
Words of Truth

When You Judge A Person, Have You Judged Yourself?

By: Brian A. Yeager

One of the large misconceptions people have about faithful Christians is in thinking that we will not judge other people. The word of God teaches us to judge righteous judgment (John 7:24). Faithful Christians have to judge others in many different ways. We judge whether or not we are amongst faithful brethren (Matthew 7:15-20). We judge whether or not a brother or sister in Christ can remain amongst faithful brethren (Matthew 18:15-17, II Thessalonians 3:6, and II Thessalonians 3:14-15). Faithful Christians judge in matters of dispute amongst saints (I Corinthians 6:1-8). Through self-examination, we judge ourselves (I Corinthians 11:28-32). We could go on and on with more, but the fact that we are to judge is abundantly clear.

The word of God does give us some ways in which we are not to judge others. In one way, we are not to judge another based on authorized liberties. For example, we are taught not to judge a brother or sister over eating or not eating certain things (Romans 14:1-15:7). We are taught not to judge in a carnal way in which we seek to speak evil of a brother (James 4:11-12). Some people confuse this instruction. Properly handling the word of God (II Timothy 2:15) shows us that this does NOT include judging a brother when he is wrong on a matter (Galatians 2:11-17 and I Timothy 5:17-20).

All of this is important to understand and more could be written. However, such is not the goal of this particular study. The goal of this study is to examine hypocritical judgment. This is, as we will soon see, a type of judgment that faithful Christians must not exercise. When someone judges a person and is guilty of the same thing, that person has condemned his or herself. This is where we are going to begin the heart of our study.

You've Just Condemned Yourself

"Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye" (Matthew 7:1-5).

When an individual is guilty of something and they turn and judge another, they stand condemned before God (Romans 2:1-3). The same judgment that this hypocrite used is going to come back upon them. That is just. God will not ignore a situation wherein someone is erring themselves yet set his or herself up as a judge of another person (II Samuel 11:1-12:24, Matthew

23:1-33, and Romans 2:17-29). If you're not living aright, how could you judge someone else for the same things you're doing?

Let's consider another application that ties to this point. How many of us have/do ask God to be merciful for ourselves (Psalms 86:3)? How thankful are we that Jesus lived in the flesh and is merciful because of such (Hebrews 2:17-18)? If you are in the same boat as another, how merciful are you if you toss them overboard? What will your judgment without mercy cause for you (Luke 6:36-38 and James 2:13)? Think on those things. Then, let's turn our study to another aspect of the overall study we are having. Ask yourself, are you living up to the standard you expect others to live up to?

Where Do You Fit On Your Measuring Stick?

First, let's be reminded that no man, on earth at this present time, is the standard we are to follow (I Corinthians 4:6 and II Corinthians 10:12). Christ is our standard (John 14:6, Colossians 3:17, I Peter 2:21, and I John 2:3-6) through the Scriptures (II Timothy 3:15-17). The thing about having your own measuring stick is that you will find it easier to justify yourself by your own standards. When you are in control of defining the terms it makes it that much easier to have your way be the right way (Proverbs 21:2). Now that we have covered that, let's get to the point we are going to discuss.

A brother used to say something like this, "when you point one finger at another person three are pointing back at you" (Red Ford). When you are unfaithful to God, in any way, you have no right to stand in judgment against another person (John 8:1-11).

For the sake of illustration, let's say you are critical of someone's parenting abilities. You have judged that their methods are not the right way to go. This is not a biblical discussion, it is just your judgment. How are/were you as a parent? What does the fruit of your parenting say based upon where your children are now (Matthew 7:20)? This is no small point, it is why elders are to be qualified, in part, based upon their abilities to guide their children (I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9). Did you raise your children in the ways of the Lord (Proverbs 22:6 and Ephesians 6:4)? Using what we read in Matthew 7:1-5, if you are going to condemn someone for what YOU think is bad parenting, what will that mean of your judgment for your parenting. Prepare yourself to be judged by the Lord, as we have read, based upon your own judgment.

Conclusion

Most people I have met over the years need to spend much more time in front of the proverbial mirror (James 1:21-25) than on the judgment seat. Let's all think about that. Then, when you walk away from the mirror having perfected that which is lacking in your life, you will be fit to HELP rather than condemn that person whom you would otherwise judge. Remember, to consider yourself when you find a brother or sister caught in sin (Galatians 6:1). If the time arises wherein we need to judge an unfaithful brother or sister in Christ (i.e. I Corinthians 5:1-13), we'd all better be sure we are in the right place ourselves to do so (Lue 6:42). As we have learned already, hypocritical judgment ends in self-condemnation!

Milkshakes

The Authorized Works Of The Church Of Christ

By: Brian A. Yeager

Many churches of Christ have divided over the years concerning what are and what are not the authorized works of the local church. Our study will show that this is not nearly as complicated as many have made it. First, we have to realize that the word of God teaches us that our idea of “good works” is not God’s idea of good works (Matthew 7:21-23). Many people have lists of things the church should be doing. The world, other congregations, preachers of today, etc., are not our standard (Ephesians 5:10). So, we shall now see what the Lord defines as the work of local congregations.

The word of God shows us that the work of the local body of Christ includes teaching His word to the lost and saved. We do such, as a congregation, inside the assembly (Acts 20:7). While the primary purpose of our assembling together is about the local congregation (I Thessalonians 5:11-14 and Hebrews 10:23-25), we also know the church is authorized to instruct the lost in our assemblies (I Corinthians 14:23). Another way in which the church collectively takes part in the work of teaching is by supporting faithful evangelists (I Corinthians 9:1-14, II Corinthians 11:8, and Philippians 4:11-18).

The word of God shows us that the work of the local church of Christ includes aiding truly needy faithful Christians both locally and abroad (Romans 15:25-27, I Corinthians 16:1-4, and II Corinthians 8:1-9:14). We should understand that there are strict limitations here. For example, a widow in Christ can only be supported by the local church with the Lord’s money if she has no family to care for her and if she meets the qualifications of a “widow indeed” (I Timothy 5:3-16).

The word of God shows us that the work of the local church includes spiritual edification (Ephesians 4:15-16). While the word of God is capable of building each one of us up (Acts 20:32), the Lord also supplied us with the local congregation as a source for edification. Each member of the local church works together in strengthening and building up each other in spiritual ways (I Corinthians 12:14-27).

It did not take very much space for us to cover this subject matter. If you read the Scriptures cited above, you will see the clear pattern is just as stated. Why then is there confusion on these things? God is not the source of confusion (I Corinthians 14:33). So, we have to conclude that it is man that has taken the work of the local church and has caused it to be a matter of confusion. One of the ways confusion has occurred on the work of the local church is by incorrect applications of some Scriptures. Many have misapplied Scriptures concerning the work of individual Christians by using those Scriptures for the work of the church. This comes back to knowing how to rightly divide the word of truth (II Timothy 2:15).

In our next study, we are going to take the time to show that there is a difference in what God authorizes us to do as individual Christians, a group of Christians [concurrent action], and the church as a collective body. To prepare your mind for this study, consider Matthew 18:15-17 as something to study to “whet your appetite”. The application will be made in our next study.