

Judge not.... Lest you **be** judged...

I have an unproven suspicion, that this verse, is the most often quoted bible verse by non-Christians, back to Christians.... It seems that whenever the church or individual Christians have anything at all to say about personal behaviour, or moral standards, or social issues that can impact on an individual, or what they perceive as their 'rights',... usually, it'll be met with the words, "Doesn't the bible tell you not to judge?" .....

Have you come across that one????

They seem to think that judgment is their own, personal prerogative, and nobody else has the right to judge them..... Well, they're sort of **right**, because the Bible does tell **us**, not to judge non-Christians – **not** because they're not subject to judgment, but because judgment is God's domain... **They will be judged** – every one of us will be judged.... And every one of us, if we're judged on our own merits, will be found guilty... That is, unless that guilt is taken away by Jesus Christ.....

But, if we're told not to judge, does that mean we're not to be discerning?

Does that mean we're not to correct our Christian brother or sister, and lead them into deeper righteousness?

Does that mean we accept all things, and adopt all practices for ourselves?

Well, no – of course not....

Paul, when he was writing to the Christian church at Corinth, said this:

1 Corinthians 5:9 I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—<sup>10</sup> not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world.<sup>11</sup> But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.

<sup>12</sup> What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside?<sup>13</sup> God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked man from among you."

The truth of the matter is, on this planet, there are 2 kinds of people. There are people of this world, and there are people called **out** of this world, and into the glorious presence of God....

When it comes to judgmentalism, people of this world are easy targets (of course). All we have to do, is look at the world and see its moral decay and depravity of the human condition... We live in a world that seems to delight in new ways of doing evil... We live in a world that is coming out of an era of "Christendom", where Christian morals and ethics **were** the norm of society, but we're coming out of that, and all kinds of **perversions** are becoming normal. You can identify that, and it's **right** to identify that. But let us **not** be judgmental about it...

You see, as a Christian, you are **not** made righteous by righteous living (and nor is anybody else).... Nor are you made righteous by judging the **unrighteous**. You are made righteous by the blood of Jesus Christ. You are made holy by the saving grace of God. God has made you worthy, to come into His glorious presence... That's what the gospel is. At one time you were cut off from God. But now, you've been brought into His presence – isn't that good news???? (you can say "Praise God", you know.)

Now, if God has done that for you and I, let us never, ever, pretend for a minute, that we had any part in making ourselves righteous. Let us never ever, forget, the **mercy** that God has shown us. And let us never ever take our Lord for granted.

So, if God has brought us into His glorious presence – if God has drawn us into intimate relationship with Him, don't you just know, that if we're living with the Holy Spirit in our hearts (that close to God, He's inside of us), don't you just know, He wants us to live holy lives? Don't you just know???? Yeah????

Likewise, if God has shown **us** mercy, without yet judging **us**, should **we** not also **show** mercy? You see, **we** have a reason, to live holy lives. We have been saved from sin, to put on holiness, and to live lives of righteousness.... We **have** that reason...

People of the world, have **no** such reason.... So don't judge them. Show mercy.

I'm going to make 4 points about this:

- ❖ Don't be judgmental...
- ❖ Don't be hypocritical
- ❖ Do be transformed.
- ❖ Do be correctional

Firstly, Don't be Judgmental:

Do you know the difference between judging, and being judgmental? To be judging, is to decide and know, what is right and wrong. And that,... God expects us to do. It is a critical, daily task, for every Christian – to judge what is right and what is wrong.

But to be judgmental, is to drill down on somebody else, “You're living in sin – you're going to go to hell.”....

So, don't be judgmental. God has shown **us** mercy – let **us** also show mercy. We are not (at this stage) in a position to judge the world. God will do that... So don't be judgmental. Don't pick on the easy targets and say “Oh, look at those people... Living like that... Goodness me... I won't have anything to do with them...”

Remember, Jesus used to hang out with sinners – He said, “It's the sick who need a doctor.” And if we Christians so judge people, that we won't associate with them, ... who's going to tell them about Jesus? So don't be judgmental.

