

DO NOT JUDGE
Matthew 7:1-5
The Commands of Christ – Week 6
By Andy Manning

I. INTRODUCTION

1. What's your favorite verse in the Bible? Mine is **Matthew 6:33** "But seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you." My dad's is **Proverbs 3:5-6** "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know him, and he will make your paths straight." My son, Reiton's favorite verse is **Colossians 3:23**, because he was born on 3/23 (March 23). "Whatever you do, do it from the heart, as something done for the Lord and not for people." There are lots of wonderful verses in the Bible: John 3:16, Romans 8:28, Jeremiah 29:11. It would be great if nonbelievers knew these verses, but most don't. Instead, the nonbeliever's favorite verse is Matthew 7:1, but I'm going to read it in context.

II. TEXT

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."

III. WHEN THEY USE IT

1. The nonbeliever's favorite verse is, "Do not be judged, so that you won't be judged." They always say it with attitude, and they often use the King James Version, "Judge not, that ye be not judged."
2. This verse is always used in the same way. When a Christian says that a behavior is sinful, they are met with the response, "Jesus said you're not supposed to judge." For example, when a Christian says, "Homosexuality is a sin," or "Pre-marital sex is against God's will," a non-believer will respond, "Judge not, that ye be not judged."

IV. WHAT THEY THINK IT MEANS

1. Nonbelievers think this verse means that you're not supposed to say that a behavior is morally wrong or sinful, or you're not supposed to tell someone that their behavior is wrong.
2. But there are several problems with this view:
 - i. It is a self-defeating statement.
 1. A self-defeating statement is a statement that defeats itself. It is a statement that violates the law of non-contradiction.

2. For example, "I can't speak a word of English." I had to speak English to say that. Or, "My parents had no kids that lived," or "My brother is an only child," or, "Everything I say is a lie."
 3. Take this statement for example. "There is no truth." What's wrong with that statement? If there is no truth, then the statement "there is no truth" must not be true.
 4. When someone says, "Don't judge," they have just judged you for judging. They have just done what they are telling you not to do.
 5. One time at work a delivery driver came into my office and he said, "I am so annoyed with Christians." I asked him why and he said, "Because they are so judgmental." I said, "Are you judging Christians for judging?"
- ii. Nonbelievers don't live by this rule.
1. The very people who say "Don't judge" turn around and do the same thing they accuse Christians of doing all the time. They condemn behaviors all the time. They condemn racism, and rape, and murder, and pollution, and white supremacy, and theft, slavery, and human trafficking. If they caught their child lying they would tell them, "Don't lie." If they caught their spouse in an affair they would say, "You need to stop." If judging is saying that a behavior is morally wrong, then they are hypocritical because they do it all the time.
- iii. Jesus didn't live by this rule.
1. Judging can't mean simply saying that a behavior is morally wrong or telling someone they need to repent because Jesus did that all the time, and He was the one who said, "Don't judge."
 2. Jesus' first sermon was to repent (Mt 4:17). In other words, the point of His first sermon was to stop sinning!
 3. The command not to judge is a part of a sermon that Christ preached called the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7). In that sermon Jesus condemned many behaviors. He condemned hypocrisy, murder, anger, insults, adultery, lust, no-fault divorce, unforgiveness, and on and on. He often said that certain behaviors were wrong.
 4. And Jesus often confronted people in their sin. Jesus called Peter "Satan" for trying to stop him from fulfilling His mission (Mt 16:23). He denounced the towns where He did miracles because they did not repent (Mt 11:21-24). He reserved His harshest judgments for the Jewish leaders, the scribes and Pharisees, calling them hypocrites, blind guides, blind fools, snakes, brood of vipers, and whitewashed tombs who look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of every kind of impurity (Mt 23).

