




GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#151)
Forgiveness and rebuke/judging

A good teacher will review with his students what he has taught.



Sometimes summarizing it...
sometimes expanding on it...
rarely word-for-word identical.

- As we read about Jesus' ministry, we often find passages that are parallel in content, but spoken at different times.
 - The "Lord's Prayer" is an example (Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:1-4).

TODAY, we look at 2 passages about forgiveness and rebuke, which are parallel in content, but probably not a reference to the same "teaching event" (or combination of events).

- The first part of Luke 17 – a brief, but succinct, summary.
- Matthew 18 – an expanded description.

<p style="background-color: yellow; padding: 2px;">The brief summary, given in Luke 17:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17:1-2 – A warning about things that cause people to sin; a horrible punishment awaits those who cause it. 17:3a – Watch yourself. (A similar parable found in Luke 15:3-7.) <div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17:3b – How to restore someone who has wandered into sin. </div>	<p style="background-color: yellow; padding: 2px;">Expanded description in Matthew 18:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18:6-7 – A warning about things that cause people to sin; a horrible punishment awaits those who cause it. 18:8-9 – The importance of avoiding sin. 18:10-14 – The joy of restoring someone who has wandered astray (illustrated by the "lost sheep" parable). <div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18:15-17 – How to restore someone who has wandered into sin. </div>
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HOW TO RESTORE SOMEONE WHO HAS WANDERED INTO SIN.

<p style="background-color: yellow; padding: 2px;">As found in in Luke 17:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; margin-top: 5px;"> <p>"If your brother sins, rebuke him. If he repents, forgive him." Luke 17:3b (NET)</p> </div>	<p style="background-color: yellow; padding: 2px;">As found in Matthew 18:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; margin-top: 5px;"> <p>"If your brother sins, go and show him his fault when the two of you are alone. If he listens to you, you have regained your brother." Matthew 18:15 (NET)</p> </div>
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Matthew includes what to do if the person *doesn't* repent. ("Brother" refers to people who claim to be saved.)

"But if he does not listen, take one or two others with you, so that at the testimony of two or three witnesses every matter may be established. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. If he refuses to listen to the church, treat him like a Gentile[i.e., unsaved] or a tax collector." Matthew 18:15-17 (NET)

<p style="background-color: yellow; padding: 2px;">The brief summary, given in Luke 17:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (Not mentioned in Luke.) <div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17:4 – The need for a gracious, forgiving spirit. </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (Not mentioned in Luke.) 	<p style="background-color: yellow; padding: 2px;">Expanded description in Matthew 18:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18:18-20 – Our authority to do this (treating the person as saved or unsaved); the need for 2-3 witnesses; doing it "in Jesus' name." <div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18:21-22 – The need for a gracious, forgiving spirit. </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18:23-35 – The relationship of our forgiveness (our attitude/actions) to the way God will treat us (parable of the unforbearing servant).
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THE NEED FOR A GRACIOUS, FORGIVING SPIRIT.

<p style="background-color: yellow; padding: 2px;">As found in in Luke 17:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; margin-top: 5px;"> <p>"Even if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times returns to you saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him." Luke 17:4 (NET)</p> </div>	<p style="background-color: yellow; padding: 2px;">As found in Matthew 18:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; margin-top: 5px;"> <p>Then Peter came to him and said, "Lord, how many times must I forgive my brother who sins against me? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, I tell you, but seventy-seven times!" Matthew 18:21-22 (NET)</p> </div>
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With verse 3, a focus on the responsibility that each has.

A focus on our attitude.

Today, many church-goers take *offense* with some of the things that Jesus said.

Especially these two parts:

- ✓ [Matthew and Luke] Rebuke/confront the sinning "brother" (person who claims to be saved).
- ✓ [Matthew] *If he doesn't repent, treat him as unsaved.*

❖ Some make slanderous accusations about anyone who tries to obey these passages.

Only self-righteous hypocrites do that!

In doing this, they **self-righteously condemn** the early church... the apostles... and even Jesus – all of whom did these very things, and/or commanded others to do them.

7

❖ Some claim that other people have no right to say anything about what they do.

