



Don't Judge, God's Isn't Finished With Me

Romans 14:1-13

Now accept the one who is weak in faith, *but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions.* ² One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables *only.* ³ The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him. ⁴ Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

⁵ One person regards one day above another, another regards every day *alike.* Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind. ⁶ He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God. ⁷ For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; ⁸ for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. ⁹ For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

¹⁰ But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. ¹¹ For it is written,

"AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME,
AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD."

¹² So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.

¹³ 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.



Here is the BIG IDEA in this lesson:

We must not cause others to stumble by unChristlike attitudes and unbiblical thinking.

Introduction:

Whenever the subject of “**judging others**” comes up, we must weed through all the worldly clichés so we can arrive at the truth. We have all heard statements like:

- *“It’s easier to judge people by what they fall for rather than by what they stand for.”*
- *“Judge not your friend until you stand in his place.”*
- *“Never judge a man’s actions until you know his motives.”*
- *“Don’t judge your wife too harshly for her weaknesses; if she didn’t have them, chances are, she wouldn’t have married you.”*
- *“A fox should not be on the jury at a goose’s trial.”*

However, at the most basic level, we need to remind ourselves that “**judging**” is really two sides of one coin.

1. On one hand, it means *to consider, estimate, think about, or evaluate*. For example, when approaching an intersection, you must judge whether to step on the gas or apply the brakes.
2. On the other hand, to judge means *to condemn or to pass judgment* on someone for the purpose of censorship, like a judge in a court of law. The Bible speaks of judging as both an attitude and an action.

By way of introduction, let’s get an overall view of what the Bible says about judging and then examine what it means for us as the church of Christ.

What do these verses teach about judging?

- Matthew 7:1-5
- Luke 18:9
- John 7:24
- John 8:12-15
- John 12:44-48

Now let’s examine judging one another as it relates to the local church.



Lesson: Thinking Truth Through

- A. According to Romans 14:1, what two groups will always exist in a church?
- B. According to verse 2, what conduct was in question?
- C. According to verses 2-3, how are those who are “*weak in faith*” identified?

Those who are in *the early stage* of their Christian development believe they are supposed to abstain from certain activities, although the Word of God does not expressly forbid them. In other words, their convictions are based on something that comes from their culture, their parents, or from someone telling them what they ought not to do, but these convictions have not been fully informed by what God commands or forbids in Scripture. However, the weak in faith are also those who *look down on those* who have a weak understanding of how their faith governs the whole of their life.

- D. What three attitudes—which have a disruptive tendency in the church—does the Apostle condemn?
 - Verse 1:
 - Verse 3a:
 - Verse 3b:

The danger that both groups face is that *attitudes* and *ignorance* obscure the centrality of justification by faith.

- E. What does the Apostle instruct us to do in regard to the “*weak in faith*” and how are we to do it? (*v.1*)
- F. According to verse 3b, what is the basis for our action?
- G. Read the rhetorical question in verse 4. What are the two emphatic points the Apostle makes that get to the heart of this matter of judging one another?
 1. It is the Lord’s *verdict that counts* (*v.4a*). In other words, it is to the Master’s advantage or disadvantage, not ours, if a servant stands or falls, for it is His church.
 2. It is the Lord’s *power that matters* (*v.4b*). In other words, the Master’s power guarantees the steadfastness of His servants.

H. According to the Apostle Paul, by what *principles* are we to operate?

1. **Verse 5:** Respect one another's convictions.
2. **Verse 6:** Give every believer the benefit of the doubt on morally neutral issues.
3. **Verses 7-8:** Remember, concentrating on self leads to sin, but being well pleasing to and living for the Lord is to be our ultimate aim.
4. **Verse 9:** The purpose for which Christ saved us is that He might own us; the reason He owns us is to transform us to be like Him. (Cf. *Titus 2:14-15*)
5. **Verses 10-12:** Never forget that the prerogative of judgment belongs only to Christ and to God; therefore, we need to sit in judgment on ourselves now in light of the account that we must ultimately give to God. (Cf. *John 5:21-23; 2 Cor.5:10; 1 Cor.3:8-15; 4:5; Eccl.12:14*)

I. In verse 13, the Apostle tucks in a two-fold duty that every Christian is called to apply.

A "**stumbling block**" is an impediment that becomes the occasion of falling into sin. Jesus strongly warned His followers against actions that hurt others (*Mark 9:42; Luke 17:1-2*). Sometimes obstacles or stumbling blocks are placed before other believers with the intent of seducing or trapping them; however, most of the time, we, as believers, can become a stumbling block by simply being inconsiderate of where people are and what they need at that moment.



Application: Making Truth Stick

How can we avoid causing others to stumble? Read Matthew 18:1-10. Howard Hendricks put it best when he said, "There is no fear of judgment for the man who judges himself according to the Word of God."³

Being a doer of the Word (2 Tim.3:16)

1. What did I learn ("teaching")?
2. Where do I fall short ("reproof")?
3. What do I need to do about it ("correction")?
4. How can I make this a consistent part of my life ("training")?

³ Eleanor Doan, *The Complete Speakers Sourcebook*

Answer Key

Introduction:

- self-righteousness is a log bigger than a speck
- self-righteousness causes you to despise others
- judging according to appearance falls short of God's standard
- judging according to the flesh is a sign of spiritual darkness
- God's Word is the standard of judgment

Lesson: Thinking Truth Through

- A. weak and strong
- B. personal convictions
- C. both those who eat all things and those who eat vegetables only
- D.
 - Verse 1: passing judgment
 - Verse 3a: regarding others with contempt or looking down on them
 - Verse 3b: judging the one who eats; censuring them
- E. accept them without making them feel scrutinized
- F. God has accepted them

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