Secondly, don't be hypocritical:

If there's one thing, that will put someone off Christianity, quicker than anything else – it's hypocrisy. Does everyone

know what a hypocrite is? It's somebody who tells someone else not to do something, when they do it themselves.

*After a college professor gave a long lecture, he concluded, "And so you can see that there are no absolutes. Are there any questions?"*

*One student raised his hand and asked, "Are you sure?"*

*"I am absolutely sure!" answered the professor.<sup>i</sup>*

But you've probably heard of some well known hypocrites in the Christian church:

- ❖ *Ted Haggard was a well known leader of an evangelical movement in the US, that is, until it was revealed that he was using male prostitutes.*
- ❖ *Jimmy Swaggart attacked other televangelists for their infidelity, until it was revealed that he, himself, was paying prostitutes for sex.*
- ❖ *A know a retired pastor of a church, that I once used to attend, has been arrested for accessing kiddie porn....*

That's hypocrisy, and the world hates it, and God hates it.....

*I don't like to get political, but the recent events in Federal politics, reek of hypocrisy... They elect as our Prime Minister, a man they despise and cannot work with, simply so they have a better chance of being re-elected.... Hypocrisy (They don't want him, but you have to have him).*

Jesus used to chastise the Pharisees for their hypocrisy – He hated it...

And to his disciples, Jesus said,

**7** "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. <sup>2</sup> For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

<sup>3</sup> "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? <sup>4</sup> How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? <sup>5</sup> You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

So don't be a hypocrite. Do something about it and get yourself right.

And so the third point is "Be Transformed".

You know, sometimes it's easier to see faults in others, than it is to see it in yourself... *The pot calls the kettle "black"*... And I guess the lesson for me is, "If I see a fault in somebody else, well that's an opportunity for me to analyse myself.... Do I do that? Am I like that?" So, be transformed. God has called us out of worldliness and into His holiness, and that includes holy living.

And the 4<sup>th</sup> point, is be correctional.

There have been times, when I have been blessed by Christian brothers, and probably more often, my wife, who have loved me enough, to come to me and say, "Michael, I have seen such and such in your life, and you need to repent of that."

It is, sometimes a hard thing to receive, but it is a real blessing, to have somebody gently, out of love, come to you and help you to repent of something you are unaware of.

Jesus **didn't** say "If you see a speck in someone's eye, leave it there to blind them".... He said, "If you see a speck in your brother's eye, get it out,... but get yourself right first"... Get the plank out of your **own** eye, and **then** help your Christian brother (or sister) get the speck out of theirs...

Don't do it judgmentally – do it lovingly and gently...

So,

1. Don't be judgmental...
2. Don't be hypocritical
3. Do be transformed.
4. Do be correctional

OK... Now, at this point, Jesus almost seems to shift to a completely different, and obscure saying: <sup>6</sup> "Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces."

*Just this week (on Monday), I was working with a different crew to what I've ever worked with before, and as I normally do, when I'm waiting for when water is needed, I usually park somewhere near the traffic control folk, so I can have a yarn*

*with them. Anyway, I went up to this young fella I'd never met before, and introduced myself. And he said, "Oh, finally you've come over to talk to me..."*

*And I said, "Sorry about that. I was reading something and needed to get to the end of what I was reading, so I wouldn't lose my place, otherwise I would have come over sooner".*

*And he said, "Oh, what were you reading?"*

*"I was reading the Bible".*

*"Ohh. So you're a bible person hey???"*

*And I thought "Wow. This is an opportunity to have a bit of a God talk..."*

*"Yeah, well I'm a Christian. What about you? You got a faith?"*

*And he said "I'm a Wicca".*

*And I'm a bit hard of hearin.... "What did you say" (You see, I thought he said "I'm wicked")*

*"I'm a Wicca".*

*"You're wicked????"*

*"No No.. I'm a Wicca!"*

*"Ahh. Wicca." And I thought "Well, you are wicked aren't you?"*

*If you've never heard of "Wicca", it's a modern form of witchcraft, involving the practice of Magic. And my understanding of it was, it includes a lot of mother-earth type worship. But looking it up, they worship "a triple-goddess, associated with the Moon and stars and fate, and a horned god associated with forests and animals and the realm beyond death"<sup>ii</sup>".*

