

Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church
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“Cease Judging One Another”- Part Two

LESSON SCRIPTURE: *“Let us not therefore judge one another anymore: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way.”* Rom. 14:13 (King James Version).

“Therefore, let us no longer criticize one another, but instead decide not to put a stumbling block or pitfall in your brother’s way.” (Holman Christian Standard Bible)

GOAL: To understand God’s perspective on judging one another.

OBJECTIVE: To refrain from judging one another

Lesson Content:

We all have a habit of forming our opinions based on our personal standards. Most of us hold ourselves at a higher standard and have a tendency to look at others who may be different as being inferior. The Scripture tell us "there is no respect of persons with God." (Romans 2:11) The ground is level at the foot of the cross. We are all the same in the eyes of God. How can we judge fellow believers, when we must all stand before the judgement seat of Christ? Satan effectively uses this human trait to destroy relationships and to stifle and destroy evangelism and discipleship—the mechanisms for the Great Commission and spiritual growth within the church.

We discovered from last month’s lesson that we are expected to encourage fellow believers who may be babes in Christ in the spirit of love and compassion. Our liberty in Christ should not be used to hinder or cause our brothers and sisters to falter. Paul is saying (Romans 14) we should not criticize or condemn one another but use wisdom and good judgement to foster growth in the weaker Christian. Instead of passing judgment on others we should use our best judgement to help them. Our words and even our non-verbal expressions and actions can encourage or discourage others thereby causing other believers to fall away. When we incorporate a Christ consciousness in all that we do, or say, and wherever we are, we reflect the joy of His love. Jesus said *if I be lifted up I will draw all men unto me.* (John 12:32) As *living epistles*, our charge is to win souls for Christ and to conduct our lives in a Christ like manner. *Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God.....* (2 Corinthians 3:2-3)

God’s Love Empowers Us to Edify and Love Rather Than Judge Each Other

Scriptures: 1 Peter 4:8; I Corinthians 8:13, Romans 14:13-20, Romans 5:8, Romans 3:23

***“Therefore, let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this—not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother’s way”
(Romans 14:13 NASB)***

The Scriptures tells us that God commended His love towards us while we were still sinners. (Rom. 5:8). God was *intentional* in His plan to provide salvation to man. In this scripture, the Greek word for ‘rather’ is “*mallon*” (mal’-lon). It is an adverb that means: *more to a greater degree; more willingly, more readily*¹. So we must make up our minds that we will never let our freedom in Christ become a stumbling block to a fellow believer. To judge another’s person’s convictions, beliefs, and conduct is to assume a self-righteous posture. God has allowed all of us with our faults, beliefs, and conduct to become members of the household of faith. So what is our responsibility? We have a responsibility to refrain from using the freedom we have been given in Christ to cause our brother to stumble in their faith.

“What’s important in all this is that if you keep a holy day, keep it for God’s sake; if you eat meat, eat it to the glory of God and thank God for [it]; if you’re a vegetarian, eat vegetables to the glory of God and thank God for [it]. None of us is permitted to insist on our own way in these matters. It is God we are answerable to—all the way from life to death and everything in between—not to each other. That’s why Jesus lived and died and then lives again: so that He could be our Master across the entire range of life and death, and free us from the petty tyrannies of each other.” (Rom. 14: 6-9, Peterson, Eugene: *The Message*)

Earlier in Romans 14: 1-12, Paul related that Jesus desires that congregations become havens of grace or places to where people have the freedom to be who they are and to become what God desires based upon His timetable and plan. Accepting our brothers and sisters in Christ allows them the freedom to be different without being judged. There are times, however, when sin must be addressed. The bible does allow for the godly confrontation of error. (Matthew 18:15-17) The truth should not be set aside for sin’s sake. *Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgement* (John 7:24) The goal is not harsh, self-righteous legalism, but instead restoration. *Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.* (Galatians 6:1) Accepting others calls for love and truth to guide our relationships with full knowledge that we cannot be someone else’s Holy Spirit. We must release the offender to be directed by God. (Charles Swindoll, *Living Insights Romans*)

Paul reminds us that each of us must give account of ourselves to God. (Romans 14:12) Jesus said, *Judge not that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.* (Matthew 7:1-2) Since we do not have the qualifications to rightly judge others, we are instructed to cease doing it. God knows the hearts of others; we are not omniscient. We do not know all of the circumstances, experiences, or the motivations of another believer. We are biased, and limited in our

¹ Strong’s Concordance

² Peterson, Eugene: *The Message* (Rom. 14: 6-9)

knowledge of every aspect and where a person is in their spiritual development to judge correctly. Neither do we know the plans God has for that individual. Christ suffered and died for our sins and theirs. God's judgment is embraced by His love and compassion and shaped by His refining purpose for our lives.

Judging You Must Cease

When you woke up and was blessed to see another day, the first thing you should have done was PRAY.

Now as you journey on your way, be mindful to stop being so judgmental today.

Remember, JESUS said let he who is without SIN cast the first STONE,
When in reality no one can cast stones, because deep down inside,
we all have hidden secrets and sins of our own!

You shouldn't judge me, and I shouldn't judge you, because only GOD
knows if our hearts are clean and true.
For all of us have sinned and come short of the glory, and we must realize
GOD is the only One who will judge our life story.

Paul the Apostle said, I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians,
both to the wise and unwise, therefore no man on earth should criticize!

So as of today, let us therefore not judge one another anymore, or put a
stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way, and if you feel
that I am going astray, please talk to me in a GODLY way.

And just remember, GOD is the only One who will judge each man on
judgment day, and only GOD will determine if in HELL or HEAVEN that
our SOULS will STAY.

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DISCUSSION/APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

1. How do you imagine God reacts when we judge/criticize our Christian brothers and sisters? Is he angrily stomping and shouting, disappointed and disapproving or graciously understanding and compassionate?
2. How do you feel about yourself when you are critical and judgmental of others?
3. Discuss what Christians must do to develop an uncritical temper and cease judging one another?