

TO JUDGE OR NOT TO JUDGE

John 7:10-24

by Andy Manning

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The most popular verse in the world today is no longer John 3:16. It is Matthew 7:1. "Do not judge, so that you won't be judged."
2. These days just about anytime you say that behaviors like homosexuality and premarital sex are sinful, you will likely be met with, "Don't be intolerant! Don't you know that Jesus said not to judge."
3. According to our culture, it is unloving and therefore unchristian to condemn certain behaviors.
4. But today we're going to see while Jesus does command us not to judge, He also commands us to judge. Is this a contradiction, or is there type of judgment we are to avoid, and a type of judgment we are to practice?

II. TEXT: John 7:10-24

1. *10 After his brothers had gone up to the festival, then he also went up, not openly but secretly. 11 The Jews were looking for him at the festival and saying, "Where is he?" 12 And there was a lot of murmuring about him among the crowds. Some were saying, "He's a good man." Others were saying, "No, on the contrary, he's deceiving the people." 13 Still, nobody was talking publicly about him for fear of the Jews.*
2. *14 When the festival was already half over, Jesus went up into the temple and began to teach. 15 Then the Jews were amazed and said, "How is this man so learned, since he hasn't been trained?"*
3. *16 Jesus answered them, "My teaching isn't mine but is from the one who sent me. 17 If anyone wants to do his will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own. 18 The one who speaks on his own seeks his own glory; but he who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is true, and there is no unrighteousness in him. 19 Didn't Moses give you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why are you trying to kill me?"*
4. *20 "You have a demon!" the crowd responded. "Who is trying to kill you?"*
 - i. Jesus was accused of being demon-possessed on several occasions. John 8:48; John 10:20; Mt 12:24
 - ii. They also accused John the Baptist of the same thing.
 - iii. He was also accused of the following:
 1. Sabbath breaking. Jn 5:16, 18; 19:16
 2. Blasphemy. Jn 5:18 8:59; 10:31, 33, 39; 19:7
 3. Deceiving the people. Jn 7:12, 47
 4. Being a Samaritan. Jn 8:48
 5. Madness. Jn 10:20
 6. Criminal activity. Jn 18:30

5. 21 *“I performed one work, and you are all amazed,” Jesus answered.*
 - i. He is speaking about healing the man who was paralyzed for thirty-eight years at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-16). He did this miracle on the Sabbath.
6. 22 *“This is why Moses has given you circumcision—not that it comes from Moses but from the fathers—and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. 23 If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses won’t be broken, are you angry at me because I made a man entirely well on the Sabbath?”*
 - i. In Genesis 17 God gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision. He ordered that every baby boy had to be circumcised at eight days old. If a boy was born on the Sabbath, then he had to be circumcised on the following Sabbath. So, the Jews violated their own Sabbath rules all the time with circumcision.
 - ii. Then Jesus goes on to argue that if the law of circumcision supersedes the law of the Sabbath, then surely the law of love supersedes the Sabbath, which includes healing a paralyzed man.
7. 24 *Stop judging according to outward appearances; rather judge according to righteous judgment.”*
 - i. Jesus gives two commands, a negative and a positive. Stop judging according to outward appearances, and start judging according to righteous judgment.
 - ii. Our culture assumes that “Judge not” means you shouldn’t call out sin. That you should not say to someone, “This behavior is wrong and you should repent.” Is it wrong for Christians to judge in this way?
 - iii. In verse 24, Jesus doesn’t forbid all judging; only some judging. In fact, there is a command here to judge with righteous judgment.
 - iv. What is the difference between evil judging, and righteous judging?

III. IS IT WRONG TO CALL OUT SIN?

1. This is a self-defeating statement. To say that it is wrong to call out sin is to call out sin. When you say that “judging others” is sinful, you are doing exactly what you are condemning – saying someone’s behavior is sinful.
2. Everyone calls out sin.
 - i. Everyone believes that certain behaviors are sinful, and at times boldly and openly denounces them: Pedophilia; rape; racism; pollution; Donald Trump; anyone who supports Donald Trump; Nazis; murder; theft; slavery; kidnapping; human-trafficking; lying; child-abuse, etc. If you followed this rule, then you would be fine with people lying and stealing from you.
3. The prophets called out sin.
 - i. Samuel confronted Saul when he disobeyed God. 1 Samuel 15
 - ii. Nathan confronted David when he committed adultery. 2 Samuel 12
 - iii. **Hosea 4:1-2** “Hear the word of the Lord, people of Israel, for the Lord has a case against the inhabitants of the land: There is no truth, no faithful love,