5. None of the preachers in the Bible lived by this rule. They called out sin for the purpose of showing people that they needed a Savior and needed to repent to honor God.
 - a. Samuel rebuked King Saul for his disobedience.
 - b. The prophet Nathan confronted and rebuked David for his adultery and murder.
 - c. Ezra rebuked the Jewish men for taking foreign wives.
 - d. Nehemiah harshly rebuked the Jewish nobles and officials for charging interest.
 - e. Malachi rebuked the Jews for offering defiled sacrifices, and for withholding the tithe.
 - f. John the Baptist preached that the tax collectors should stop collecting more money than they were authorized. He told the soldiers to stop taking money from people by force.
 6. Why would Jesus say not to say that any behavior is wrong when He and all the prophets did it all the time?
- iv. It is impossible for Christians to live by this rule.
1. If judging simply means saying that a behavior is morally wrong, or telling a person that they need to repent, then it is impossible for Christians to live that way. Christians have to say that behaviors are wrong all the time.
 2. The Bible commands Christian parents to discipline their children when they do what is wrong (Pr 13:24).
 3. The Bible says when another person sins against you, go tell him his fault (Mt 18:15).
 4. The Bible says when a church member is living in open sin, they need to be restored (1 Cor 5:13).
 5. The Bible says that when a pastor sins, they are to be publicly rebuked (1 Tim 5:20).
 6. The Bible says that preachers should preach the word, which involves correcting and rebuking (2 Tim 4:2). How can a preacher teach people what is right without pointing out what is wrong? How can he teach what is true without pointing out error?
 7. This rule of never saying that any behavior is morally wrong is impossible for faithful Christians to keep.
3. To judge is to say that a behavior is wrong, or to tell someone that they need stop sinning. But it's clear that it's not always wrong to do that. There are times when you have to do that and should do that. There are times when Jesus did that. So what did Jesus mean when He said, "Do not judge"?

V. WHAT IT ACTUALLY MEANS

1. Jesus isn't saying "Don't judge," but "Don't judge in the wrong way." There's a right way to judge, and a wrong way to judge.
2. **John 7:24** "Stop judging according to outward appearances; rather judge according to righteous judgment."
3. In this verse Jesus is actually saying that we should judge, but we must judge righteously. We shouldn't avoid all judgment; but we must avoid unrighteous judgment.
4. What kind of judging must Christian avoid? There are **four types of unrighteous judgment**.

i. Hypocritical judgment.

1. This is what Jesus is calling out in Matthew 7:1-5. He isn't saying we should never judge, but that we shouldn't judge hypocritically. The context of Matthew 7 is hypocrisy. In Matthew 6, Jesus condemned hypocrisy in verses 2, 5, and 16. And then He uses it again in verse 5 of this passage. In other words, the focus of this passage is not so much about judging others, but hypocritical judgment.
2. **Matthew 7:2-3** "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? 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."
3. What is hypocritical judgment? It is pointing out the sins in another Christian's life when you have much bigger sins in your own life.
4. It reminds me of a story I heard of two Christian men who were sharing an apartment. One of them caught the other looking at pornography on the computer, and harshly condemned and rebuked him. The very next day the same man who harshly condemned the other was caught in a multi-year affair with a married woman. That's hypocritical judgment.
5. Jesus isn't saying that we should never say to our brother, "Let me take the splinter out of your eye." We shouldn't ignore the splinter in their eye. We should help them. But He is saying that we should first take the plank out of our own eye, and then help our brother with his splinter.
6. It is human nature to focus on other people's sins and ignore our own. And it's not simply because it is easier to see other's faults than our own. We tend to accuse others and excuse ourselves. When other people sin, it's a big deal. When we sin, it's no big deal. It was an accident. It was a one-time thing. We were having a bad day. That's the kind of judging that Jesus is rebuking.

