

Lesson Outline**I Principled Judgment**

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Judging and Discerning

Probably no other statement in Scripture has been cast in the teeth of Bible-believers more than “Judge Not!” Whenever an open Biblical stand against wrong-doing is taken, someone will probably berate us by saying it is not our place to judge, or that we have no right to judge – particularly when it comes to matters of morality and immorality (in which case a second out-of-context, and usually misquoted statement often follows: “he that is without sin, let him cast the first stone!”) We are accused of being “unloving.” We are told to keep our opinions to ourselves.

Yet the question, “Is it right to judge?” and if so, “When is it right to judge?” have perplexed numerous believers - many of whom have been browbeaten into silence when they have a duty to speak out.

The subject of judging and discerning is one of BALANCE. As with most teachings in the Word of God, there are extremes on both sides. Truth is found at the center (in the pages of Holy Scripture.) As always, CONTEXT is important. Those who (themselves judgmentally) quote just part of Matthew 7:1 and John 8:7 against Bible-believing Christians effectively make the Bible teach the exact opposite of what it does teach!

It is foolish to think that a Christian has no business exercising judgment over various matters or even other people – as the following examples demonstrate:

- Jesus commending Simon the Pharisee for judging. Read Luke 7:43 (from verse 36 for context) *³⁶And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. ³⁷And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, ³⁸And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. ³⁹Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner. ⁴⁰And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. ⁴¹There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. ⁴²And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? ⁴³Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. **And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.** ⁴⁴And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. ⁴⁵Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. ⁴⁶My head with oil thou didst not*

anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. ⁴⁷Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. ⁴⁸And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

- Paul passing judgment even though he was absent in body (not present). Read I Corinthians 5:3 *¹It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. ²And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. ³For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, ⁴In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁵To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*
- Paul challenged the members of the church at Corinth to judge him in “what I say “. Read I Corinthians 10:15 (from verse 12) *¹²Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. ¹³There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. ¹⁴Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. ¹⁵I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say.*
- According to Paul, he that is spiritual judges all things. Read I Corinthians 2:15 (from verse 12): *¹²Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. ¹³Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. ¹⁴But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. ¹⁶For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? but we have the mind of Christ.*

It is not so much a question of whether it is right to judge, but “What are we to judge?” and “How are we to judge?”

THESE ARE THE CONCERNS OF THIS STUDY.

I Principled Judgment

The verb “to judge” is translated from the Greek word ‘krino’ (from wench we get our word ‘critic,’ to criticize, crisis, etc.). Its meanings range in intensity and Biblical usage from “to discern” all the way to condemn – in other words, there are different forms of judging, and there is both a good and bad kind of judgment.

This fact is seen in John 7:24 where Jesus speaks of right and wrong judging in the Temple during the Feast of the Tabernacles: ²⁴*Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.*

The question then is: HOW CAN WE JUDGE RIGHTLY?

The answer is: **By observing the principles from Scripture discussed below:**

A. The Principle of the RIGHT MOTIVE

Read Matthew 7:1-5 ¹*Judge not, that ye be not judged. ²For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. ³And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? ⁴Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? ⁵**Thou hypocrite**, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.*

Although the so-called Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) was given specifically to Christ's disciples, (read Matthew 5:1-2 ¹*And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: ²And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying...):*

1. The context of this particular passage shows that Jesus was referring to the kind of judging which is **HYPOCRITICAL** in attitude (verse 5a).
 - a. This word was originally used in the ancient Greek theater of an actor who displayed the identity (role) by covering his face with a mask (hence the term “two-faced”).
 - b. Judging others in this manner only serves to condemn oneself.

Read Romans 2:1-3 ¹*Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. ²But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. ³And thinkest thou this,*

O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?

2. The contrast given is between the MOTE (a tiny speck of sawdust) and the BEAM (plank).
 - a. The judging Jesus referred to here is the nit-picking, negative, hypercritical, fault-seeking kind. It is the criticism of others without consideration of their feelings; it is pointing out all that is wrong while ignoring what is right. It is characterized by an attitude of superiority.
 - b. An excellent example can be seen in King David when he displayed great anger and indignation over a wealthy thief at the time he was covering up his own sins of adultery and murder. David was chastised by God through the prophet Nathan correspondingly. Read II Samuel 12:1-7 *¹And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. ²The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: ³But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. ⁴And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. ⁵And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: ⁶And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity. ⁷And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul;*
3. The conclusion (and command) from Matthew 7:1(a) is that we “judge not” with this wrong kind (hypocritical/superiority) attitude or motive.
 - a. Read how Aquila and Priscilla compassionately treated Apollos’ limited knowledge of Scripture / Jesus. Read Acts 18:24-26 *²⁴And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. ²⁵This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, **knowing only the baptism of John.** ⁶And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and*

Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

- b. Be a stepping stone – don't be a stumbling block. Read Romans 14:10-13 ¹⁰But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought [to treat as of no account; to disregard; to despise; to defy] thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. ¹¹For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. ¹²So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

B. The Principle of METE & MEASURE

Read Matthew 7:2 ²*For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.*

This is the principle of sowing and reaping in action.

