 that is the God appointed procedure , but here Yeshua answers Peters question , how many times do you forgive your brother for sin. He asks this because the Pharisees taught that you should only forgive someone who habitually sins against you three times. But of cause Yeshua made the point, seventy times seven. But there can never be forgiveness where there is no repentance, so this only applies when they come to you to say sorry, but that can for some be a step to far. But the Lord sees all and if you don't say sorry to your brother or sister you have broke the Commandment of love in John 13:34 ,and you can expect God to judge you, because you are rebelling against the Commandment . Now some might say **“Well I always meant to do it”** and God will say **"Why didn't you then?!"**

The answer often is we don't like to loose face publicly. But the idea of repenting is as much for our benefit as for the injured party, so that we don't think we can keep doing it and getting away with it, which will create havoc in the body. So there are instances where we are called to judge, but we need to learn the difference between judging and discerning. We are rarely ever called to judge others, but we are called to judge ourselves so that we will not be judged of the Lord and then chastised.

As far as discerning goes, if we were not allowed to do this we would not have been given a gift of Discernment of Spirits in 1Cor 12:10, but this gift must be seen as a gift and not an excuse to psychoanalyse other believers, it is the gift of being able to identify the true source of a teaching or problem. Where other believers are told to **‘test the spirits’** in 1 John 4:1 .these believers know straight away that a doctrine is wrong or demonic in its outworking, This is a gift that has been abused in recent years especially by the Charismatic Movement who thought they could see demons everywhere and in everyone.

So then there is a call to judge oneself but not each other, and a call to discernment in the Lord, but this gift is to edify the body, not to in any way bring condemnation on anyone or an excuse to criticise other believers and their actions, since God the Holy

Spirit will take full care of all that, allowing the right amount of grace in every case as only He knows what our requirements are.

But you might say to me, “That’s not fair” and your right, God is not fair! He’s Just! And I for one am very pleased that He is just, because I may well need more grace than you, or you may need more grace than me, and God will give exactly what you need. So I am so glad that it’s not administered across the board but each one receives what is required.

Now if we are to move on to the Judgement of the world, Paul brings the witness of three forms of Divine Revelation and that comes from God’s will, as it is revealed in the Law and the Prophets. Here Paul uses his great ability and learning in the Torah to make these points from scripture. Towards three specific types we can now find in our society:

1) **Against the pagan there is the Law and witness of Creation.**

2) **Against the moralist there is the witness of conscience.**

3) **Against the Jew the witness of the scriptures.**

This from God has them all banged to rights, they are judged!! But we can only be judged of God!!

We can not judge other believers, why? Because when we judge them or talk about them one to another we cut them off from the body. The old saying goes ‘Sticks and stones will break my bones but words can never hurt me’. But this is not true in spiritual terms, when we criticise a brother or sister who is not present we cut them off from the body and life outside of the body for a believer is death!! Because as believers we only have life in the body, because we are dead to ourselves and now live with Christ in God.

This is what Paul is getting at in 1Cor12:14-26 one member of the body can not say to another ‘**we do not need you**’ because it’s God who has put the body together and every part is important. When we do criticise one another, this is the greatest blasphemy against the Holy Spirit because it is as if we had taken over operations from Him, and now we are directing God’s affairs, perhaps because we think we can do a better job. I can judge your doctrine and am indeed called to do so in Titus 1:9, but if I judge you personally I am breaking the commandment of love, apart from showing others my vulnerabilities. Remember, disciples have to keep discipline. James informs us that he who can tame the tongue can control his whole body. This is why Paul says in Galatians 6:1

*“Brothers if a man is overtaken in a trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness considering yourself less you also be tempted”*

Restore, in a spirit of meekness, have compassion on the person concerned, why? because God is watching and how you judge is how you will be judged, because God is not fair! He’s just!