

Judging Others

The Right Way and The Wrong Way

“Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment.” John 7:24

There is a right way and a wrong way to judge people. The right way is inspired by God and results in blessings. The wrong way of judging releases a devilish curse that eventually ricochets back to strike the one who unleashed it. According to God’s Word, the moment we judge someone, a consequence is set into motion.

“For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it shall be measured to you.” Matthew 7:1-2

In this Scripture, Jesus is warning us that what we sow in judgment towards another, we will reap in our own lives. All human beings are subject to God’s universal laws. When a law enforcement officer isn’t looking, a person can break one of man’s laws and avoid getting caught. But God’s laws cannot be broken without consequences. For example, you cannot break God’s universal law of gravity. If you drop something, the law of gravity will automatically be enforced. God’s universal law of sowing and reaping works the same way. Whether you are an atheist, or a disciple of Christ, what you sow towards others you will reap. There are no exceptions.

“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.” Galatians 6:7

God is a generous father, and His law of sowing and reaping was designed to bring a multiplication of blessings to His children. God wants to take the blessings that you sow towards others, and multiply them back to you. Unfortunately, the devil plots against you to use God’s law of sowing and reaping in order to bring a multiplication of curses into your life. Satan knows that if he can get you to sow a negative judgment towards another, then you will be sentenced to reap that same judgment back, only multiplied. Yikes!!!

Our fallen nature loves to blame and to judge others. We think our judgments are harmless opinions, but the truth is, our judgments against others can end up determining our future. Some of the biggest battles in our lives may actually be a judgment that we sowed towards another, coming back to haunt us.

For example, I had a co-worker named Sue, who became bitterly offended when one of our mutual acquaintances got romantically involved with a married man. Sue arrogantly proclaimed that she herself would never be as immoral or stupid as to fall for a married man. Unfortunately, just a little over a year later, Sue found herself overwhelmingly attracted to her new boss, who just happened to be married. It seemed Sue set herself up to reap the bitter fruit of her judgment. I’m sorry to say, she did end up in an adulterous affair and of course it caused much pain to everyone involved. One terrible side effect of judging is that you end up doing precisely what you hate.

You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at **whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself**, because you who pass judgment do the same things. Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? Or do you show contempt for the riches of His kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?" Romans 2:1-4

It's important to note that Sue's disapproval of our mutual friend's adulterous actions was right. Adultery is a sin and should never be condoned. But, as the Scriptures state, it's the way in which we judge that determines what we reap. When we arrogantly judge others, we are submitting to a spirit of pride. Pride is very insidious, and always leads to trouble. The Bible warns that:

"Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall." Proverbs 16:18

If you're feeling uncomfortable because you already know that you have made judgments against others, don't worry. In the first section of this chapter, we are going to dig them up and repent to God for making them. Once you've taken a judgment to the cross, it will be destroyed for eternity, and can no longer come back to haunt you. Wrong judgments are the work of the devil and Jesus came to destroy all his works.

"The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil."
I John 3:8

THE RIGHT WAY TO JUDGE

Since most judgments are made in pride, it's a good idea to pray for humility in the midst of your conflicts with others. However, before you vow to never judge again, let's consider the topic of judging from God's perspective. When you become a born-again Christian, you become one part of a larger body, which is interconnected.

"So in Christ, we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." Romans 12:5

Just as the human body is made up of many interdependent parts, the larger body of Christ is made up of many interdependent Christians. Like it or not, we cannot fulfill our God-given destiny without interacting, supporting, receiving from, and giving to others in the body of Christ. For this reason, we are very dependent on the health and welfare of our Christian brothers and sisters. The Bible says that when one of us in the body of Christ is hurting, we are all affected.

"If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it." 1 Corinthians 12:26

If one of its organs is failing, it is in the best interest of the whole body to get that organ working again. That's why the Bible encourages us to support and strengthen one another:

“Admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, assist the weak; be patient with everybody.” 1 Thessalonians 5:14

It's God's heart that all Christians would look out for one another. So, it is in this context that God would call us to actively evaluate and judge the well-being of others. When we discern a problem with a brother or sister in Christ, we are not to bury our heads and hope for the best. Offering timely feedback and loving correction is all part of caring for the body of Christ. The fact that God designed us to need each other is proof that we must learn to be our brothers' keepers.

