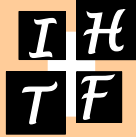


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JUDGE NOT

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A Command: Judge Not

Matthew 7:1-2, 12 (NIV)

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

12 So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

To "judge" someone means to form an opinion about them based on their character, behavior, or beliefs. This decision is often followed by an action that goes against the individual. Jesus commanded His disciples not to judge. This command was more about the individual judging than it was about the individual or group being judged. One of the things we can do as born-again believers is to think about the measure we want for ourselves and then use that for others. Here are some things to consider before we 'judge' others: Do we measure others the way that we would want to be measured? Do we examine ourselves first before judging others? Do we repent, confess, correct our own hearts first, and remember we are sinners saved by grace before forming and acting upon our opinion of others?

3

Self-Examination First

2 Corinthians 13:5 (NIV)

5 Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?

One of the things to consider before judging others is to examine yourself first. To examine yourself spiritually is to compare your actions, attitudes, and motivations against the Word of God with a yardstick such as the "fruit of the Spirit". We should also pray to God to reveal areas needing attention and consider our desires, relationship with Him, and our reactions to difficult situations, to see if our life aligns with His divine will. We can judge others according to the Word of God as "each other's keeper" but this must never mean we indulge in self-righteousness, hypocrisy, prejudice, or mercilessness. May we always ask ourselves this: Is this the way of Christ? Jesus drove out people who were desecrating God's temple and called the Pharisees and Sadducees hypocrites; but they were clearly in the wrong. Besides, Jesus had no sin in Him and therefore could rebuke such behavior. We should always run self-checks so that when the moment calls for it, we can graciously call to correction anything that does not glorify God - but not until we have passed the self-check first.

4

Take Away

We should always run self-checks so that when the moment calls for it, we can graciously correct anything that does not glorify God - but not until we have examined and passed the test ourselves. May we continually ask the Holy Spirit for guidance in correcting ourselves and others without judgment. Amen!

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