7. Jesus is rebuking people who are always criticizing other people for their sins, even their small faults, but they have much bigger sins in their own life that they are ignoring.
8. Before you judge others, judge yourself. Before you confront someone about their sin ask yourself, “Am I committing the same sin? Is there a more serious sin in my life? Is there unconfessed sin in my life?” If so, you are not qualified to judge that person. Take the two-by-four out of your own eye first, and then you will be able to help them take the splinter out of their eye.

ii. Unloving judgment.

1. Jesus made it clear in this passage that the reason to judge someone is to help them; it is to help them remove the splinter from their eye.
2. But often the way we judge people, the way we point out the speck in their eye, is not helpful. We do more harm than good.
3. **1 Corinthians 16:14** “Do everything in love.”
4. How can we judge with a loving spirit?
 - a. Don’t judge someone behind their back. This damages their reputation and doesn’t help them. If someone has sin in their life, speak to them face to face. Don’t talk about them behind their back. At Church Acadiana we have a policy: Be a raving fan in public, and an honest critic in private. If you have a problem with another church member, don’t talk about them behind their back. Be raving fan, and if you don’t have anything good to say them restrict your remarks to the weather. If you have a problem, then talk to them in person, in private.
 - b. Don’t be condescending. Don’t treat someone as if you are superior, as if you have never struggled and messed up. Be humble and remember that you are just much a sinner, and the only reason that you have made any progress over sin is because of the grace of God.
 - c. Don’t use cutting words. When you talk to someone about their sin, be sure to do so with gentleness and kindness and respect. Be careful about choice of words, your tone, your body language.
5. Make no mistake, when a fellow believer sins are supposed to restore them. We are not supposed to see the splinter in their eye and say, “It’s not my business. Who am I to judge?” We need to help them remove the splinter.
6. **James 5:19-20** “19 My brothers and sisters, if any among you strays from the truth, and someone turns him back, 20 let that person know

that whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.”

7. When another believer is caught in error or false teaching, we must try to restore them. We must try to help them. But we must do it in a spirit of love.
8. Galatians 6:1-2 “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. 2 Carry one another’s burdens; in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”
9. We are to restore them. We are to get involved. We are to carry their burden. It is our business. But we are to do with gentle spirit. Treat them with the same gentleness, and grace, and patience that you would want others to give to you. Treat them with the same love and patience and forgiveness that God has given you.

iii. Motive-judgment.

1. Motive-judging is when you judge a person’s intentions; their purpose for doing something.
2. There’s an example of this in the life of King David (2 Sam 10). When Hanun became king of the Ammonites, David decided to show him kindness. So he sent emissaries to console Hanun when his father died. But when David’s men arrived, the Ammonite leaders told King Hanun, “David hasn’t sent these emissaries to console you; they are spies so David can attack and demolish us.” So Hanun took David’s emissaries, shaved off their beards, and cut off their clothes at the hips and sent them back. They misjudged their motives, insulted David, and this led to a war. An entire war was started and over forty-thousand soldiers were killed because of misjudged motives.
3. People commit motive-judgment all the time.
4. For example, when we leave the BCM on Sundays we are instructed to turn up the thermostat to eighty degrees to save power. But let’s say one day that we fail to do that, so the director calls me up and says, “Andy, you didn’t turn up the thermostats.” I reply, “I’m so sorry. I totally forgot.” But then he says, “You didn’t forget. You did it on purpose to get back at me for charging you such a high rent.”
5. Or let’s say my wife and I go to a movie, and when I take my jacket off I hit her drink and it spills all over her. I say, “I’m so sorry; I didn’t mean to do that.” But she says, “Yes you did. You did that on purpose.” That’s motive-judging.
6. Motive-judging happens all the time and it ruins relationships.

7. We should never judge a person's motives because we don't know their heart. That's something only God knows.
8. When you judge a person's motives, you are playing God. You are acting like you are omniscient – all-knowing.

iv. Conscience-judgment.