As for interacting with non-Christians, we know that, based on Jesus' own actions, God doesn't want us to ignore or tolerate evil. God hates sin, but on the other hand, He is seeking to reconcile all sinners unto Himself. In this chapter you will learn to strike that divine balance between having the answer and having the humility necessary to bring restoration to another. The Bible says:

“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and **gave us the ministry of reconciliation**: that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.” 2 Corinthians 5:18

In order to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness and justice in your sphere of influence, you must learn to evaluate the behavior of others using God's Word as a standard. Whether you are a parent disciplining your child, or you are a professional judge presiding over the highest courts in the land, God wants you to use your every day circumstances to practice judging according to His righteousness. After all, the Bible says:

“Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? 1 Corinthians 6:2

The second half of this chapter will cover God's way of judging, and break it down into practical steps. Then you'll have an opportunity to take an example from your own life and practice discovering God's heart on the matter, so you can judge it rightly. But first, I know you'll want to begin by renouncing your past wrong judgments and nailing them to the cross, where they can no longer harm you.

PRAYER

Father God, I renounce the ungodly judgments I have made against others; including judgments against people's nationalities, cultural practices, sexual habits, spiritual disciplines, political and religious affiliations, etc. Please continue to reveal harmful judgments I have made against others as I work through the following exercises. I desire to be a righteous judge. I ask for Your Spirit of understanding to teach me and guide me in the way I should go. I want to be used by You to bring restoration and salvation to many. Thank You for making this possible. In Jesus' precious name, I pray. Amen.

Judging Others – The Wrong Way

The longer you let judgments go unrepented and unconfessed, the larger and more powerful they become. Eventually, a small seed of judgment sown in childhood can grow into a very large bitter root. Bitter roots will continue to spread throughout your soul until they impinge upon your thoughts and attitudes, and end up defiling your health, your relationships, and even your physical appearance.

Have you ever known a bitter person? They're not pleasant to be around, are they? But that's what you'll become if you allow bitter root judgments to grow in your heart. What begins as a seemingly harmless opinion against one person ends up affecting the lives of many, as that root judgment continues to degrade your life, and the lives of those around you.

“Looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness (hatred or resentment) springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled.” Hebrew 12:15

Satan wants you filled with as many bitter roots as possible. This is why he will constantly tempt you to arrogantly judge others. He knows that the more bitter roots you develop, the more hateful you will become.

The Word of God says there is a direct correlation between how well you honor your parents, and how well life will go for you. Whether your parents were godly people or very dysfunctional, in the areas that you judged them, you will have a bitter root lodged in your soul. Even though you have grown up, and have moved away from home, your original judgment seeds will continue to grow and reap negative circumstances into your life until their roots are taken to the cross.

“Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged and that it may go well with you in the land which the LORD your God gives you.” Deuteronomy 5:16

Satan knows that if he can get you to hate and judge your parents, your life will not go well. Judgments against your parents can wind up damaging your life in many different ways. For example, you may have judged your mother for abandoning you when you were little, and now you find yourself in a bitter divorce, losing custody of your own kids. Or you may have judged your parents for not providing enough for you, and now you yourself are struggling financially, and you're unable to give your own kids what they're wanting or needing.

Bitter root judgments don't always cause you to act just like your parents. Sometimes bitter roots cause you to choose a spouse who acts like one of your parents. On one of *Elijah House's* inner healing videos, John and Paula Sanford talk about a man whose mother was overweight, and who dressed sloppily in comparison to the other mothers in his neighborhood. This man was very embarrassed by his mother's appearance when he was a child, and he judged her for it. At that time in his life, a bitter little seed was silently planted in his heart.

Later in life, this man married an attractive, smartly dressed woman. Unfortunately, early on in their marriage, his wife began battling a serious weight problem. This, in turn, caused her to stop putting effort into her appearance. Eventually, the man no longer felt attracted to his wife. Of course, this put tremendous stress on their marriage. When the couple decided to seek Christian counseling, this man discovered the bitter root judgment he had made against his mother. He repented to God for this judgment, and released it to the Lord. Miraculously, not long after that day, his wife started losing weight, and improving her whole appearance. Until you remove the root of your parental judgments, those same issues will keep cropping up in your other relationships.

