

## "Judge Not, That Ye Be Not Judged" - Part 1

The title of this article comes from Matthew 7:1. How many times have you heard people quote this verse or make reference to it regarding the actions or lifestyles of others? A person, though personally expressing disagreement with homosexuality, says of those who engage in the perversion, "It's not our place to judge them." Another person, referencing those who practice and teach religious false doctrine, encourages acceptance of everyone by saying, "As long as their hearts are right, we shouldn't judge them."

When Jesus said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged," did He mean that we can't make any judgments at all? Did He mean that everything in life is subjective and therefore we have no right to say something someone does is wrong? Consider for a moment the consequences of this view. If we can't make any judgments at all, then how can we hope to have any semblance of order or system of law in our world? I suppose I could here give an example of a judge trying a criminal and the judge saying, "I have no right to tell you that you're wrong so I'm letting you go." The only trouble with this illustration is that if we are not allowed to make judgments, then there would be no trial, no judge and, for that matter, no criminal because it would not be our place to judge that person's actions as being criminal. There would be no laws because laws indicate a standard of right and wrong. We must make judgments or else our society becomes lawless and completely out of control.

"But you're missing the point," someone objects. "This is not about making day to day judgments. It's about making eternal judgments. We don't have the right to tell someone that they will be lost because of their actions." Let's go back to our judge and criminal illustration. Most everyone would agree that we need earthly laws. When one breaks the law, he/she is brought before a judge. The judge hears the case and then announces the guilt or innocence of the defendant. If the judge says the person is guilty, upon what basis does the judge make that decision? Is he himself saying, "I have heard the evidence and I feel in my heart that this person should be punished"? If that's what he's saying, then our system of law has as many standards as it does judges, as each judge could determine for himself or herself what is right and what is wrong. Doesn't the judge instead say, "I have heard the evidence, and based on the law that is on the books, this person should be punished"? Yes, this is what the judge says and in so saying, he himself does not make the judgment but instead pronounces the judgment that has already been put in place by the laws of the land. Do you see where this is headed? While it's true that you and I will not make eternal judgments on others (Matthew 25:31-46), we do have the inspired standard from the One who WILL make these judgments. By warning others of the dangers of their sinful ways, we are doing no more than telling them what God has already said. Is that judging? Yes. Is that our judgment that we're pronouncing? No, it is God's judgment.

Here's a good example. Jesus said in John 8:24, "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." Those who reject Christ will lose their souls in eternity. That's a fact (see also Acts 4:12; II Thessalonians 1:7-9). So if I teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a Moslem, Buddhist, Jew or any other adherent to a doctrine that rejects Jesus as the Messiah, I am going to teach them the entire truth and let them know that rejecting Jesus as Christ will lead to eternal damnation. Is this true because I said so, because I made a judgment? No, it's true because God said so. It is His judgment. I am merely teaching what God has said. Of course, I must teach this truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), but I must not back down from teaching it (Acts 20:27).

"Judge not, that ye be not judged" does not have the meaning that so many today assign to it. What does it mean? The answer will be in part two of this article.

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