- and no knowledge of God in the land! Cursing, lying, murder, stealing, and adultery are rampant; one act of bloodshed follows another.”
- iv. Jonah preached against the sins of the city of Nineveh.
4. John the Baptist called out sin.
 - i. John the Baptist was imprisoned and arrested for preaching against the sin of King Herod Antipas, who was committing adultery. Matthew 14:1-12
 5. Jesus called out sin.
 - i. Jesus often told people to stop sinning.
 1. After rescuing the woman caught in adultery from being stoned, Jesus told her, “Go, and from now on do not sin anymore.” John 8:11
 2. After healing a man who had been disabled for thirty-eight years, Jesus told him, “Do not sin anymore, so that something worse doesn’t happen to you.” John 5:14
 - ii. Jesus openly called out the sins of the Jewish leaders.
 1. He called them hypocrites. Mt 23:15
 2. He called them children of hell. Mt 23:15
 3. He called them blind fools. Mt 23:17
 4. He said they were full of greed and self-indulgence. Mt 23:25
 5. He called them whitewashed tombs. On the outside they seemed righteous, but inside they were full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. Mt 23:28
 6. He called them snakes, and a brood of vipers. Mt 23:33
 - iii. Jesus said that the reason He was hated was because He called out sin.
 1. **John 7:7** “The world cannot hate you, but it does hate me because I testify about it—that its works are evil.”
 6. The apostles called out sin. There are many lists of vices in the New Testament.
 - i. **1 Corinthians 6:9-11** “9 Don’t you know that the unrighteous will not inherit God’s kingdom? Do not be deceived: No sexually immoral people, idolaters, adulterers, or males who have sex with males,, 10 no thieves, greedy people, drunkards, verbally abusive people, or swindlers will inherit God’s kingdom.”
 7. The Bible commands us to call out sin.
 - i. Jesus commands us to judge immediately after commanding us not to judge.
 1. **Matthew 7:1-6** “Do not judge, so that you won’t be judged. 2 For you will be judged by the same standard with which you judge others, and you will be measured by the same measure you use. 3 Why do you look at the splinter in your brother’s eye but don’t notice the beam of wood in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the splinter out of your eye,’ and look, there’s a beam of wood in your own eye? 5 Hypocrite! First take the beam of wood out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to take the splinter out of your brother’s eye. 6 Don’t give what is holy to dogs or toss your pearls before pigs, or they will trample them under their feet, turn, and tear you to pieces.”

2. Help your friend after you've taken the plank out of your own eye.
Matthew 7:5
8. The Bible commands us to expose sin.
 - i. **Ephesians 5:11** "Don't participate in the fruitless works of darkness, but instead expose them."
 - ii. In order to avoid sin, we need to expose it – to clarify which behaviors are sinful and which are good.
9. We must call out sin to faithfully preach God's word.
 - i. **2 Timothy 4:2** "Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, and encourage with great patience and teaching."
 - ii. **Titus 1:10-11** "10 For there are many rebellious people, full of empty talk and deception, especially those from the circumcision party. 11 It is necessary to silence them; they are ruining entire households by teaching what they shouldn't in order to get money dishonestly."
 - iii. **Titus 1:13** "This testimony is true. For this reason, rebuke them sharply, so that they may be sound in the faith"
10. We must call out sin to confront other believers who sin against us.
 - i. **Matthew 18:15-17** 15 "If your brother sins against you, go tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won your brother. 16 But if he won't listen, take one or two others with you, so that by the testimony of two or three witnesses every fact may be established., 17 If he doesn't pay attention to them, tell the church., If he doesn't pay attention even to the church, let him be like a Gentile and a tax collector to you."
 - ii. Not only are we to confront them, but if they don't listen, we are to involve the rest of the church, and then expel them from the church if they persist in sin.
11. We must call out sin to try to restore Christians who are living in sin.
 - i. **Galatians 6:1** "Brothers and sisters, if someone is overtaken in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual, restore such a person with a gentle spirit, watching out for yourselves so that you also won't be tempted."
12. We must call out sin to practice church discipline.
 - i. Paul said that we must practice church discipline, including separation from unrepentant Christians, and expulsion from the church.
 - ii. **1 Corinthians 5:9-13** "9 I wrote to you in a letter not to associate with sexually immoral people. 10 I did not mean the immoral people of this world or the greedy and swindlers or idolaters; otherwise you would have to leave the world. 11 But actually, I wrote you not to associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister and is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or verbally abusive, a drunkard or a swindler. Do not even eat with such a person. 12 For what business is it of mine to judge outsiders? Don't you judge those who are inside? 13 God judges outsiders. Remove the evil person from among you."
 1. Don't associate with Christians who are living in sin.
 2. Expel them from the church.