Right now, you are going to let the Holy Spirit guide you to the areas in your childhood where you have sown bitter seeds of judgment against your parents or primary care givers. You may have a great relationship with your parents now, and I pray you do, but we still need to review any times when that might not have been the case. Many of the judgments you now make against others are simply off-shoots, growing out of the bitter roots you sowed as a child. Once you pull up the roots of your parental judgments, the off-shoots will no longer spring up.

So, find a quiet place and think back over your childhood. Think about the places you grew up. Start with the youngest age you can remember. Ask God to help you recall what was going on in your family, and what your different issues were at each age. Take extra time to focus on your teenage years, or any periods of rebellion or resentment.

Holy Spirit, show me the areas where I resented and held judgments against my father or primary father figure: (i.e.: not spending enough quality time with you, not spending enough money on you, his anger, rage, neglect, discipline, being told no, his intellect, his work, his ministry, his teasing, mocking, way of dressing, weight, character flaws, poverty, forcing religious beliefs on you, abandonment, drinking or drug problem.)

What judgments did I make against my father?

Are any of these same issues still present in my life, but showing up in different relationships? (i.e.: my spouse, child, friend, boss, pastor, etc?)

Now, let's move on to your mother.

Holy Spirit, show me the areas where I resented and held judgments against my mother, or primary mother figure: (i.e.: her lack of nurturing, her not spending enough quality time with you, not spending enough money on you, her anger, neglect, abandonment, discipline, spending habits, her intellect, her work, her talking too much, gossiping, way of dressing, weight, character flaws, abusive nature, drinking or drug problem, her forcing you to dress a certain way, or forcing religious beliefs on you.)

What specific judgments did I make against my mother?

Are any of these same issues still present in my life today, but showing up in different relationships? (i.e.: my spouse, child, friend, boss, pastor's wife, etc?)

Human beings are naturally drawn to those who are of like mind. When we see someone who is different, the devil loves to make us fearful; to cause us to sow seeds of judgment. In order to come out from under the curse of judgment and condemnation, it's important to recognize any wrong beliefs causing racism and bigotry in your heart.

Holy Spirit, what races of people, nationalities, or other religions have I feared, judged or resented?

What specifically did I judge them for?

The bad news is everyone will reap the judgment crops he sows. The good news is Jesus allowed the Father to lay every judgment and curse on Him at the cross, so there would be a place for our judgments to be consumed. When we renounce the judgments we've made about others, the bitter roots we had inside us are consumed by the cross. Hallelujah!

Prayer: Father God, I know that Your commandment is that we honor our mothers and fathers, so that our days on earth may be long, and life goes well with us. You also command us not to judge others. Lord, I confess I have made the following judgments against my father and mother, and others:

(Confess the judgments that you have uncovered.)

- **I forgive my parents for their part in modeling any wrong behavior to me.**
- **I break all agreements I formed with the kingdom of darkness, regarding my parents and others.**
- **I renounce all the ways I have dishonored my parents and others with my attitudes, words, and actions.**
- **Jesus, I release these bitter root judgments to You and I Thank You for consuming them for eternity at the cross.**
- **I receive Your forgiveness for having sown them.**
- **I decree that the law of judgment that I previously set in motion is now and forever broken over my life, in Jesus name, through His authority.**
- **I am free!**

Father God, I ask You to restore all the years that bitter root judgments have stolen from me. Help me to see others through Your eyes of grace, instead of condemnation. I pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Inheritance Alert – Restoration of Lost Blessings

When you come into agreement with the kingdom of darkness, you release devouring locusts into your life. The enemy's goal is to kill, steal and destroy you. But God says to his children:

“I will restore to you the years the locust have eaten.” Joel 2:25

One of the most exciting aspects of becoming a Christian is experiencing God's restoration power. When Jesus defeated the devil on the cross, God gained the legal right to storm into the devil's camp and take back the keys to death and hell. Jesus has the authority to restore to you lost years, finances, health, children, job opportunities, possessions, relationships, you name it. There is no limit to His restoration power. Restoration is a very thrilling portion of your inheritance in God.

