

# Unraveling The Biblical Principle Judge Not



This study is about a subject that can be often misinterpreted, leading to misinformation ultimately resulting in a false understanding of the subject.

Have you ever heard the phrase, "you can't judge me" or "Only God can judge me?"

The Bible talks a lot about judging all throughout scripture from the Old Testament to the New.

Before we investigate the text, let's lay a foundation by doing a little history of judging and judgement from the Old Testament. Scripture makes it very clear that there is one supreme Judge of all- The Lord God- and that He alone has the authority to determine right and wrong, good and evil. Let's



• **Psa. 7:11- God is a righteous judge, and God is angry with the wicked every day**

• **Psa. 9:8- He shall judge the world in righteousness, and He shall administer judgements for the people in uprightness.**

• **Psa. 50:6- Let the heavens declare His righteousness, for God himself is Judge. Selah**

look at a few Old Testament passages that attest to the truth of God as Judge:

The Old Testament is full of verses that establish God as the ultimate Judge. When we come to the New Testament, we find that the Father has committed all authority and judgement to the Son.

• John 5:22- "For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgements to the Son."

• John 12:46-48 "I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness. And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him- the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.

• Acts 17:31- Because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.

We live in a world that increasingly tries to promote an agenda of false tolerance but actually becomes intolerant of Christian absolutes.

Christian absolutes are absolute truths based on what the Bible teaches. An example is that anything the Bible categorizes as a sin, is absolutely a sin.

By contrast, the overall message of the current culture is, "There are no absolutes. Think what you want, say what you want, do what you want." The philosophy of the multitudes seems to be that the only absolute is one's own personal values, which means, "Do as you please." In fact, this is a luciferian doctrine made popular by a man named Aleister Crowley, which has its origins in Eden with a serpent. (Gen. 3:1-5) The result of this is a serious inability to know right from wrong. Here's how the Bible puts it:

***Isaiah 5:20*** Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.

In opposition to these twisted values, the Bible teaches that right and wrong, good and evil, are absolutes that are defined by God, not our opinions. He has placed in the human heart a recognition of these

absolutes- the conscience- that tells us right from wrong. When a person travels so far in disobedience, destruction soon follows.

Even though God has given us Christian absolutes, (the knowledge of right and wrong), there are still many today that believe that they can choose right and wrong based on their opinion. Basically saying that what is right and wrong is determined by the individual and not by a power greater than themselves. Before we go further, let's look at some text that are often mishandled without deeper study...

James 4:12 There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. **Who are you to judge another?**

Matthew 7:1-5 **"Judge not, that you be not judged.** 2 For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. 3 And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? 5 Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

We'll be unpacking these verses a bit so that we can get some clarity. The passage in James 4 is a great example of culture taking a Bible Scripture and disregarding

the context to support a narrative. First and foremost, if we start at the beginning of the book of James, we find that it's written to address common issues faced by the early believers, (as well as us today). He covers everything from enduring trials and troubles, to taming our tongue, to prideful boasting.

That's actually the context of James 4:12. In the verses previous to this, he has corrected the Body of Believers about being prideful and contentious with each other. He criticizes their motives and their means and admonishes them to be humble. In verse 11, right before he says this about judging another, he condemns speaking evil of each other, as in gossiping and backbiting and political maneuvering. The context has nothing to do with calling out sin and everything to do with exposing hypocrisy.



In similar fashion, the back story of Matt. 7:1-5 is that the Pharisees and some law teachers from Jerusalem came to investigate Christ and His followers. They critically observed and continuously tried to judge and condemn the actions of Christ and His followers based on their own traditions and opinions, NOT God's Word.

Without reading any of the other verses in Matthew 7, it's easy to create a misinformed view of what's being taught by Christ. But let's move from that famous verse 7:1 "Judge not, lest ye be judged" and focus our attention just 4 more verses further to verse 5...

### Matthew 7:5

Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, **and then** you will see clearly to **remove the speck from your brother's eye.**




What does it mean to have a plank in your eye? First, having anything in your eye is going to cause blurred vision and even blindness depending on the severity. So, a plank in our eyes would mean that we ourselves are

blind due to our own sinfulness, we have blurred vision due to our own lack of knowledge on what is right and wrong. But Christ doesn't stop there. He goes on to tell us to remove the plank first, **THEN** we can see clearly so that we can remove the speck from our brother's eye. He doesn't say to ignore the speck. He doesn't tell us to leave it alone. He still wants us to help our brother or sister to see clearly.

Christ is warning believers against making judgments in a hypocritical or condemning manner. That type of judging is a characteristic often associated with the Pharisees during the ministry of Jesus. Many people who quote "judge not" from Matthew 7:1 fail to notice the command to remove the speck in Matthew 7:5.

