DO NOT JUDGE - AN EXPOSITION ON MATTHEW 7v1

(See comments for .docx file with each citation hyperlinked to open the Bible App for a fluid study experience)

'Do NOT judge' may be one of the most quoted — and most misunderstood — statements in modern Christianity. Many Christians quote **Matthew 7:1** to avoid judgment altogether. But is that really what Jesus was teaching? What if Jesus never meant 'Do NOT judge' the way most people use it today? The issue was never judgment itself—the issue was judging while spiritually blind. Refusing to judge EVIL does not produce love—it produces blindness.

I encourage you to read this post fully before reacting. I believe that the deeper you delve into the Scriptures discussed in this post, the clearer the intent of Jesus' words becomes.

Matthew 7:1-2
*[1] "**DO NOT JUDGE**, **or** **YOU TOO WILL BE JUDGED.** [2] For in the same way you judge others, you*

will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. ***NIV***

I think the first reason why people adopt the absolute idea of “Do NOT judge” to apply to everything is because of the second part of the verse about being judged if you judge. Like everyone else, no one wants to be judged. So their interpretation is that in order NOT to be judged, they must refrain from passing judgment.

However, we need to honestly determine if this was Jesus’ intent behind the command. Because the fact is that regardless of whether we refrain from judging or not, our every action or inaction is going to be judged by people (**2 Cor 8:20-21**, **Rom 12:17**, **1 Tim 3:6-7**), and likewise Jesus Christ (**2 Cor 5:10**).

So I'll say it again, you will inevitably be judged, hence the fear of being judged is needless (**1 Cor 4:3**, ****1 John 4:16-18****). Meaning that the fear of being judged is NOT a justification to refrain from judging. Your focus however should be that in judgment, you use a righteous-Biblical standard, and live by that standard, so that there is no fear when it is used on you, either by God or people (**Matt 7:2**, ****12****).

So Biblically speaking, the statement in itself 'Do NOT judge' does NOT absolve or free anyone from judgment, whether from the judgment of people or from God. That being the case, we must then try to figure out the actual meaning and intent of what Jesus Christ said in the quoted Passage above.

Thankfully from the next couple of verses, in connection with the rest of Scripture, we can discern what Jesus Christ was actually teaching. Read the following Passage carefully, and I'll explain what I mean:

Matthew 7:3-5
*[3] "**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?** [4] **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?** [5] 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**. **NIV***

Now from the above Passage, we see that **v1&2**, which were previously quoted, make perfect sense, and we can discern the kind of people that Jesus Christ was telling NOT to take it upon themselves to judge others. I mean someone who is NOT in

right-standing is NOT in a position to judge another person who is apparently guilty. But Jesus Christ did NOT end the conversation there; instead, He invited people to FIRST get in right-standing (i.e. be righteous) by getting rid of their own guilt, and then they'll be in a position to HELP their brother who has a "speck" of guilt (**v5**).

So Jesus Christ was NOT just saying 'Do NOT judge' to absolve people of the responsibility of passing judgment on things, but instead He was showing that for someone to SAFELY be an instrument or agent of judgment, they must FIRST be righteous, otherwise they themselves will fall into judgment. Shortly, I'll illustrate what I mean by "SAFELY".

Clearly, from the Illustration above, which Jesus Christ used to explain His initial statement in **v1&2**, both men are shown to have a foreign object obstructing their sight or blinding them, and this is demonstrative of sin (**John 9:39-41**). The first man obviously judges the other, and his verdict is accurate, that the other man has a problem, a "speck" in their eye. Jesus Christ did not dispute the man's judgment or verdict. What Jesus Christ showed was that the one passing judgment needed to FIRST of all address his own shortcomings,

before he could be in a position to address the shortcomings of someone else (**Luke 6:39**).

Jesus's intent was not for both men to remain blind, but that they both receive sight and the fullness of light (**Luke 11:34-36**, **Rev 3:17-19**). But if we take the approach of "Do NOT judge" to mean an absolute refusal to identify the "specks" that cause blindness, and we choose to leave people in darkness simply because we fear being judged ourselves due to the sins in our own lives, then it becomes clear that such an interpretation does NOT align with Jesus's intention.

Sooner or later, the "plank" in your own eye will take its toll, and the "speck" in your brother's eye—which you may have been able to help remove—will also take its toll on him. So refusing to judge righteously will NOT spare you from judgment, because either way your "plank" must be dealt with; and also you are responsible for your brother whom you see fall into sin, or is about to fall (**Ezek 3:17-21**, **Prov 24:11-12**, **Lev 19:15-18**, **James 5:19-20**, **1 Peter 4:8**). You cannot be like Cain who refrained from being his "brother's keeper" (**Gen 4:9**). Even concerning your enemy, you have a responsibility to show kindness to him or that which concerns him (**Exo 23:4-5**, **Matt 5:43-48**, **Rom 12:20**); so how

much more are you responsible for your brother when you see the “speck” in his eyes. Ignoring it by claiming you won't judge, so that you won't be judged, is NOT in line with Christ's teachings or the expression of Love (**Rev 3:19**).