- iii. **1 Timothy 5:20** “Publicly rebuke those who sin, so that the rest will be afraid.”
 - 1. This is referring to pastors who sin. They are to be rebuked publicly.
- iv. **Titus 3:10** “Reject a divisive person after a first and second warning. 11 For you know that such a person has gone astray and is sinning; he is self-condemned.”

13. We must call out sin to teach and discipline our children.

- i. **Ephesians 6:4** “Fathers, don’t stir up anger in your children, but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.”
- ii. We cannot teach our children right from wrong, and correct them when they go astray, without calling out their sin.

IV. HOW TO JUDGE WITH RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT?

1. Jesus commands us to judge with righteous judgment (Jn 7:24). What does this look like?

i. Don’t judge by outward appearances.

- 1. **John 7:24** “Stop judging according to outward appearances; rather judge according to righteous judgment.”
- 2. To judge by outward appearances is to judge based on things like race, dress, age, religion, education. It is to make a superficial, surface judgment without a thorough investigation of the facts.
- 3. God sent the prophet Samuel to anoint one of Jesse’s sons as the next king of Israel. Jesse had eight sons. When Samuel saw Eliab, he just assumed by his appearance that he must be the Lord’s anointed. He must have been tall, or handsome, or well-built. But the Lord rebuked Samuel.
 - a. **1 Samuel 16:7** But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or his stature because I have rejected him. Humans do not see what the LORD sees, for humans see what is visible, but the LORD sees the heart.”

ii. Don’t judge hypocritically.

- 1. **Matthew 7:1-5** “Do not judge, so that you won’t be judged. 2 For you will be judged by the same standard with which you judge others, and you will be measured by the same measure you use. 3 Why do you look at the splinter in your brother’s eye but don’t notice the beam of wood in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the splinter out of your eye,’ and look, there’s a beam of wood in your own eye? 5 Hypocrite! First take the beam of wood out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to take the splinter out of your brother’s eye.”
- 2. When you read verse one in context, it becomes clear that Jesus wasn’t prohibiting calling out sin, but doing it from a hypocritical heart.
- 3. We must not call out sin if we are doing the same thing. We must not call out sin and act like we are better; like we are sinless.

4. This kind of judgment will not be well-received.

iii. Don't judge critically.

1. **James 4:11** "Don't criticize one another, brothers and sisters."
2. **James 5:9** "Brothers and sisters, do not complain about one another, so that you will not be judged. Look, the judge stands at the door!"
3. To judge critically is to call out sin either to someone or about them, with the wrong attitude, and for the wrong purpose. It is to call out sin with an attitude of contempt, and frustration, and anger, and dislike. The purpose is to tear down rather than to build up; to vent your anger; to make yourself feel better or look better by focusing on their faults. The purpose is to laugh at them, to mock them, to poke fun at them, or to take out your anger on them.
4. This is judgmentalism. It is being hypercritical – making things of little important very important. It is being fault-finding, nitpicky, overcritical.
5. There's a word for this: Censorious. It means "always wanting to criticize other people or ideas and finds fault in them." It means "severely critical of others."
6. If you want to, you can find reasons to criticize everyone. There is plenty of material. You can criticize a person for not keeping their car clean enough; for not keeping their yard nice enough; for being too hard on their kids, or not hard enough; for wasting their money, or for being too stingy. You can criticize someone for their weight, or because their marriage isn't perfect, or their kids aren't perfect. But we must not be judgmental. It is easy to be hypercritical; it is hard to keep your mouth shut. But that's true godliness.
7. **James 1:26** "If anyone thinks he is religious without controlling his tongue, his religion is useless and he deceives himself."
8. To judge righteously we must have an attitude of love and humility. We must not be self-righteous. We must acknowledge that we don't have it altogether; and that we are not perfect. Our aim must be the restoration of the other person; their growth. Our goal must be to build up; to teach; to instruct; to help; to rescue; to encourage; to motivate.
9. As a general rule, be a raving fan in public and an honest critic in private. When you are speaking to and about someone in public, be a raving fan. If you can't do that, then keep your mouth shut. And if they have a serious fault that needs to be called out, then go to them in private.

iv. Don't judge people on disputed matters.