Some Rabbis taught that God had two (2) measures with which He judged men:

- The measure of Justice
- The measure of Mercy

Perhaps the Lord was alluding to this commonly held belief.

Regardless:

1. We shall receive the same measure in quality (verse 2a)
 - From those superior to us (e.g. employers, magistrates, etc.)
 - From those we have influence over (children, students, etc.)
 - Ultimately God the Judge.
2. We shall receive the same measure in quantity (verse 2b)
 - If you “mete it out” you'd better be able to take it!

C. The Principle of SELF SEARCHING

Read Matthew 7:5 ⁵*Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.*

We should major on “fault fixing” rather than “fault finding.”

1. Take care of your own ‘beam’ first. (verse 5b)
2. Make sure you are able to see things clearly. (verse 5b)

3. When seeking to help a brother overtaken in a fault, **one should first consider oneself**.
Read Galatians 6:1-2 *1Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. 2Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*

D. The Principle of LIMITED INSIGHT

1. Judgment based solely on the **outward appearance** of people doesn't produce righteous judgment. Read John 7:24 *24Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.* [Jesus]
2. Read I Samuel 16:1-12 *1And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons. 2And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear it, he will kill me. And the LORD said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the LORD. 3And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will shew thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee. 4And Samuel did that which the LORD spake, and came to Bethlehem. **And the elders of the town trembled at his coming,** and said, Comest thou peaceably? 5And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the LORD: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice. 6And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD's anointed is before him. 7But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance [bearing; behavior; looks], or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: **for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.** 8Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this. 9Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this. 10Again, Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The LORD hath not chosen these. 11And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither. 12And he sent, and brought him in [David]. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he.*
 - a. Samuel based his judgment of Eliab as God's choice on his countenance and height.

- b. The absence of young David from such an auspicious occasion as a visit from the man of God (see verse 4) shows his father Jesse apparently judged David to be of lesser importance than his brothers.
- c. The attitude of David's eldest brother toward him is seen in I Samuel 17:28 *²⁸And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.*
- d. While David indeed possessed a striking countenance (read I Samuel 16:12 *¹²And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he.*), God was impressed with his **heart**. Read Acts 13:22 *²²And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave their testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.*
3. Read I Corinthians 4:1-5 *¹Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.²Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.³But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self.⁴For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. ⁵Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.*

According to verse 5b, **only the Lord can see the counsels (motives) of the heart.**

We can judge a man's words and deeds...

BUT

... we cannot (and must not) judge his heart or motives.

4. Read II Timothy 2:19b ¹⁹Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, **The Lord knoweth them that are his**. And, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

[Only] the Lord knoweth them that are his. We cannot really judge with absolute certainty whether a man is truly saved or not. For example:

- No one suspected Judas of being lost. Read: John 13:21-29 ²¹When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. ²²Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. ²³Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. ²⁴Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. ²⁵He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it? ²⁶Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. ²⁷And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. ²⁸Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. ²⁹For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor.
- No one would have thought Peter was saved. Read Matthew 26:69-74 ⁶⁹Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. ⁷⁰But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. ⁷¹And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. ⁷²And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.
- We can only make an assessment of a man's spiritual condition by looking at his FRUIT. Read Matthew 7:18-23 ¹⁸A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. ²⁰Wherefore **by their fruits ye shall know them**. **BUT NOTE:** ²¹Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. ²²Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? ²³And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. [... **No gaming the system! ...]**

E. The Principle of WISE DISCERNMENT

While the Lord Jesus Christ warned His disciples about being judgmental and hypocritical, He also taught them to exercise some common sense discernment in Matthew 7:6

This principle balances the first five (5) verses of Chapter 7:

Matthew 7:1-6 ¹*Judge not, that ye be not judged. ²For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. ³And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? ⁴Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? ⁵Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.*

⁶*Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.*

[An interpretation: non-judgmentalism can only go so far and that there are some who should be excluded (and judged).]

