

What Does Jesus Mean When He Says Do Not Judge?

Luke 6:37-38

37 "Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. 38 Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

There was a minister who went on a cruise across the Atlantic Ocean. On the first day, he found out he would be sharing his cabin with someone else. About a half hour later, he went to see the cruise director. He said, "Normally I don't do this, but I was wondering if I could leave my wallet in the ship's safe. I met my roommate, and judging from his appearance, he doesn't seem like a trustworthy person."

The cruise director said, "No problem. In fact, your roommate left his wallet with us about ten minutes ago for the same reason!"

It's okay to lock up your valuables, but these two guys were judging each other!

They were jumping to conclusions before they knew all the facts! How many of you ever do that? **How many of you have ever jumped to conclusions before you knew "the rest of the story?"** Jesus says "Do not judge, and you will not be judged! For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you!"

We need to talk about what Jesus means when He says Do not Judge for two reasons.

Number one: Judging is a very serious sin. Some people miss eternal life because they spend their whole lives pointing fingers and judging other people.

Number two: We need to talk about it because sometimes we get accused of judging when we're not really judging! Someone says "what's your take on the abortion issue?" You say "Well, Psalm 139:13 says For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb." and verse 16 says that your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be." So I think abortion is wrong in most cases."

The person says "You're judging. You're pushing your agenda on others."

You say "No I'm not. You asked me a question, I'm doing my best to give a biblical answer."

"No, you're judging. Do not judge, or you will be judged!" **Pretty soon, Christians won't be able to say anything without someone accusing us of being judgmental.**

So I need to talk about what judging is, what judging isn't, and what we should be doing instead of judging.

We're in Luke chapter six. Jesus has just finished saying we're supposed to love our enemies, and one of the best ways to love them is to not judge them. Cut them some slack! Give them a break! The expression "do not judge" in verse 37 means three things.

Number one: it means do not accuse unfairly. You can't find your cell phone. You say to your brother, "Where did you put my phone?" He says "I don't have your phone." You say "You're always playing on it when I'm not around. You're always losing other people's things. You're a klutz!"

He says "Mom, Kathy called me a klutz!"

Ten minutes later, you're making your bed. You pull up the covers, and there's the phone right there on the bed! You say, "Oh no! I accused my brother unfairly! James 2:13 says "For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment. " So you go to your brother and say "I'm a klutz. I was wrong. I apologize for judging you and accusing you unfairly."

Number two: "The expression "do not judge" also means "do not presume prematurely."

Do not assume the worst about someone without knowing all the facts. One time, I was preaching at the nursing home one Sunday and as I began my sermon, I noticed a lady sitting in the front row wearing headphones and holding what looked like a Sony Walkman. She was looking up at me with this big grin! I was like "I can't believe what I'm seeing! Who have the nerve to come to church, sit in the front row, and play their Walkman? I mean I didn't think someone that old would even know what a Walkman was let alone bring one to service. That is so disrespectful! I can't believe this lady!" I was so mad, I could hardly concentrate and what I was saying.

Later on, Kathy asked "how did the service go?" I said "Okay I guess, but who was that lady in the front row jamming on her Walkman?"

She said "Did it ever dawn on you that it wasn't a Walkman, but an amplifier so she could hear the sermon better."

Ohhhh, did I feel like a heel! John 7:24 says " Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

Do not judge means do not criticize unfairly, do not presume prematurely, and **number three**, do not preach hypocritically.

A kid says a swear word. Dad says "Watch your mouth in this house." Two hours later, your dad's watching the Cards play, and a rookie hits into an inning ending double play the dad says "Ruh ruh ruh ruh ruhhe unloads a stream of cursing that still hovers over Busch Stadium to this day! You're like "Really? Do you realize how hypocritical it is for you to judge me for swearing, and then you go out and do the same thing ten times worse?"

Jesus reserves his strongest words for hypocrites. Look down at verse 41 " 41 And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the plank in your own eye? 42 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me remove the speck that is in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the plank that is in your own eye?"

Picture a guy with a block in front of his eyes saying "Hey, watch where you're going! Pay attention!" That's what hypocrites do, they don't practice what they preach.

Verse 42 "Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck that is in your brother's eye."

Do not judge means do not criticize unfairly, do not presume prematurely, do not preach hypocritically, and number four, it means do not condemn unjustly. Jesus goes on to amplify this in verse 37 " "Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven."

"Someone says "That person over there is gay. I don't want them in my church, and I definitely don't want them sitting in my pew. They're on their way to the lake of fire, and that's the end of it!"

