

Biblical Paradoxes Series

To judge or not to judge

“Do not judge” is a common phrase that we hear all the time. The fact is that everyone judges people and situations all the time. If someone knocks on our door wearing smart clothes and someone else knocks on our door wearing shabby clothes we’ll judge them differently. When we hire someone to work for us we’ll ask them a lot of questions to make a character judgment. Even in the church, we’ll make judgments about whether someone is trustworthy to carry out a responsibility or not, or has the ability to do a task or not. Many times, I’ve heard people say “Do not judge” then they make judgments about someone else. So, did Jesus contradict Himself, or have we misinterpreted what He said?

Matthew 7:1-2 Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

John 7:24 Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.

1) Hypocritical judgment

- Hypocritical judgement is when we judge others while we ourselves are living sinful lives in some way or the other, actively or passively
 - Romans 2:1 Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things.
- An example of active sin is telling someone that they are sinful because they have a habit of stealing whereas you might be stealing small things from your employer.
- An example of passive sin is telling someone that they need to forgive others who have hurt them while you yourself live with resentment and unforgiveness against someone.
- Hypocritical judgment is looking at a speck of dust in someone else’s eye while having a log in your own eye
 - Matthew 7:3-5 Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.
- Hypocritical judgment stems from pride. Pride always sees the faults of others but never its own faults.
 - Luke 18:9-12 He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’
- Hypocritical judgments are legalistic and put rules before people
 - The Pharisees put the Sabbath before the healing of people on the Sabbath
 - They didn’t care that Jesus’ disciples were hungry when they picked corn to eat on the Sabbath
 - They were more concerned about their social norms when they judged the prostitute for washing Jesus’ feet and dried it with her hair and also judged Jesus for allowing her to do that
 - They were happy to flout the law when they judged the woman caught in adultery by wanting to stone her, but the man was nowhere to be seen.
- Before making any judgments, go before the Lord to make sure that you’re not making a hypocritical judgment

2) Eternal judgment

- I often hear people say that people who committed suicide have gone to hell, or that the Pope has gone to hell because of being a Catholic.
- We need to refrain from making eternal judgments on whether someone has gone to hell or not as we aren't the final judges, only God is and He judges justly
 - Only God knows all the facts of a person's life and only he knows their heart attitudes and intentions
 - Without knowing the facts we would have condemned the thief on the cross to hell, but Jesus told him that he would be with Him in paradise.
- James 4:12 There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?
- Hebrews 12:22-23 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all.
- Revelation 20:11-13 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done.

3) Righteous judgment

- John 7:24 Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.
- There are ways that we aren't to judge, i.e. hypocritically and eternally, but that doesn't mean that we should not judge. However, we should judge with right judgment.
- We judge by making the right assessment of the person against the facts and not according to our personal feelings
- How then do we make righteous judgments?
 - Weigh up the person's actions against the scriptures
 - Hebrews 5:14 Solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.
 - Have all your facts of what the person did or didn't do correct
 - Psalms 139:23-24 Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.
 - A right judgment is always for restoration and not for condemnation
 - Galatians 6:1-5 Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, for each one should carry their own load.