Only God can judge me!

What they choose to ignore is the fact that, when it involves sin, **God has already judged.**

And: He has put that judgment in written form (= the Bible), so that people can read it and know for certain that he condemns it.

And: Because he does not take pleasure in people perishing, he commands his followers to **warn** those who are sinning, **so that they can repent and be forgiven.**

He who does not believe has been **judged** already,
John 3:18b (NHEB)

8

❖ Others take an attitude of false humility.

**That's 'judging'!
Who am I to judge?**

It's a *fake* spirituality, because they say this to *excuse* their disobedience.
They may ask the question, but they aren't interested in the answer!

If it were *genuine* humility, they would go to the Bible and look for the answer to the question!

Because the Bible tells us **who** we are (which qualifies us to do it), **why** and **when** we must do it (and when to *not* do it), and **how** we must do it.

9

❖ Some selectively choose Bible verses and **tear them out of context**, in an attempt to "support" their views. (They skip over any verses that don't fit.)

Jesus said he didn't come to judge!

Both Paul and James said "Who are you to judge!"

People who use this method of **misusing the Bible** can "prove" **anything** they want.

By selecting a *different* set of verses (also torn out of context), a different group of people can "prove" the **opposite** of what the first group "proved."

(They may also be relying on **false definitions** of words and have **false perceptions** of how different concepts relate to each other, *because of the world's influences on their thinking.*)

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IF WE USE THE BASIC BIBLE STUDY METHOD THAT WE LOOKED AT IN THE PAST...

⇒ We will discover that some verses **command** judging and others **prohibit** judging. The contexts of the two are distinctly different; and **to refuse to do EITHER (in its own context) is to choose to sin.**

We need to pay attention to:

- ① The words and their meanings.
- ② How those words connect.
- ③ The context of the passage.
- ④ What other passages say.

START AT THE CENTER

AND WORK OUT!

11

Yes, there ARE verses that tell us to NOT judge.

And yes, Jesus did say that he *didn't* come to judge.

But to understand these verses accurately, we need to look at the context.

EXAMPLE: Jesus told us that he did not come to judge.

For I **have not come to judge** the world, but to save the world.
Jn 12:47b (NIV)

The part that people tend to omit:

- ✓ People are **already** judged, if they do not trust Jesus (which means they are unwilling to follow him) – John 3:18b.
- ✓ There are instances in which he **did** judge – John 8:26, 44; Matthew 21:12-13; etc.
- ✓ When Jesus returns, he **will** judge – 2 Timothy 4:1; etc.

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EXAMPLE: Jesus says, "Do not judge."

"Do not judge, or you too will be judged."
Mt 7:1 (NIV)

The part that people tend to omit:

- ✓ When Jesus says, "Do not judge," he is telling us to deal with our own sins before we deal with the sins of others.

"For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.
"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? 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.**"
Mt 7:2-5 (NIV)

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- ✓ What Jesus says, *in the full context* of "Do not judge" is similar to what Paul says in Galatians (but in a different order).

HELP YOUR "BROTHER."

WATCH YOUR ATTITUDE.

BE AWARE OF YOUR OWN WEAKNESSES.

DEAL WITH YOUR OWN SINS FIRST (IMPLIED).

Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are **godly** should **gently** and **humbly help** that person back onto the right path.
And **be careful** not to fall into the same temptation yourself.
Galatians 6:1 (NLT)

Paul is giving these instructions to people who have *already* dealt with their own sins. Otherwise, he wouldn't have used the word "godly" (or "spiritual," in many translations)!

14

EXAMPLE: Paul and James tell us "Who are you to judge..."

Who are you to judge someone else's servant?
Romans 14:4a (NIV)

But who are you to judge your neighbor?
James 4:12b (CSB)

The part that people tend to omit:

- ✓ Both passages are condemning the judging of people on *matters that are NOT sin*. In these cases, the judging itself was the sin being committed.
- ✓ **Romans 14:** They were judging people based on the type of food they ate (meat vs. vegetables).
Paul's response: DON'T DO IT!
- ✓ **James:** They were judging people based on their social status (2:1-4+). They were speaking out against others and trying to make themselves look good.
James' response: DON'T DO IT!