That's judging. Is homosexual behavior a sin? Yes it is. Romans 1 is very clear about that. We'll talk more about that next month. But Romans 2 is just as clear that judging is a sin. **No matter what sin you struggle with, there's room in this church for you, and there's love in this church for you, because we all need the salvation and forgiveness of Jesus.** Do not judge, and you will not be judged, do not condemn, and you will not be condemned.

But when Jesus says "Do not judge," **I don't think he is saying that we cannot make any judgments at all.**

For example, your roommate comes home plastered almost every night. You're concerned. You try to talk to him. He says "Hey you're judging me! Do not judge, or you too will be judged!"

No, that's not judging, that is showing Christian concern for someone you love. You're warning someone you care about.

If we were riding in the same car, and you were weaving across the middle line, would it be a sin for me to warn you about it? Would it be wrong for me to keep you from crashing? Of course not!

Well, what about people who are in danger of crashing spiritually? Is it a bad thing to warn about something like that? I don't think so. Jesus says in Galatians 6:1 "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."

There are a lot of verses in the Bible that say we should passionately speak out when people we love make bad choices.

In second Samuel 12 Nathan confronted David because he committed adultery and murder. He wasn't trying to be judgmental. he was doing it because God wanted him to help David see his need for forgiveness.

And in Galatians 2, Paul rebuked Peter because Peter was preaching that Jews and Gentiles were equal in Christ, but when the Jews showed up, he acted like the Gentiles didn't exist. Paul wasn't trying to be judgmental, he was trying to help Peter get back on track.

1 Corinthians 2:15 says "But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. "

We can judge whether or not the pastor's theology is correct, we can make a judgment about what TV programs are best to watch and best to avoid, we can make judgments on the social issues of our day. The only thing we're not allowed to judge is other people!

So what should we do instead of judging other people?

Number one: We should forgive them. Luke 6:37 goes on to say "Forgive, and you will be forgiven." The Greek word for "forgive" is not the word we usually see for forgiveness. **It literally means "to release someone, to let them go."**

The word is used in Matthew 27:15 of Pontius Pilate releasing a prisoner at the time of the Passover.

Instead of judging people in our hearts, we need to release them. We need to let it go.

There's the story of two monks who were about to wade across a river. There was a lady there who needed to get across, but couldn't get her dress wet because she was on her way to a wedding.

So one of the monks picked her up and carried her across the bridge.

But the monks are not supposed to touch women for any reason, so the other monk criticized him for hours. "How could you agree to carry that woman? How could you break the rules so flagrantly?"

The first monk said "I put the woman down hours ago, why are YOU still carrying her?"

We need to release all of our pent up judgments and allow the forgiveness of Jesus to flow through us. Colossians 3:13 says "bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. " We need to forgive.

Number two: We need to give. Verse 38 says "Give, and it will be given to you"

When someone's going through a tough time financially, it's tempting to pass judgment and say "Why can't they manage their money better? Why can't so and so hold on to his job? This has been going on for years. When will they ever get on their feet. Bla bla bla."

I'm not saying I've never had these thoughts. I'm not saying we should give handouts to every single person who wants a handout. But Jesus is saying that generally speaking, **it's better to be generous than to be judgmental. It's better to show compassion than to show condemnation.**

He also goes on to say that if you are generous rather than judgmental " good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

The measuring of the corn in Bible days follows an established pattern. The seller crouches on the ground with the measure between his legs. First he fills the measure three-quarters full and gives it a good shake to make the grains settle down. Then he fills the measure to the top and gives it another shake. Next he presses the corn together strongly with both hands. Then he pours it into a bag to go. In this way, the purchaser is guaranteed an absolutely full measure of corn.

This is what God does for those who give to the needy instead of judging the needy. He gives us the full measure of His blessing in our lives by blessing us with food, finances, friends, and forgiveness!

Instead of judging people, we should forgive them, and give to them, and number three, we should pray for them. "God I'm tempted to be mad at a certain person because of the way he treated me. I'm tempted to judge him harshly.

But I've been learning today that I should treat people with the same grace that I need in my life. I've been learning that I should be forgiving and generous rather than judgmental.

So I pray for the person to experience the joy and peace and the blessing of God, and from this moment on, I release any and all hostility I might be feeling in the name of Jesus, I pray, Amen.

There's one more reason why we shouldn't be judgmental? Because Jesus wasn't judgmental with us! He could have said "You guys are so bad that I'm going to zap you right now!"

But instead, Romans 5:8 says " But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. " And 1 Peter 3:18 says "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us[a] to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,"

There is grace and forgiveness and love for those who are guilty of judging.

Let's bring it to Jesus.

Allow the grace and love of Jesus to blanket your life.

Jesus loves you this I know, for the Bible tells me so. Amen."