*Real satanic, occult sort of stuff...*

*But I wasn't perturbed, because the Holy Spirit can take a Satanist out of darkness and into light. So I endeavoured to continue the conversation, and hopefully lead this man to Christ.*

*He told me he used to be part of the Seventh Day Adventist, but they wouldn't answer his questions, and he wouldn't tolerate that because he was (and he named some star sign of astrology). And living with his father, who was a (and he named another star sign), he's had to learn to be assertive and strong, and no-one pushes him around..*

*Anyway, once again, because I'm a bit hard of hearing, I missed the 2 star signs he said, and I asked him to repeat them. And anyway, at the end of that he said, "Don't you know what star signs are?"*

*And I said "I'm aware of them, but I worship the God who controls the stars – the stars don't control me."*

*But as I talked with him, I very quickly realised that this man was so full of himself and his own importance, and his own opinion. And the Holy Spirit said to me, "Michael, do not share your faith with this man. Don't tell him about the*

*mission of God in this place. Don't even tell him about the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ – he's not ready to hear it."*

And to me, that's a good example of what it means, when Jesus said, <sup>6</sup> **"Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.**

*He wasn't ready to hear the gospel. He had no interest – actually he was dead against Jesus. Who knows? One day, he might be at the end of himself, and be needing a start with Jesus, but that day was not Monday.*

*If I'd shared with him about the ministry of bush disciples, that would have just given him something to practice his dark arts against, so I said nothing. And there were times when Jesus would say nothing. When Jesus was brought before Herod, he said nothing.*

<sup>6</sup> **"Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.**

So, that's a good example of what it means, but I think there's also something very important about the context in which Jesus said it. I do **not** believe, that this was a simple a cut-off of the old topic of judging and correction, to have a one-verse,

two-sentence lesson, all on its own..... I actually think Jesus is saying to us something important here, about judging and correction.....

There are times, when it is not right to correct someone you think to be a Christian brother.

How do I say this sensitively? I learned this from experience.

Sometimes, into the church, will enter 'false teachers' – 'wolves in sheep's clothing'. They will have the appearance of being good, but their motivation is not right, and their fruit will not be right. Now, let me be clear, sometimes it is very difficult to identify a false teacher. The better the sheep's clothing – the more they look like a sheep, the more difficult they are to discern.

Some people will identify them far quicker than anybody else. It's not because they're more spiritual. Nor is it because they're less gullible. They identify false teachers, far quicker because of the Holy Spirit Gift of 'discernment'. They have a God-given ability, to discern sheep from wolves. They're like the maramma's (if you like). They're amongst the flock, but they can sniff out the wolf. They give warning, when someone who appears to be of God, is actually leading people astray.

And it's very important, that the Christian church, and particularly the leaders of a church, pay attention to what these people say. God gives spiritual gifts to the church, for a reason, and we don't all have the same gift. And the gift of discernment, is given to some people, to prevent the whole church, from being led astray.

At one stage in my ministry, a number of people (who I now know have the gift of discernment), came to me, and said to me (of a particular church leader) “I can't put my finger on it, but there's something not right about this man.”

A little later, I saw bad fruit. I saw things in this person's life and ministry, that needed to change, and so I thought “Well, he's supposed to be a Christian brother, I'll lovingly go and talk to him about these things.”... And I did. ...

And do you know what happened? He trampled under his feet, my “opinion”, and he turned and tore me to shreds.

And I realised, that if someone **is** actually, a false teacher – a wolf in sheep's clothing, they're not actually a Christian brother... And to try to correct such a person, was casting pearl before swine. ... So I no longer do that.

There is a time to correct, and a time to cut-off. And it's only the Holy Spirit who can give us the wisdom to know the difference, as we listen to those who do have the gift of discernment.

I think we'd better leave it at that. Don't be judgmental or hypocritical. Do be transformed and correctional.

Questions???

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<sup>i</sup> [www.kentcrockett.com](http://www.kentcrockett.com)

<sup>ii</sup> [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)