1. **Romans 14:1-4** "Welcome anyone who is weak in faith, but don't argue about disputed matters. 2 One person believes he may eat anything, while one who is weak eats only vegetables. 3 One who

eats must not look down on one who does not eat, and one who does not eat must not judge one who does, because God has accepted him. 4 Who are you to judge another's household servant? Before his own Lord he stands or falls. And he will stand, because the Lord is able to make him stand."

2. Each of us has a personal relationship with God. We each have different strengths and weaknesses; different experiences; we live in different circumstances. So, the Lord is going to give each of us personal instructions that are not general commands for everyone. For instance, the Lord may tell you to not to drink alcohol, or to never go to a bar, or to not wear a two piece bathing suit, or to not watch PG-13 movies, or to not listen to anything but Christian music, or to get rid of cable, or to home school your kids, or to be a reverse-tither. And you should be obedient. But don't push those personal instructions onto others. Don't criticize other people for not sharing your personal convictions.
3. In the 2016 election, evangelical Christians were divided over how to vote. Many thought it would be best not to vote, because they could not in good conscious support Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump. Many other Christians thought it would be best to vote for Trump, because even though he wasn't perfect, he was far better than Hillary. And these Christians heavily criticized each other. It caused a lot of division among Christians that still exists today.
4. These are disputed matters. Areas of Christian freedom. Gray areas. When it comes to disputed matters, we must learn to accept one another.
5. **Romans 15:7 (NLT)** "Therefore, accept each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory."
6. We cannot call people out for not sharing our personal convictions; only when they blatantly disobey God's clear-cut commands in Scripture.

v. Don't judge motives.

1. A person's motive is their why. It is the reason why act. It is their intention. The reason we should not judge a person's motives is because we don't know their motives. We don't know their heart. We don't know their true intentions. The heart is something only God knows.
2. **1 Chronicles 28:9** "The Lord searches every heart and understands the intention of every thought."
3. This gets people in trouble all the time. If the man gets the promotion, the company is sexist. If the white man gets promoted, the company must be racist. If the black man gets promoted, it must not be because he is the most qualified, but because of affirmative

action. If your husband is late for dinner, it's not because he lost track of time or ran into heavy traffic, it's because he doesn't respect you. If the preacher doesn't call you when you are sick, it must be because he doesn't care about you, not because he just forgot.

4. There's an example of this in the Bible. When David inquired about Goliath, his oldest brother, Eliab judged his heart.
 - a. **1 Samuel 17:28** David's oldest brother Eliab listened as he spoke to the men, and he became angry with him. "Why did you come down here?" he asked. "Who did you leave those few sheep with in the wilderness? I know your arrogance and your evil heart—you came down to see the battle!"
 - b. Do you see what he did? He judged David's motives. He accused David of visiting just because he wanted to see some action, when in reality, David was there because his father instructed him to bring his brothers some supplies.
5. Nobody knows another person's heart. You don't know what a person is truly thinking; or why they do what they do. So don't judge motives.

V. CONCLUSION

1. So, to judge or not to judge? As Christians, we must judge. We must call out sin. But we must judge with righteous judgment.
2. And we must point out to people that sin does not have the last word.
 - i. The point of calling out sin is not to make people feel bad about themselves, but to point people to a closer relationship with Jesus Christ.
 - ii. The point is to tell people that even though you have sinned, Christ can forgive you, and restore you, and clean you up, and change you, and reconcile you to God, because He already paid for your sins.
 - iii. The point is to tell people that the best life, abundant life, is found in a right relationship with God through Jesus Christ.
 - iv. All you have to do to receive God's forgiveness is to repent and turn to God.
 - v. **1 John 1:8-9** 8 If we say, "We have no sin," we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
 - vi. If we deny that we are sinners and just say, "Judge not," then we are doomed. But if we will admit our sin and repent, and put our faith in Jesus Christ, then God will forgive us.