1. There are two types of sins. Universal sins and personal sins. A universal sin is something that is wrong for everyone, such as murder or adultery. We know that it's wrong for everyone because the Bible clearly states that it is wrong. A personal sin is something that is only wrong for you. We know it's wrong for you because you feel very convicted that it is something you should avoid; and when you commit the sin you have a guilty conscience. But we know that it's not wrong for everyone because the Bible doesn't clearly state it. For example, it may be a sin for you to drink alcohol, even though it's not a sin for everyone. But your conscience tells you to avoid it.
2. Issues like alcohol are called matters of conscience. In other words, you are free to do it if you can do it with a clear conscience, but not if you have guilty conscience.
3. Conscience-judging is when you take a matter of conscience, such as alcohol, and you try to force it on everyone. You try to turn a personal sin into a universal sin. You tell other Christians who drink alcohol that they are living in sin and need to stop.
4. **Romans 14:4-5** "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. 5 One person judges one day to be more important than another day. Someone else judges every day to be the same. Let each one be fully convinced in his own mind."
5. Over the years Christians have said all kinds of things are sinful that are not explicitly in the Bible: playing cards, dancing, watching TV, shopping at Target, wearing a hat in church, etc. If those things are sinful to you, that's fine. But if you don't have verse that explicitly condemns these behaviors for everyone, then keep it to yourself.
6. Conscience-judging is very divisive and destructive to the church.

v. Unfair judgment.

1. This is when you hold unbelievers to the standards of believers.
2. **1 Corinthians 5:12-13 (NLT)** "12 It isn't my responsibility to judge outsiders, but it certainly is your responsibility to judge those inside the church who are sinning. 13 God will judge those on the outside; but as the Scriptures say, "You must remove the evil person from among you."

3. In a previous letter, Paul told the Corinthians not to associate with people are living in sexual sin. But then he clarifies. He says, “I wasn’t saying don’t hang around unbelievers, but believers who refuse to repent.” Then he says in verse 12, “It’s not my responsibility to judge outsiders. God will judge them. But it is our responsibility to judge insiders – fellow Christians.” And he goes so far as to say that if there is a Christian living in gross, unrepentant sin, then remove them from the church!
4. In my family we have rules for our kids to follow. I’m not going to confront your kids about breaking our family rules because they’re not in my family.
5. As Christians, we have family rules. They are God’s commands. We have a family rulebook. It’s called the Bible. If the Bible clearly says don’t do something, then we avoid it. If we break one of God’s rules, it’s called sin. And the Bible tells us when a member of the family breaks one of God’s rules, we need to say something. We need to restore them if they are willing to repent, or remove them if not.
6. But when it comes to nonbelievers, it is not our job to condemn them. It isn’t our job to change them. Our job is to introduce them to the God who loves them and let Him change them, just as He transformed us.
7. At Church Acadiana, nonbelievers are welcome. We want them here. And we don’t expect them to act like believers. We expect them to act like nonbelievers.

vi. Superficial judgment.

1. **John 7:24** “Stop judging according to outward appearances; rather judge according to righteous judgment.”
2. Notice that Jesus didn’t say “Don’t judge,” but instead commands us to judge. But He tells us that we need to judge righteously, and that means don’t judge by outward appearance. Don’t judge superficially.
3. What is superficial judgment? Superficial judgment is judging by hearsay, or from a distance, or from one encounter, or by merely the way things look on the outside.
4. Christians do this all the time. We see a Christian driving an expensive car and we say, “I can’t believe they waste their money like that.” You have no idea how much they do for the kingdom of God with their wealth. Or we see a husband and wife at a restaurant and they are both looking at their mobile phones so we say, “They have a terrible relationship.” You don’t know that. You have no idea why they are looking at their phones. We judge superficially when we judge

someone by their appearance, or by their income, or by their job, or by education, or by their race.