The point Christ emphasizes here is to judge yourself first before you make judgments about others. To correct your own sin struggles before trying to correct others. That, if we use hypocritical judgments in dealing with others, we will be judged by our own hypocrisy when the time comes. An example would be if I struggled with alcohol, but I judged you because of your energy drink habit. That would make me a plank-eyed hypocrite. We all need the planks and specks removed from our eyes so that we can see clearly. Why do we need to see so clearly? Well, in the very same chapter as "Judge Not", Christ tells us to beware of wolves in sheep's clothing...

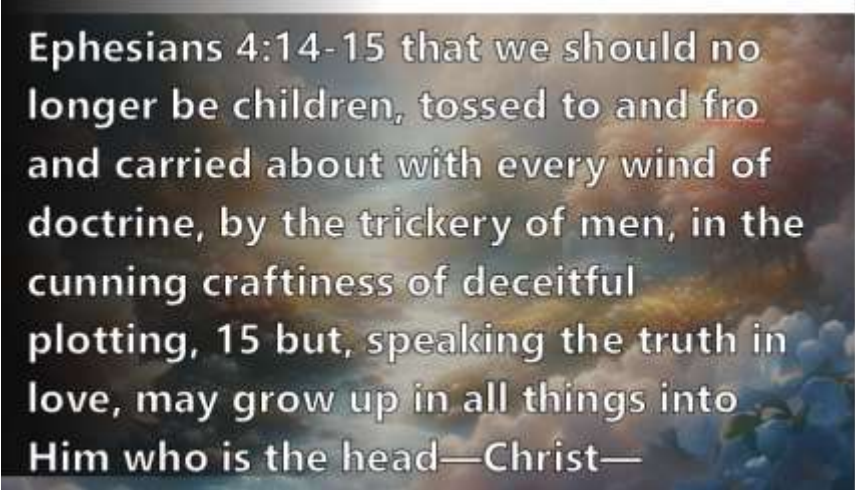


**Matthew 7:15-16** "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?"

He said we will know them by their fruits. How can we know good fruits if we aren't allowed to inspect them? How can we beware of false prophets if we can't judge them by God's Word?

As Christians, our first priority is to focus on our own repentance of sin, before looking at other's struggles. Sanctification is a lifelong process of being transformed every day into the image of Christ. Without this, we have no place in helping another brother or sister. What Christ is teaching in Matt. 7, is that if we ourselves are not personally repenting of our sins, we are in no place to tell others how sinful they are acting, but the Bible does tell us to preach the gospel- and part of the gospel message is that people are sinners in need of salvation. The Bible does tell us to beware of wolves in sheep's clothing and to test the fruit, (character) of others, and the only way to accomplish that is to hold ourselves and others to the standard of God's Word.

What most of the world calls “judging” is actually accountability. As Christians, we must be willing to not only be accountable ourselves, but to also hold others accountable. Do we really have love for another if we recognize evil and say nothing? Absolutely not! We are called to minister the truth in love and recognize the lies of the enemy. Paul explained the need for truth and the divisive nature of lies in the following passage...



**Ephesians 4:14-15 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—**

Some may take offense and say that as believers, we should focus on loving others and not be divisive. We are, however, bringing division if we don't correct error.

Are we working toward the “unity of the faith”, or are we compromising God's Word by allowing the world's “wisdom” to creep into our midst? Remember, as believers we are all part of “one faith”. Are we being loving if we allow our fellow brethren to remain in error and even deceive others? Of course not. Loving others requires that we graciously correct them when they fall into error.

We must establish our foundation in the truth of God's Word and not our own philosophies. We must make God the authority over our life. Having the right foundation will help us to know the difference between truth and lies as well as right and wrong.

As we conclude, here are a few scriptures to help us understand that righteous judgment is motivated by love and manifests as correction, while self-righteous judgement is motivated by pride and manifests as condemnation...

**1 Corinthians 1:10** Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in **the same judgment.**

**2 Timothy 2:25** in humility **correcting those who are in opposition,** if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth,

**2 Timothy 3:16** All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, **for correction,** for instruction in righteousness,

**John 7:24** Do not judge according to appearance, but **judge with righteous judgment.**

That last verse in John 7 is a direct quote from Christ Himself. He's not contradicting His words in Matt 7, He's making the distinction between the hypocritical, self-righteous judgment of Matt 7 and righteous judgment. Hopefully this study has encouraged us not to look at correction as a negative thing but instead, to see that Godly correction is born from love because it cleans our eyes so we can help others to see clearly for themselves. AMEN.