1. In Scripture, the dog is an unclean animal. Read Deuteronomy 23:18 ¹⁸*Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, or the price of a dog, into the house of the LORD thy God for any vow: for even both these are abomination unto the LORD thy God.*
Dogs are governed by their carnal appetites. Dogs are symbolic of false teachers (Isiah 56:10-11) and the unregenerate. (Rev 22:15)
2. Likewise, the swine are unclean, loving to wallow in the mire typifying the unregenerate professor. Read II Peter 2: 1,19-22 ¹*But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.*
²¹*For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. ²²But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.*
3. The Scripture teaches that we ought to exercise discernment as to a man's true spiritual condition. (Don't try and make a deacon out of a dog, or a preacher out of a pig!!) Also, read Proverbs 11:22 ²²*As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is*

without discretion. (Beauty is abused by those who have not discretion or modesty with it... applies to males also.

“If someone put a “ring of gold” in a pig’s nose, it wouldn’t be seen as being very pretty because the filth that most pigs live in, will, very quickly, make it be soiled beyond recognition. This is the way that God feels about a woman who is not discreet and doesn’t take the time to learn to act responsibly. No matter how pretty the woman is to look at, she will quickly lose that “loveliness” as disgust at her lack of integrity make themselves known.” Viewed at <http://proverbs-abiblestudy-ocmist.blogspot.com/2009/10/proverbs-11-22-women-without-discretion.html>

F. The Principle of ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY

All human judgment **MUST** be based on the Word of God.

1. Read Psalm 19:9 ⁹The fear [respect] of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

The judgments of the Lord are TRUE and RIGHTEOUS altogether.

2. Read Psalm 119:160 ¹⁶⁰Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.

Every one of God’s true and righteous judgments endure FOREVER.

3. Read Hebrews 5:14 ¹⁴But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

The consistent use of the Word of God will enable a believer to discern both Good and Evil.

4. Read I Corinthians 2:14-16 ¹⁴*But the natural man receiveth not the things of the **Spirit of God**: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. ¹⁶For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? but we have the mind of Christ.*

Summary of Principled Judgment

Right Motive	Mete and Measure	Self Searching
Limited Insight	Wise Discernment	God as Absolute Authority

II Patterned Judgment

If and when we do exercise judgment, we ought to judge as God does.

A. GOD IS the JUDGE:

1. God is the judge of ALL THE EARTH. Read Genesis 18:25 ²⁵*That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*
[Abraham to God.]

2. The judge of the quick (living) and the dead
 - a. Read Acts 10:42 ⁴²*And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.*

 - b. Read I Peter 4:5 (from verse 1 for context) ¹*Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; ²That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. ³For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: ⁴Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you: ⁵Who shall give account to him that is ready to **judge the quick and the dead.***

3. God is the judge of ALL. Read Hebrews 12:23 ²³*To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,*

GOD IS THE JUDGE

B. GOD'S JUDGMENTS ARE RIGHT and JUST:

1. Read Genesis 18:25c *Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* (entire verse above)
2. Read Psalm 9:8 (from verse 7) *7But the LORD shall endure for ever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment. 8And he shall judge the world in **righteousness**, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness.*
3. Read John 5:30 ***30I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.***
4. Read John 8:16 ***16And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.***
5. Read Romans 2:2 *1Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. 2But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. 3And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?*
6. Moreover (read about the sovereignty of God), read Job 38:1-6 *1Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, 2Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? 3Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. 4**Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.** 5Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? 6Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof;*

GOD'S JUDGMENTS ARE RIGHT and JUST.

III Permitted Judgment

There are some areas and matters in which we are allowed (even required) to exercise judgment. When doing so, we must follow the above mentioned principles of: Right Motive, Mete and Measure, Self Searching, Limited Insight, Wise Discernment, and God as Absolute Authority.

A. Judgment OF SELF

1. Read 1 Corinthians 11:20, 28-32 ²⁰When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper...
*²⁸But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.
²⁹For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. ³⁰For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. ³¹For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. ³²But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.*
 - a. We must judge ourselves before partaking in the Lord's Supper.
 - b. Failure to do so will have consequences.
 - c. Our prayer should be Search me, O God, and know my heart. (Read Psalm 139:23-24 ²³Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: ²⁴And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.
 - d. Our method should be to look into the glass (mirror). Read James 1:23-25 ²³For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: ²⁴For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. ²⁵But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.
2. Read 2 Corinthians 13:5 ⁵Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?
 - a. We are to examine our own selves to be sure we are "in the faith" (i.e. folding fast to sound doctrine). Also read:
 - Ephesians 4:5 ⁵One Lord, one faith, one baptism,
 - Titus 2:7 ⁷In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,

- b. We are to know our own selves, meaning we should continually be measuring our faith and practice against the WORD of GOD.