'For I will restore you to health And I will heal you of your wounds,' declares the LORD.” Jeremiah 30:17

“And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself **restore** you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.” 1 Peter 5:10.

In fact, God says that when you return to Him, He will restore to you double whatever was stolen from you.

“Return to your fortress, O prisoners of hope; even now **I announce that I will restore twice as much to you.**” Zechariah 9:12

If you have suffered loss due to sowing bad judgments, just remember it's your inheritance as a Christian to claim restoration and double payback from the God of all grace.

Judging Others – God's way

In the Bible, we learn that God is very reluctant to judge. Time and again in the Old Testament He unleashed His judgment only as a last resort. God is merciful, and He wants His children to be filled with that same Spirit.

“Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, **slow to anger**, and abounding in loving kindness and truth; “ Exodus 34:6

“But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth.” Psalm 86:15

God's way of judging begins slowly and so must we. Longsuffering is one of the nine fruits of the Spirit. So, when you are led by God's Spirit, you will also be longsuffering. When we become aware of another person's sin, we need to check our own hearts first. If you find yourself in the same sin, then always begin with personal repentance.

Once you've cleared the log out of your own eye, God may then call you to pray for your brother's or sister's sin. God's way of judging can be broken down into three steps: personal repentance, prayer, and loving correction.

STEP ONE – PERSONAL REPENTANCE

Whenever we are noticing the sins of another, it could be for one of two reasons. Sometimes God is calling us to turn away from that same sin. Other times, the Lord is giving us discernment so He can use us to bring correction and freedom into another's life. There's a big difference between being led to repent and getting called into ministry. More often than not, God is calling us to turn away from something (repentance). This is why God's way of judging others begins by judging ourselves first. The Bible says:

“But if we **judged** ourselves, we would not come under judgment.”
1 Corinthians 11:31

Jesus warns us not to judge hypocritically. We have no right to confront someone with a sin that we ourselves are committing.

“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.” Matthew 7:5

I believe there is a correlation between what we see in others and what exists in ourselves.

"Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye?" Luke 6:41-42

I noticed that when another person's behavior really upsets me, I usually have that same issue in my own life. The Bible says:

“For at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.” Romans 2:1

After you have taken the log out of your own eye, you may actually stop noticing that sin in others. Then you'll know that God was using them to correct you. If however, you are still noticing that same behavior in another, than ask God how to pray for that brother or sister.

STEP TWO – PRAY FOR THEM

Many times the ministry that God is calling you into will never be public. In other words, you will merely pray for that person during your private prayer time, without them even knowing. You may be called to pray just once, or God may call you to lay down your life in prayer for a season, until that person gets a breakthrough.

STEP THREE – LOVINGLY CORRECT THEM

If after you pray for a person and there is no change in their behavior, God may then lead you to lovingly correct that person. Scripture says God is the only righteous judge. Therefore, you can only judge righteously if you are yielded to His Holy Spirit. Jesus said:

“By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but Him who sent me.” John 5:30

When Jesus was on the earth, He refused to judge anyone unless He was led by God the Father.

“But if I do judge, my decisions are right, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me.” John 8:16

Apart from God’s Spirit, we can accomplish nothing. But if God’s Spirit goes with us, He will fill our mouth with His words, and His wisdom, in His timing. Jesus talks about the timing of judgment and correction in a parable found in the book of Luke.

... "A man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and did not find any. And he said to the vineyard-keeper, 'Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground?' **But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it.** And if it bears fruit next year, fine; but if not, cut it down.”
Luke 13:6-9

God may need to do some digging and fertilizing to prepare the heart of the one you will confront. God alone knows people’s breaking points. If you confront someone before they are ready to turn from their sin, they can end up hardening their heart to correction, which only makes things worse. This is why it is so critical that you pray for God’s timing, and not step out ahead of Him. Remember, love is patient.

“Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word spoken in right circumstances.”
Proverbs 25:11

The whole goal of correcting anyone should always be to guide that person back to the cross. Jesus has done all the work necessary for any believer to be ushered immediately back into the blessings of grace, once they turn from sin. No matter what they’ve done, Jesus’ blood has already paid the price to set them free.

Once people can see the love God has for them, and the perfection of what He has done for them, they will want to run to Him. The Bible says it is the grace and goodness of God that brings a person to repentance. Sin and Jesus are in opposite directions. So, in order for a person to turn towards Jesus, they have to turn away from sin.

“Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that **God's kindness leads you toward repentance?**” Romans 2:4

If a person is ignorant that their behavior is sinful, then you will have to show them the

Scriptures that reveal God’s laws concerning their sin.

“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul.” Psalm 19:7

But never present the law without also presenting the grace of God that sets them free from sin.

“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ” Titus 2:11-13v

God wants all His children to know that forgiveness and reconciliation with Him is always at hand. You will never go wrong presenting His grace to those in trouble. The Bible says:

"Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted." Galatians 6:1

In summary, godly judgment begins as we humble ourselves in prayer, and allow God to remove all logs from our own eyes. Only after our own blinders are removed, can we help bring truth and recovery into someone else’s life. When we correct someone, we want to be led by God’s Spirit, move in God’s timing, and remember that it is the goodness of God that leads people to repentance.

This next section will give you a chance to take a situation in your life and judge it God’s way.

Name a person you feel tempted to judge right now.

What is the behavior or action you’re seeing?

Holy Spirit, where am I submitting to this same behavior?

Lord, I can now see that I have empowered my old sin nature and behaved in the following way:

I choose to turn from this behavior and return to You Lord, to be led by Your Spirit in me. Thank You, Jesus, for your forgiveness and grace.

If you still feel God wants to use you to bring restoration to another person, it's always a good idea to check your motivations first.

Holy Spirit, show me my true motives in wanting to be used to help restore (whomever you previously named). Am I defending myself, wanting the other person to feel bad, being manipulative for my own gain, or do I truly want to see this person set free and restored?

Once you know your motives are pure, than pray through the following list of questions.

- **Lord, what are the real issues in this person's life?**
- **What's right about this person's situation?**
- **What's wrong about their situation?**
- **How do You want me to pray for them?**
- **Do You want me to minister to them through prayer alone, or would You have me speak to them in person?**
- **Is now the right time?**
- **What Scriptures do You want me to share with them?**

PRAYER: Holy Spirit, if it is Your will for me to confront this person, please fill me with Your Spirit of humility and give me discernment as to the timing and scope of our discussion. Thank You, Lord, that love covers a multitude of sins, including offense. I pray that this person will feel loved and protected at all times during our discussion. In Jesus name, I pray. Amen

Construction Zone – SLOW DOWN

Pride is a silent thief because it blocks so many blessings and creates a barrier between you and God. The Holy Spirit is here now to dismantle any aspect of the wall between you and God that is made up of pride. Remember, it is when the devil's heart became proud that God threw him out of Heaven. God said of Satan:

“You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you... You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you... **Your heart became proud on account of your beauty and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor.** So I threw you to the earth. I made a spectacle of you before kings.” Ezekiel 28:12-17

Many times your own gifting can make you proud and cause you to judge others as less than yourself. What are some of the talents and blessings God has given you?

Have you ever judged someone, or been annoyed with them, for not being as talented or blessed as you in an area?

When we humble ourselves and repent for pride, we turn back to God and rejoin our hearts to His Humble Spirit.

“I dwell in the high and holy place with him who has a contrite and humble spirit.”
Isaiah 57:15

Prayer: I repent for submitting to pride and arrogantly judging others for not being as blessed as I am. Thank You, Lord, for consuming all pride on the cross so I could be set free from it. Please show me how to humbly enjoy and share the gifts You have given me with others. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Whenever you sense a wall between you and God, always check your heart for pride.

Praise the Lord

Let's praise the Lord for His amazing grace. Name three reasons why God's goodness makes you turn from sin and run to Jesus.

Private Practice

Every time you notice an ungodly behavior in someone else this week, ask God how you may be succumbing to that same behavior.