

Understanding Judgment

Matt 7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged. Upon examining the context of the verse (v2-5), it speaks of condemning judgment, which is to say to judge others condemning them when the judging person does the same thing (this is actually condemning hypocrisy, not judging). There two parts here, guilt and punishment. Judging a punishment on someone is not for us, but only for God. If for a moment we accept that it is wrong to discern (judge), we will end up blind. You cannot discern any wrong because you “will be judging”. **Discernment is an obligation for every Christian.** We should examine and judge every thing we see or are exposed to, but **we are never to assign punishment on others.** Being sinners as others that do wrong, it is not our place to decide punishment (or if mercy is to be given).

The Existence of False Prophets

Matt 7:15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. How can we beware of (protect ourselves from) the false prophets if we do not investigate and discern what doctrine or practice is not biblical? In Mat 7:1 we are commanded to beware. The existence of false prophets is clearly in play like in **Acts 20:29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Matt 7:16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.** This fruit examination is every Christian's business, and only by it, can we follow God correctly, believe truth, and stay away from error.

John 7:24 Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment. In other words, if we read Mat 7:1 without the broader biblical context then you will get the wrong position on this, that all judging, examining, evaluating, or discerning really is bad. The truth is that we should judge according to the biblical guidelines and instructions! “Judging”

is to examine, and then **form opinions and conclusions about the actions of others.** Good yes follow, bad no do not imitate. Many places in Scripture God commands us to examine others and their doctrines and actions. In **1Cor 5:1-13** Paul in verse 3 “judged” a case, even though he wasn't physically present. He exhorted the Corinthians to “judge” for themselves (1Cor 5:12) in similar cases.

Criteria for Judging

Isa 8:20 To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. Criteria for correctly discerning here has to be Scripture. Nothing else can have authority and be communicated to us like Scripture. According to **Heb 5:14 But 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.** there is a requirement of successful experience in discerning over time that is necessary. There is no greater help or authority than the Scriptures themselves. To judge well is very important, and because of this **the person HAS TO KNOW THE BIBLE WELL** (understanding the principles, and going beyond just intellectual knowledge), and he has to have his “senses exercised” which **speaks of having experience in the ministry to understand how people are, what the ministry is in general, and the nature of those who would deceive us.** We should focus on discerning. W.E. Vine said that “discerning” means “discernment, clear discrimination, distinguishing, judging, as in 1Cor 12:10 discerning by the Holy Spirit.”

Denouncing False Prophets

Matt 3:7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? John the Baptist used strong language (without cussing) to accuse the false teachers of his day. **Matt 12:34 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things?... Jesus did the same calling them “hypocrites”, “blind guides of the blind”, “whitened sepulchers”, “serpents”, “generation of vipers”.** There

was no doubt about who he was talking about, nor what was his position about these false teachers. It was clear, direct, and energetic. **John 2:13...and Jesus... 14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: 15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; 16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.** Their was no doubt as to Jesus' opposition against them!

Denouncing Error

The major part of the epistles of the New Testament were written to correct doctrinal errors or to rebuke and exhort touching on conduct. To suppose that this is against what the Bible teaches is to misunderstand most of the NT. The Bible speaks very strongly in respect of what we are to do.

Try them: 1John 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Rev 2:2 I 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:

Mark and Avoid: Rom 16:17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

Rebuke: Titus 1:13 This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; Titus 1:9 Holding 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.

Have no Fellowship: Eph 5:11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

Separate from them: 2Thess 3:6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that

walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. **2Thess 3:14** And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, **note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.** **15** Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. **1Tim 6:3** 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; **4** He is proud, knowing nothing...**5... from such withdraw thyself.**

Avoid: **2Tim 3:5** Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: **from such turn away.** **7** Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Receive not: **2John 1:10** If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, **receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:** **11** For he that biddeth him God speed **is partaker of his evil deeds.**

Reject them: **Titus 3:10** A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition **reject;** **2Cor 11:4** For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.

Separate from them: **2Cor 6:17** Wherefore **come out from among them, and be ye separate,** saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

Naming Names

When we denounce error, some brethren counter, "Yes, denounce the error, but never name names of who are doing this. Just leave it anonymous, or just name groups or churches generally." Partial information is next to useless. Whether our "good" brethren are involved or false prophets, error in doctrine and conduct is always to be identified and rebuked. Implied in your not identifying error is your acceptance of that error by your silence.

Peter: Paul had no fear of publicly rebuking Peter and talking about it afterward. **Gal 2:11** But when Peter was come to Antioch, **I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.** **12** For before that certain came from James... **14** But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the

truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter... Peter, even being one of the 12 apostles, was not immune or exempt from public rebuke when he strayed from the truth in his conduct. Paul confronted, rebuked, and named him publicly in his rebuke. Later he commented on it again after all was set right, standing against what error Peter did still.

Demas: **2Tim 4:10** For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

Hymenaeus and Alexander: **1Tim 1:18** This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy,...that thou **by them mightest war a good warfare;** **19** Holding faith, and a good conscience; **which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:** **20** **Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander;** whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

2Tim 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. **16** But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. **17** And their word will eat as doth a canker: **of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus;** **18** Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

2Tim 4:14 **Alexander the coppersmith** did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: **15** Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words.

3John 1:9 I wrote unto the church: but **Diotrephes,** who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.

What we learn from this is that it is right to publicly denounce false doctrine and sinful conduct, (especially unrepentant conduct), and in the case of apostates (abandoning the faith) or those who hold or teach error without repenting, it is just and right to denounce them by denouncing their doctrine and naming them specifically.



Is it correct to Judge?

By David Cox

[ort05] v2 ©2013 www.coxtracts.com
You may reproduce for free distribution

Mat 7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.

There is a thinking process that prevails throughout some groups of Christians that attack others saying that it is incorrect for us to judge others. Their view is that it is sin to condemn other people, and that it is sin to reveal, or even talk about others sinful conduct. The idea is that we should leave this to God to deal with, and that we should say nothing nor mark those who propose and disseminate false doctrine.

This ignores the power of examples in our lives in a spiritual sense to influence us. See my tracts **Ch24 The Power of an Example** and **Ch16 The Example of the Man of God** both on www.coxtracts.com.

They carry this to the extent that we should not even mention the names of those false prophets and false teachers.

This is actually the exact argument of all false prophets, to not do anything to reveal their sinister workings. They are wanting to identify themselves as one of the faithful, but when obviously by doctrine or conduct they are not, they want to cover themselves from public revelation.

This tract is an adaptation of the English tract "Is it right to judge, to expose error, and to call names?" by E.L. Bynum <http://www.av1611.org/crock/judbynum.html>