Also read Galatians 6:4a ***4But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.***

3. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:21 *21Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.*

We are instructed to PROVE [to establish the truth or genuineness of, as by evidence or argument] all things in order to hold fast to that which is good.

- This proving is done according to Acts 17:11 *11These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.*

B. Judgments BY SELF

1. Read 1 Corinthians 14:29 *29Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.* Prophets who speak (preach) should be judged. Since the completion of the New Testament in apostolic days, this practice is now done by listening to a preacher with an open Bible on one's lap!

2. Read 1 Corinthians 11:13-14 *13Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? 14Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?* [This passage does not have so much to do with hair but with common sense!] **Some judgments are made on the basis of common sense and natural observation.**

C. Judgments BY THE CHURCH

- Read 1 Corinthians 1:10 *10Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.* According to this passage, meaningful church unity is achieved when members are perfectly joined together in the same MIND and in the same JUDGMENT. This means that church members all need to be on the "same page" (Biblically).
- Read Philippians 1:9-10 *9And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; 10That ye may approve*

things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ. This passage teaches that real Christian LOVE will abound in KNOWLEDGE and in all JUDGMENT.

The Lord has given His churches authority to make Biblical judgments in manners pertaining to:

1. Discipline – Read 1 Corinthians 5 *¹It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. ²And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. ³For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, ⁴In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁵To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. ⁶Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? ⁷Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. ⁸Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. ⁹I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: ¹⁰Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. ¹¹But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. ¹²For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? ¹³But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.*
 - a. The sin of a certain person was commonly known (a public offense).
 - b. Paul (who was not a member) had judged already as far as what needed to be done.
 - c. The church was instructed to gather together.
 - d. The church had the power (authority) of the Lord Jesus Christ to act in this matter.
 - e. The Lord's churches have divine authority to judge "them that are within [the church]."
 - f. Churches are to "put away" from themselves sinning members and not to "keep company" with such people afterwards.
 - g. Read Matthew 18:17 (from verse 15) *¹⁵Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. ¹⁶But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be*

established. ¹⁷And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. According to this passage, the ultimate authority in Church disciplinary matters is the CHURCH.

NOTE: Unlike the “excommunication” practiced by the Roman Catholic Church and other cults, spiritual church discipline does NOT claim to invoke the loss of one’s salvation.

Read 1 Corinthians 5:5 *⁵To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.* This verse **makes clear** that the worst case scenario for an unrepentant sinning [and saved] church member is physical death (at Satan’s hand by God’s permission), “that the spirit be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”

From the church’s perspective, the act of exclusion removes a sinning member from the fellowship, privileges, and rights of church membership.

2. Disputes – Read 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 *¹Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law [prosecute, to institute legal proceedings, or bring suit] before the unjust, and not before the saints? ²Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? ³Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? ⁴If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church. ⁵I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? ⁶But brother goeth to law [prosecute] with brother, and that before the unbelievers. ⁷Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law [prosecute] one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? ⁸Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren.*

This passage deals with interpersonal strife between members of a church over matters NOT related to personal offenses (Matthew 18:15-17), heresy (Titus 3:10), or morality (1 Corinthians 5).

- a. The wrong course – church members going to law [prosecute, bring a legal suite] with other church members
- b. The right course – set them to judge who are the least esteemed in the church.
- c. The best course – it is better to take the “wrong” than allow dishonor to come upon the Lord and His church.

3. Deacons - Read 1 Timothy 3:10 *¹⁰And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.*

A deacon should first be proved. Read these passages for the qualifications of both bishops (elders and pastors) and deacons:

- 1 Timothy 3:1-12 *¹This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. ²A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; ³Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; ⁴One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; ⁵(For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) ⁶Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. ⁷Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. ⁸Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; ⁹Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. ¹⁰And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. ¹¹Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. ¹²Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.*

A deacon should first be proved (judged).

A study of the qualifications of both bishops (elders and pastors) and deacons (above) shows the need for an examination and close scrutiny (judgment) of any man being considered for a church office. Also read:

- Titus 1:5-9 *⁵For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: ⁶If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. ⁷**For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;** ⁸**But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;** ⁹Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.*
- 1 Timothy 5:22a *²²**Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.***

4. Deceivers

We are taught to judge men to determine their worthiness throughout scripture.

- a. Read Revelation 2:2e *²I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, **and hast found them liars:***

The church at Ephesus found false apostles.

- b. Read I John 4:1 *¹**Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.***

We are commanded to try (judge, put on trial, not just 'sample') the spirits as to whether they are of God.