15

EXAMPLE: Paul tell us "Do not let anyone judge you..."

Therefore **do not let anyone judge you ...**
Col 2:16a (NIV)

The part that people tend to omit: **THE REST OF THE SENTENCE!**

- ✓ Paul is talking about religious activities and food – not sin!

————— ◆ —————

ALL OF THESE "DO NOT JUDGE" PASSAGES ARE REAL AND MUST BE OBEYED.

But they are all dealing with:

- ✓ **People who invent judgments** based on personal preferences, in matters that the Bible says are NOT SIN.
- ✓ **Hypocrites** – people who are eager to judge others, while ignoring their own sin.

16

Yes, there are also verses that tell us we MUST judge.

And also many examples – far more than all the "do not judge" passages combined.
(Examples do not always contain the word "judge.")

EXAMPLE: The Matthew 18 passage (which we already observed).

- ✓ Deal with their sin... if possible, in private.
- ✓ Those who refuse to repent should be treated as unsaved.

Treating them as unsaved?
Shouldn't we give them the "benefit of the doubt"?
We tend to forget that God is involved in salvation. If their salvation is genuine, repentance and a changed heart/mind *will be present*. So if these things are NOT present, we would be lying if we continued to call them "saved."

17

EXAMPLE: Paul commanded the Corinthians to judge – and he would judge with them.

Although I'm not physically present with you, I am with you in spirit. I have already **judged** the man who did this as though I were present with you.
When you have gathered together, I am with you in spirit. Then, in the name of our Lord Jesus, and with his power, hand such a person over to Satan to destroy his corrupt nature so that his spiritual nature may be saved on the day of the Lord.
1 Corinthians 5:3-5 (GW)

Observations: (The context includes both chapters 5 and 6.)

- ✓ The ultimate goal isn't to "send them to hell," but to bring them to salvation.
- ✓ The focus of such judgment is on people who *claim* to be saved – not the lost who belong to the world.
- ✓ In chapter 6, Paul lists other typical examples of sins that *prove* that a person is not saved. (ALL such sins must be judged.)

18

EXAMPLE: Paul mentions two people who had to be handed over to Satan (in hope that they would learn and repent).

For some people have deliberately violated their consciences; as a result, their faith has been shipwrecked. Hymenaeus and Alexander are two examples. **I threw them out and handed them over to Satan** so they might learn not to blaspheme God.

1 Timothy 1:19b-20 (NLT)

Other related passages:

- ✓ In the verses below, Paul warns Timothy about certain people. Two of the people are mentioned in the above quoted passage.
- ✓ **2 Timothy 2:16-18:** Hymenaeus and Philetus, who had left the path of truth, and were destroying the faith of some.
- ✓ **2 Timothy 4:14-15:** Alexander the metalworker, who violently opposed the truth.
- ✓ Most likely, all three of these were at one time in the church – but have now been expelled. We do not know if they ever repented.

19

EXAMPLE: John warned his friend about someone in the church who would need to be dealt with (judged). This person was wrongly judging others.

I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will not welcome us.

So when I come, **I will call attention to what he is doing**, spreading malicious nonsense about us. Not satisfied with that, he even refuses to welcome other believers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church.

3 John 1:9-10 (NIV)

Observations:

- ✓ This is about a leader who needed to be judged.
- ✓ This example serves as a warning about false judging. He was wrongly judging, and expelling Christians who were doing what was right.

20

EXAMPLE: Paul warned people about anyone who would distort the Good News. It's a serious matter!

But even if we (or an angel from heaven) should preach a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, **let him be condemned to hell!**

As we have said before, and now I say again, if any one is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, **let him be condemned to hell!**

Galatians 1:8-9 (NET)

- ✓ In reference to the Judaizers, who wanted to add Jewish rituals to the Good News, Paul said:

Watch out for those dogs, those people who do evil, those mutilators who say you must be circumcised to be saved.

Philippians 3:2 (NLT)

21

EXAMPLES: Jesus and Paul tell us to watch out for false prophets (or teachers). We need to judge whether or not they are false!

Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit **you will recognize them.**

Matthew 7:15-16a (NIV); see vs. 15-23.

THESE ARE ACTS OF "JUDGING."

Regarding some who claimed to be equal to the apostle Paul...

For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no great surprise if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will be according to their works.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 (CSB)

Two more examples:

- ✓ **2 Peter and Jude** also pronounce strong judgments against false teachers.

22

EXAMPLE: John warns us to evaluate the spirits that control those who claim to be teachers (prophets) from God.

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but *test the spirits to see if they are from God*, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

1 John 4:1 (CSB)

- John would not have told them to do this if it couldn't (or shouldn't) be done!

EXAMPLE: Paul warns us to evaluate ourselves!

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you— unless, of course, you fail the test?

2 Corinthians 13:5 (NIV)

23

EXAMPLES: Paul tells us that it is our duty to judge people within the church, rather than the unsaved on the outside.

- After Paul has instructed them to hand the sinning person over to Satan, he tells them:

It isn't my responsibility to judge outsiders, but it certainly is your responsibility to judge those inside the church who are sinning. God will judge those on the outside; but as the Scriptures say, "You must remove the evil person from among you."

1 Corinthians 5:12-13 (NLT); (quoting Deuteronomy 17:7b); see also chapter 6.

There may be exceptions to this basic principle:

- ✓ When Elymas the sorcerer tried to keep the proconsul from being saved, Paul had to rebuke and judge him – Acts 13:8-11.
- ✓ In a sense, the proclamation of the Good News is an act of "judging" – but perhaps we can consider it to be an indirect type of judging.

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ALL OF THESE PASSAGES THAT EMPHASIZE JUDGING (OR EVALUATING, RECOGNIZING SIN, ETC.) ARE REAL AND MUST BE OBEYED.

They are all dealing with: things that are objective, verifiable and factual; none of them have to do with opinion, guesswork or probability.

- ✓ Righteousness vs. sin (*genuine* sin, not personal preference).
- ✓ Truth vs. error. ✓ Genuine vs. fake.

THESE VARIOUS EXAMPLES ALSO TEACH AND WARN US ABOUT:

- **The seriousness of sin.** – They tell us: "This is the type of thing that deserves judgment."
- **The potential for false judgment.** Scripture teaches us ...
 - How to minimize the chance of us doing this.
 - How to respond, if others do it to us.

25

WHAT MUST WE CONCLUDE?

Some these examples of *judging* and *not judging* have a direct application to the issue of rebuking and forgiving.

Others don't; but as examples, they *affirm* the basic issue that such activity is not only taught in Scripture... it is a mandatory activity.

But in either case, it all needs done in the way that Scripture teaches us to do it.

People who tend to emphasize the "judgment" verses need to pay attention to the "do not judge" verses.

People who tend to emphasize the "do not judge" verses need to pay attention to the "judgment" verses.

26

YOUR MISSION!

OUR PURPOSE TODAY was to look at an aspect of forgiveness that is normally ignored – and often strongly opposed – in modern-day churches. (This forced us to look at the issue of "judging" – to verify that it is a genuine part of "following Jesus.")

AS YOU GO THROUGH THE WEEK, consider these matters, and apply them, if these types of situations should arise.

In the Bible, when you find commands or examples related to judging:

- **Learn** what they teach about the seriousness of this issue.
- **Pay attention** to instructions and restrictions that are relevant in how WE should respond, when such issues arise in our lives.

27

(SOME MISC. COMMENTS)

We did NOT look at all the various issues related to judging, because that goes beyond the scope of our current study.

(You are encouraged to study the Scriptures to find out more about the right way to do this.)

We included a large number of "DO judge" verses, because so many people close their eyes to this concept, or just flatly reject it.

But then, Scripture does seem to contain more of the "DO judge" verses than there are commands and examples of "DO NOT judge"!

(However, we have not taken the time to count them all, to get the exact number comparisons.)

28

For those interested in further study, here are some additional, random observations related to judging.

You can consider this to be a "starting point," as you look through Scripture to gain a better understanding of the "who, what, when, where, why and how" of judging.

