

Should Christians judge others?

“Quit judging me! The Bible says, ‘Judge not, lest ye be judged!’”

How many of us have heard that from someone else? (Or perhaps more transparently, how many of us have actually said that to others?)



We are living in a culture that is clamoring for tolerance, not wanting anyone to judge them for their beliefs and choices. (See our article entitled [“Can't we all just get along?”](#) for more on that subject.) On a purely logical note, when someone tells you that you should not judge them, they are actually judging you, implying that your views are wrong, which is the very thing they don't want you to do to them! What they really mean is, you shouldn't use your own values when you assess their life, it is only acceptable to use theirs. Huge double standard!

But what about this question in general? Biblically speaking, are we to judge others or not?

It will come as no surprise, but context is everything. You can use the Bible to defend just about any position, if you have no concern for context. For example, I can allegedly support the three following beliefs about God:

- There are many gods.
- There is only one god.
- There are no gods.

MANY

“I have said, Ye are gods” Psalm 82:6

“Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods?” Exodus 15:11

“Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods” Exodus 18:11

ONE

“Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel... beside me there is no God.” Isaiah 44:6

NONE

“There is no God” Psalm 14:1

The context of each of these passages explains the proper meaning, all consistent with the belief there is only one true God.

Question of the Month

So, can we legitimately support judging and not judging using the Bible? Actually, we can, but it turns out it's not a contradiction, because there are two different types of judgment in view (and two types of people, as well). Let's take a closer look.

Just a quick comment regarding the two types of people: Christians and non-Christians. Too often, we tend to focus on the non-Christian's sinful actions, making attempts to lessen or eliminate these activities. However, since they are not saved and do not accept the Bible as their standard for living, why should they make great efforts to conform to its moral requirements? Without the Holy Spirit, they are virtually helpless to make any real, lasting change. And it's not about living up to a particular standard that is of utmost importance – it's about repenting and submitting our lives to Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. We get the “cart before the horse”. Clean-up your life and then become a Christian! How about this instead; submit your life to Christ and He will empower you to make any necessary changes to your lifestyle? (Additional side note: When talking with non-Christians about their need for a Savior, we are not actually personally judging them, we are simply explaining to them the judgment God Himself has already made. We care about them and want them to consider these things very seriously. We shouldn't be angry with them. On the contrary, we should be heart-broken regarding their current situation, and it should be evident through how we interact with them.)

Regarding the two types of judging, one relates to motives and the other relates to actions. We are not to assume we accurately know someone's motives and judge them based on what we think their motives might be. It's not wrong to ask some probing questions in order to determine someone's potential motives, but we shouldn't say something like, “You only offered to help, because you thought there might be a free meal involved. It wasn't out of the sincerity of your heart.” We may actually be right, but we don't really know that and it's something that they will have to deal with before God, who does know their heart (1 Samuel 16:7).

We can and should, however, make judgment calls when it comes to seeing things that directly violate known biblical principles (Matthew 18:15-17, 2 Timothy 4:2, Ephesians 5:11, Ezekiel 3:18-19). Even in these cases, we should focus on the behavior and not the character or motive of the individual. We should also offer our commentary in a caring manner, not wanting to see the other person suffer the consequences of their actions, as opposed to approaching them in a condescending, “holier-than-thou” manner. That type of a confrontation is what is addressed in Matthew 7:1 “For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.”

The Bible is also very clear about dealing with those individuals within the church. Matthew 18:15-17 “Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.”

Question of the Month

We can only scratch the surface on this topic in this brief article, so here are some verses for further study. I highly encourage you to read these on your own and allow the Holy Spirit to refine your response to those around you whenever conflict arises. (Just make sure you read these in their proper contexts!)

- Romans 2:3
- Matthew 7:1-5
- Luke 6:37
- John 7:24
- James 4:11-12
- Romans 2:1-3
- Proverbs 31:9
- 1 Corinthians 2:15
- 1 Corinthians 5:12-13
- 2 Timothy 2:24-26

In the meantime, if you have any questions about this or any other issue, please don't hesitate to [contact us!](#)