- c. Read Isaiah 8:20 (from verse 18 for context) *¹⁸Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion. ¹⁹And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? ²⁰**To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.** ²¹And they shall pass through it, hardly bestead [placed or situated, often unfavorably or in difficulty] and hungry: and it shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward. ²²And they shall look unto the earth; and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness. [paranoia similar to many familiar and contemporary cults!]*

If a preacher or teacher speaks not according to God's Word it is because "there is no light in them."

- d. Read I Timothy 6:3-5 (from verse 1 for context) *¹Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. ²And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort. ³**If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; ⁴He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, ⁵Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.***

IV Prohibited Judgment

There are some areas and matters in which we ought NOT exercise any judgment at all.

A. OVER PERSONS

Read James 2:1-9 ¹My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. ²For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; ³And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: ⁴Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? ⁵Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? ⁶But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? ⁷Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called? ⁸If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: ⁹But if ye have respect to persons, **ye commit sin**, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.

1. We should never judge people on outward appearances (“love your neighbor as yourself” independent of outward appearances – verse 8).
2. Partiality makes us judges of [with] evil thoughts (verse 4).
3. God calls the respect of persons **SIN** (as opposed to their actions). [Don’t respect their outward appearance!] (verse 9)

B. OVER PREFERENCES

Preferences have to do with things **neither proscribed nor prescribed** in the Bible by precept or principle – areas of personal liberty and conscience. This subject is dealt with in:

Romans 14 *¹Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. ²For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. ³Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. ⁴Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. ⁵One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. ⁶He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. ⁷For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. ⁸For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. ⁹For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. ¹⁰But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. ¹¹For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. ¹²So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. ¹³Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. ¹⁴I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. ¹⁵But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. ¹⁶Let not then your good be evil spoken of: ¹⁷For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. ¹⁸For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. ¹⁹Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. ²⁰For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. ²¹It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any*

thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. ²²Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. ²³And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

I Corinthians 8 ¹Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. ²And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. ³But if any man love God, the same is known of him. ⁴As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. ⁵For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) ⁶But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. ⁷Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. ⁸But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. ⁹But take heed lest by any means this liberty of your's become a stumbling block to them that are weak. ¹⁰For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; ¹¹And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? ¹²But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. ¹³Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

1. A Sound Rule For Church Membership – Romans 14:1 *¹Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.*
 - a. Receive into membership those who are **weak** in the faith.
 - b. Don't receive those seeking to stir up doubtful (not-of-faith) Romans 14:23 *²³And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*

2. A Right Attitude Toward Other Members Holding Different Preferences

- a. Do not despise them. Romans 14:3a ³**Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.**
 - b. Do not judge them. Romans 14:3b – 14:4 ³Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; **and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.** ⁴**Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.**
 - c. Do not set them at nought [nothing]. Romans 14:10 ¹⁰*But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.*
 - d. Do not cause them to stumble. Romans 14:13b ¹³*Let us not therefore judge one another any more: **but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock** or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.*
 - e. Do not grieve them. Romans 14:15a ¹⁵**But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat,** now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.
 - f. Do not offend them. Romans 14:21 ²¹*It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.*
 - g. Do not wound them. I Corinthians 8:12 ¹²*But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.*
- 3. Preferences Outside The Scope Of Personal Judgment.**
- a. Diet – Romans 14:1 -14:3 ¹*Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.* ²*For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.* ³**Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.**
 - b. Days:

- (i) Romans 14:6 *⁶He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.*
- (ii) Colossians 2:16-17 *¹⁶Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: ¹⁷Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.*

4. The Right Approach For Every Church Member

- a. Live your life unto the Lord. Romans 14:6-8 *⁶He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. ⁷For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. ⁸For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.*
 - b. Follows those things which make for peace in the church. Romans 14:19 *¹⁹Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.*
 - c. Bear the infirmities of the weak. Romans 15:1a ***¹We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.***
 - d. Don't seek to please yourself. Romans **15:1b** (above)
 - e. Seek the wealth [best] of others. I Corinthians 10:24 *²⁴Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth.*
- Remember, when we wrongly judge our brothers and sisters in Christ, we are judging **the royal law**. Read:

- James 4:11-12 ¹¹Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. ¹²There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?
- James 2:8 ⁸If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:
- Remember, one day every one of us must give an account of ourselves to God. Read:
 - Romans 14:10c-12 ¹⁰*But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. ¹¹For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. ¹²So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.*
 - II Corinthians 5:10 ¹⁰*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*
 - I Corinthians 3:13-15 ¹³*Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. ¹⁴If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. ¹⁵If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.*
 - I Corinthians 4:5 ⁵*Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden*

things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.