

IS IT EVER OK TO JUDGE?

“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.” (Matthew 7:1-2)

This article provides an overview of the biblical directive to judge and provides suggestions regarding how to do this in “truth and love.”

Watchmen must understand that their calling is to be the loving but bold voice of God in the world in these last days. Indeed, it is an expression of love to warn—to share prayerfully-discerned judgements (based on the Word of God) to those who need to be called back from sin or prompted to enter into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. Watchmen should not defer or put-off this important work. Watchmen are to share as the Spirit leads, remembering, “If today you hear His voice, harden not your heart” (Hebrews 3:7-8a).

Satan is the great deceiver. He whispers that in the name of tolerance, love, and acceptance, it is never appropriate to judge. One of his more effective moves in recent decades is to foster social movements which challenge traditional values. In the last fifty years or so there have been significant social shifts toward equating judging with bigotry, linking moral standards with prejudice, viewing truth as being relative, and confusing what feels good with what is good. These new mores are prominent in media, reflected in recent laws, and advanced in academia by those deemed enlightened. Slowly but surely this so-called progressive thinking is becoming the norm.

These social changes, and a misunderstanding of well-known verses such as, “Judge not lest ye be judged” (Matthew 7:1-3), have quieted the voice and influence of the Church in recent decades. In short, many Christians do not defend the faith (1 Peter 3:15) for fear of being labeled a bigot, or because they do not understand that expressing biblical truths in love is biblical, and an expression of the love of God.

Christians are called to share their faith (Matthew 28:18-20). Watchmen are to guard against the encroachment of sin (Ezekiel 33). These are not suggestions—they are commands and they evidence a true commitment to the Lord. Many are quick to say that Jesus loved and accepted all. While it is true that Jesus extended love to all, it is also true that He did not accept all behavior—and was quick and bold in calling-out behavior that conflicted with Scripture. Why? Was Jesus mean, or prejudicial, or a bigot? No. He warned and rebuked people because He loved the people. Because He cared for sinners, He constantly challenged individuals to confess and move away from sin.

Jesus exercised great freedom in calling-out sinful behaviors and activities that hinder spiritual development. Following His example, Christians are commanded to speak the truth, know Scripture, and rightly judge what is right and what is wrong. The question is not, should a Christian judge but rather, how should a Christian judge.

“So you...I have made a watchman...Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. If I say to the wicked, O wicked one, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked person shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, that person shall die in his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul.” Ezek. 33:7-10

“You are the light of the world...let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” Matthew 5:14-16