- ✓ We have NOT examined all the issues related to judging, since that is not our main focus. But anyone who has a Bible and is willing can find the answers. (It's not hidden, or in language that is too difficult to understand.)
- ✓ There are many Scripture passages that describe judging as a necessary response. Those who are living in obedience to God will be willing to obey him in this matter. (They will also pay attention to the various instructions about how to judge, and when *not* to judge.)
- ✓ **We must deal with our own sin first** – whether or not other people have sins that need dealt with.

29

- ✓ People who say "Who am I to judge" should quit using that as an excuse for disobeying God; and find out in Scripture *who they are* that qualifies them to do this.
- ✓ Most (or all) of the passages we saw involved "brothers" – people who claimed to be saved. This type of judging does not apply to the unsaved – as Paul affirms in 1 Corinthians 5:12-13. (There may be certain situations there judging may apply to the unsaved – such as when Paul rebuked Elymas the sorcerer.)

DO NOT FORGET GOD'S ROLE IN SALVATION.

- ✓ Certain things will be present when a person is saved, BECAUSE GOD SAYS THEY WILL BE PRESENT.
- ✓ When those things are NOT present, we have NO BASIS for claiming that the person is saved.
- ✓ ***It is not love to pretend people are saved – and reinforce their self-deception – when they are in danger of perishing.***

30

- ✓ Judging is not the *only* activity that a follower of Jesus does; but it *is* a *mandatory* activity. Even so, it must be based on *God's* standards, not *ours*. For instance...

"Stop judging by mere appearances, but instead **judge** correctly."

John 7:24 (NIV)

- ✓ Though judging is *mandatory*, when it does involve sin, it is *prohibited* in other situations (such as when it has to do with personal preferences).
- ✓ Life isn't characterized by constant judging! There are times we need to have *other* types of response to sin and imperfection:

And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

1 Thessalonians 5:14 (NIV)

31

- ✓ There is a purpose or goal behind judging – the person's ultimate salvation. (To attain this goal, it *does* require that they repent – which doesn't always happen.)

- ✓ In the following situation, a form of judging might be needed. *But pay attention to the caution found in the last line!*

If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take note of that person; don't associate with him, so that he may be ashamed. *Yet don't consider him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.*

2 Thessalonians 3:14-15 (CSB)

- ✓ We saw one passage that gave an example of someone judging *wrongly*. (There are others.) False judgments may occur, if the people *doing* the judging have departed from Scripture. (Jesus himself experienced such a judging.) Scripture shows us how to respond in such situations. *This false judging by others does not excuse us from obeying what Scripture says on this topic.*

32

- ✓ Romans 2:1 is about hypocrisy in judging. This is the same focus as we saw in Matthew 7:1-5.
- ✓ Scripture tells us about qualifications that are needed, in order for one's judgment to be legitimate. Only in this way can we do these things as God's representatives. Only then can these two passages apply to our judgments (including our forgiving of others): Matthew 18:18; John 20:23.
- ✓ Scripture tells us what qualifications are needed, and how/why we have this authority to judge. But false teachers will ignore all of this.
- ✓ Another passage that states our goal: James 5:19-20.
- ✓ In all of this – and everything else we do – we must do it as an expression of *love* for God and neighbor. (This statement implies that we need to know what *genuine* love is – which we can learn only from the Bible.)

33

- ✓ Some aspects of judging are to be done by Christians, as *individuals*. Some are to be done by *leaders* or the church as a *group*, and not by individuals. (Scripture teaches us how to recognize the difference.)

- ✓ The topic of "judging" is quite broad, and covers many issues. For instance, "judging" as "*recognizing* the difference" between good and evil is quite different from "judging" as "*punishing* evil."

- ✓ In matters where Scripture says that judging must be done by designated *authorities* (such as government or church leaders), we as *individuals* are not to take matters into our own hands – even if the authority fails to fulfil its obligations.

- ✓ We are NOT to judge motives. We cannot even judge our own motives accurately! See 1 Corinthians 4:1-5.

REMINDER: These observations about judgment are random and do not include everything pertaining to this issue. You are encouraged to find out the rest of what Scripture says!

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Credits

SCRIPTURE

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