

What Does the Bible Teach About Judgmentalism?

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

- A. Matt. 5:20 - What kind of “righteousness” characterized the Pharisees?
 - 1. Matt. 9:11, 14, 34; 12:2, 24; 19:3 - Do you begin to see the nature of the Pharisees’ righteousness?
 - 2. Hypercritical, noting every difference and giving it the worst possible spin, refusing to consider any good
 - 3. Pharisees washing couches - Mark 7:4
- B. Judgmentalism is the verbal expression or the acting out of self-righteousness; it is the bigoted thoughts, words, and actions generated by a heart troubled by bitterness, envy, prejudice, insecurity, pettiness, pessimism, pride, contempt.
 - 1. Elders betray their shepherd-hood and stewardship by attacking, suppressing, and shaming the sheep.
 - 2. Teachers cow their students into silence by being critical of every question or comment.
 - 3. Preachers empty church buildings with discouraging words, opinionated speech, crankism, and hobbyism.
 - 4. A few members can undo the good work by the many with murmuring and backbiting.
- C. This is one of the contributing factors to the lack of church growth or the diminishment of membership.
 - 1. It is too easy to blame it all on economics, secularism, or worldliness of the community in which we live.
 - 2. Who wants to become part of a local church in which judgmental persons wield influence? Who wants to remain a member there?
 - 3. Elders, deacons, preachers and teachers who are judgmental must repent or be asked to vacate their leadership roles.
 - 4. One may be sound in all other matters, but if he is judgmental he is as erring as if he endorsed the Herald of Truth.
- D. Acceptance and fellowship without being judgmental
 - 1. It’s easy in a family because of love and blood relationship.
 - 2. It’s easy in social organizations with common goals and interests
 - 3. It’s a bit more difficult in the church, a gathering of people of various backgrounds, lifestyles, and interests, but it can be done successfully.
 - 4. But where common cause does not exist or where open hostility does exist, acceptance is hard and judgmentalism becomes easy
 - a. Differences in race
 - b. Differences in nationalities

- c. Differences in political ideologies
- d. Differences in socio-economic status
- e. Differences in lifestyles
- f. Differences in secular interests

E. New family moves into the neighborhood and wants to place membership; they come from the backwoods. The wife is 17 and her husband is 33. She has a baby conceived out of wedlock. He is a blue collar worker that never finished school and is going to need financial help to get settled in this community. Joseph, Mary and Jesus

1. Man is known as a moral person and a very good Bible class teacher just moved into the neighborhood. He walks into a neighborhood block party, right past the picnic tables where some members of the local assembly are sitting and goes over to a table where a prostitute, a bookie, a convicted embezzler, and a drug dealer are sitting, and he sits down and eats with them. Jesus at the Pharisees feast

2. You have to hire preachers for overseas evangelism. The following men apply: four men who failed in secular business, one man with known ties to a terrorist organization, one man who was formerly affiliated with a corrupt political administration, one caught stealing from the treasury, and five others who did not supply you with their resumes. Which one do you hire? Jesus chose all twelve to be His apostles.

3. Two members of the church are standing on a hill at sunset above the city of Youngstown. The prostitutes, gang members, bookies and drug dealers start coming out and filling the streets. One man looks at the city and says, "What a dangerous, filthy, hopeless place." The other one looks and says, "What a lot of lost souls desperately in need of salvation." Which one do you identify with?

4. Man walks into a church building wearing bib overalls, tee shirt, beads, sandals, and has long hair and an unkempt beard. One member tells him he needs to go home and get cleaned up before he can come here. Another takes an interest in him and starts spending time with him. Which one do you identify with? Don't lie to yourself! God is listening to your heart. By the way, he is now a faithful, sound gospel preacher in Denver, CO.

5. Man rides up to the church building on a chopped Harley with a straight pipe exhaust. He is wearing black leathers with zinc studs. Long hair, tats, body piercings, gang symbols... He wants to see what church is all about. Do you let him in? Do you take him home for dinner afterwards? Do you let your daughter go out with him a few weeks later? He is now a deacon in a congregation in CA, married to an elder's daughter, and does fill in preaching when the preacher is out of town on meetings.

G. Did you automatically assume the worst?

1. An elder's point about couples traveling together without wedding bands, concluding they were going off for a weekend of fornication. And, as an overall observation of the culture in general, it is accurate. However, you cannot apply that reliably on an individual basis.