5. So, it's clear that Jesus isn't saying to never judge. He is saying never judge unrighteously. Avoid hypocritical judgment, unloving judgment, motive judgment, conscience-judgment, unfair judgment, and superficial judgment.
6. As you can see, there are a lot of ways to judge unrighteously. It's easy to judge unrighteously. That's why we need to be very careful about judging others. It's hard to do it in a way that pleases God.

VI. WHAT DOES THE WARNING MEAN?

1. If you go back to our passage, there is a warning.
2. **Matthew 7:1-2** "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. There is an incorrect and a correct interpretation of this warning:
 - i. "If you criticize and condemn others, they are more likely to criticize and condemn you." That is true, but I don't think that's the point that Jesus is making.
 - ii. "If you judge sinfully, God will hold you accountable. And the more harshly you judge others, the more harshly God will deal you." In other words, God will discipline you for sinfully judging others. It's serious, and He's not going to let it slide. He wants you to repent and to grow more Christlike. But there's more. The more judgmental you are, the harder God is going to be on you. The truth is that we all sin all the time, and God has every right to punish us, and to do so harshly. And even though His natural inclination is to be patient, and kind, and compassionate, and merciful with us, the more judgmental we are toward others, the harsher God will discipline us.
4. This is more motivation to avoid being judgmental, constantly criticizing and condemning others for every little thing. Remember this warning.

VII. HOW TO RESPOND

1. So, how should we respond when someone says this. First, you need to understand why they say it. It's a bull-tactic. They want to shut you up and make you look bad for your beliefs. "How dare you speak against my pet sin? Don't judge lest you be judged." It's essentially calling you a phony, a hypocrite. "You say you're a Christian, but you don't even follow Christ's commands." How should you respond?
2. First, whatever you say, say it with gentleness and respect (1 Pt 3:15-16). Remember that the goal is to win the person, not the argument. You may have a great response, a mic-drop moment, but if you humiliate or insult the other person, you have missed the point. We want to have a good response, but we want to speak the truth in love (Eph 4:15). Hopefully we can move the other person a little closer to Christ.

3. There are a couple of ways to respond to this.
 - i. **Defensively.** You can defend yourself by saying, “I’m not judging, I’m just telling you what the Bible says.”
 1. When you say that homosexuality is a sin, you’re not making that up. You’re not saying that because you hate gay people. You believe that because that’s what the Bible says. You didn’t write the law; you’re just stating the law. You’re not judging, you’re just agreeing with the judge.
 2. It’s important to know that as a Christian it is never wrong to agree with God. In fact, you must agree with God. If someone asks you if you think it’s a sin to have pre-marital sex and you say yes, you are not being judgmental, you are being a Christian. You are agreeing with God, and that’s what Christ-followers are supposed to do. You’re not judging; God has already decided the matter, and you’re just agreeing with Him, or stating His judgment.
 - ii. **Offensively.** Sometimes the best way to respond to an objection to Christianity is to go on the offensive by asking a thought-provoking question. When someone says, “Don’t judge,” you can ask them. “Is rape morally wrong?” Of course they’ll answer yes. Then ask, “Who are you to judge?” Once they realize that they are guilty of doing the very thing they accuse you of doing, you can say, “We all make judgments. The only thing that matters is if your judgment is correct.”

VIII. CONCLUSION

1. Nonbelievers get so upset when Christians call out sin. But to be honest, nonbelievers should be worried about being judged by Christians. You should be worried about being judged by God. One day there will be a final judgment, a day of judgment, when everyone will be judged. And on that day God will want to know what you did with Jesus Christ? What have you done with Jesus Christ? Did you repent of your sins and follow Him? Or did you reject Him. Did you accept Him as Your Lord and Savior, or did you ignore Him? The Bible says that if you trust in Christ as Your Lord and Savior, God will not condemn you on judgment day; your sins will be forgiven and you will be allowed into heaven. But if you reject Christ, on judgment day you will be condemned, and you will be cast into hell. God loves you and wants to save you. The choice is yours. Will you turn to Jesus today?