2. Coral and I came home from FC for the holidays so I could introduce her to my parents. Krystal brought Jonathan home to meet her parents.
 3. If you make assumptions without proof in individual cases, and you act on your assumptions, you are guilty of being judgmental
- H. We forgot that at one time all of us were sinners needing to be cleansed.
1. Like AA and recovering alcoholics, we all are former sinners at risk of falling back into sin
 2. 1Cor. 10:12 - Who did you think this was written for?

I. WHY DO CHRISTIANS BECOME JUDGMENTAL?

- A. They did not learn it from their Father
1. Deut. 10:17; Rom. 2:11; 1Peter 1:17; Acts 10:34-35, 15:7-9
- B. They did not learn it from their Savior
1. Rom. 15:7; Gal. 3:27-28; Col. 3:10-11; James 2:1-4, 8-9
 2. As we develop Christ-like character, the potential for partiality, prejudice, and judgmentalism lessens - Col. 3:12-15
 3. Tax collectors and sinners drew near to hear Jesus - Luke 15:1
 4. Pharisees and scribes were murmuring because Jesus would receive them and eat with them - Luke 15:2
 5. In response, Jesus told three parables to answer them
 - a. The Lost Sheep - Luke 15:3-7
 - b. The Lost Coin - Luke 15:8-10
 - c. The Prodigal Son - Luke 15:11-32
 6. He revealed what our own attitude should be toward the lost
 - a. That there will be "more joy in heaven" over one sinner who repents - Luke 15:7
 - b. He welcomed sinners; He sought for them - Matt. 15:24
- C. Where judgmentalism comes from:
1. By-product of bitterness, selfishness, pride, jealousy, prejudice, and cynicism - Attitudes of the Adversary; all of which are sinful
- D. What is our attitude when a sinner repents?
1. Are we indifferent? "Ho hum, so what"
 2. Are we skeptical? "I wonder if they really repented"
 3. Are we judgmental? "Shame on them for sinning!"
 4. 2Cor. 7:4-9 - Or do you worry about the well-being of the lost?
 5. Eph. 5:1-2 - What are you willing to sacrifice for them?

II. "THE WORLD IS OUT TO GET US"

A. "Just being careful"; "Christians are always being persecuted."

1. I worry about people who continually think they are under siege, or who are proud when someone is actually giving them a hard time, or talk about it constantly.
2. No one here today is persecuted in the same way Christians were in the first century. Fear has become a virtue to many professed Christians.
3. First and second century Christians were under threat of being arrested and executed for assembling. They assembled anyway, meeting in tombs and catacombs to avoid detection. Fear of Roman spears and scourges did not keep them from assembling for worship. But now, many professed Christians have elevated fear of a virus or fear of socialist politicians to hinder them in their service to the Lord. Fear has motivated too many disciples to hide from the world and to shun the lost, judging them all as evil and a threat to their existence. We cannot call unnecessary, unreasonable fear the virtue of prudence. If we do, we have not only become guilty of being more fearful than faithful, we have judged others in an unrighteous manner and have deceived ourselves in the process.

B. Let's put this fear into perspective and in so doing understand the lost and become less afraid and more empathetic. Why does the world dislike faithful Christians who only have their best interests at heart? (Not talking about the hypocrites or arrogant Christians who look down their noses at sinners)

1. They do not agree with the message; it runs counter to their philosophies, outlook on life and purpose for living, hopes, beliefs
2. A moral example is a visible indictment of an immoral life. Incites untrue charges of intolerance
3. Violates personal sense of independence; do not want to be answerable to anyone
4. Excites feelings of guilt
5. Shows the lost the futility of their life's course
6. Reminds them of a past they may wish to forget.
7. Removes them from their comfort zone (threatens), implying that they will need to uproot and change their lives
8. Threatens the loss of money, position, relationship
9. Challenges their present lack of strength, character, or will
10. Sin causes pain, and preaching reminds people of sin and the temporal and eternal consequences of sin. People lash out when they feel pain.

C. When you start seeing the sad perspective of a sinner, you begin to feel less paranoia and more pity and sorrow for their lot. You will want to do something to help them. You will be less judgmental and more like Christ

1. What is your answer to the problem of sin in your community? We talk about how bad the neighborhood kids are in our Bible classes. We boast about how we don't let our kids play with them. That really helps, doesn't it?
2. What if you took the time to take an interest in their lives? Do you think you might rescue them from the same kind of life their parents have chosen for themselves? You might even rescue them from an abusive situation. It is more common than you think.
3. And you might even save your soul instead of joining the Pharisees in eternity because you were so proud of how much distance you put between yourself and the sinners.