Paul also taught that if you see a brother stumble into sin, you who are spiritual and standing, should help lift him out of it, and in doing so you will be fulfilling “the law of Christ” (**v1&2** 👇), which I believe he said in reference to the Passage we're discussing (**Matthew 7:1-5**). He however said that, one should be watchful of themselves when they get involved in getting people out of sin, because if not, they would fall into that same sin. This I believe connects to those who still have a “plank” in their own eye, while trying to remove the “speck” in their brother's eye. The rest of the verses below then go on to say that each person should honestly evaluate and judge themselves (**2 Cor 13:5**), and take responsibility for their own burdens. This I also believe connects to Jesus’s instruction that people should FIRST get rid of the “plank” in their own eye, before anything else.

Galatians 6:1-5

*[1] Brothers and sisters, **IF SOMEONE IS CAUGHT IN A SIN, YOU WHO LIVE BY THE SPIRIT SHOULD RESTORE THAT PERSON GENTLY**. **BUT WATCH***

YOURSELVES, OR YOU ALSO MAY BE TEMPTED. *[2] Carry each other's burdens, and* ***IN THIS WAY YOU WILL FULFILL THE LAW OF CHRIST.***

[3] If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive ***THEMSELVES****. [4]* ***EACH ONE SHOULD TEST THEIR OWN ACTIONS****. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, [5]* ***FOR EACH ONE SHOULD CARRY THEIR OWN LOAD****.* ***NIV***

So if you're NOT in right-standing, you have no business judging someone else, otherwise you will be judged or most likely fall into their sin.

Sin is quite contagious (**1 Cor 15:33**, **1 Tim 5:22**), just as righteousness is equally contagious (**Rom 5:18-19**, **Jer 15:19**, ***1 Tim 4:12**, **15-16***, **1 Peter 3:1-2**, ***Prov 27:17***, **2 Cor 9:2**).

But if you're in right-standing, and the "plank" in your own eye has been removed, then you can get involved to remove the "speck" you observe in your brother's eye.

So, Jesus's intention concerning His illustration is for both the "plank" and "speck" to be dealt with in the people. And for that to happen one must FIRST have full sight and light, to be able to bring someone else into the light.

Refusing to get rid of your “plank” so as to be able to help your brother with his “speck” is tantamount to embracing darkness. And this is clearly far from Jesus’s intention for everyone. Hence, **Matthew 7:1** cannot be interpreted to mean that we shouldn't judge, because that would amount to everyone remaining in darkness, both the one with the “plank” and the other with a “speck”.

John 3:19-21

*[19] **THIS IS THE VERDICT:** Light has come into the world, **but people LOVED darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil**. [20] Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light **FOR FEAR THAT THEIR DEEDS WILL BE EXPOSED.** [21] But whoever **LIVES BY THE TRUTH** comes into the light, **so that it may be SEEN PLAINLY that what they have done has been done in the Sight of God**.* ***NIV***

Matthew 5:14

*[14] “**YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.** A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.* ***NIV***

Ephesians 5:8-14

*[8] **For you were ONCE darkness**, **BUT NOW YOU ARE LIGHT IN THE LORD**. **LIVE AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT** [9] (for the fruit of the light consists in **ALL GOODNESS, RIGHTEOUSNESS and TRUTH)** [10] and **FIND OUT WHAT PLEASES THE LORD**. [11] Have NOTHING to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, **BUT RATHER EXPOSE THEM.** [12] It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do **IN SECRET**. [13]*

But everything exposed by the light becomes visible*—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. [14] This is why it is said: "Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead,* ***and Christ will shine on you****." **NIV***

For fear of being judged people shy away from their calling of being a light to the world. So they find Scriptures to isolate in order to justify their fears and desires, and not what God desires from them.

Whatever the "plank" in our lives may be, we should be willing to let the Lord remove it, so that we can be in a position to truly help those who are shackled by darkness (**2 Cor 4:2-6**). Ultimately, we do not live our lives for our own pleasure, but rather for the pleasure of the One Who saved us, Jesus Christ (**2 Cor 5:14-15**, **1 Cor 6:19-20**).

Again, I reiterate that you will inevitably be judged, and more so by those closest to you. That should not rattle you. As long as you do what is right before God and keep a clear conscience, you have nothing to worry about (**1 Cor 4:2-4**).

Some of the people in Jesus's day accused Him of being "demon possessed" (**John 7:20**, **8:48-52**, **10:20**, **Luke 11:14-15**); and even at one point Jesus's family members judged Him to be "out of His mind" (**Mark 3:21-22**); but that did NOT stop

Him; rather, He continued doing the will of God (John 4:34). Similarly, Paul was persecuted and judged as being “out of his mind” (2 Cor 5:13, Acts 26:24); but that did not stop him either; and thankfully so, because his works are mighty pillars in the Church today.

At its core, passing judgment is simply discerning between good and evil, and upholding good (*1 Kings 3:9-12, 28*). That which is good must be recognized and appraised as good, and encouraged by sound doctrine (1 Thess 5:21, Titus 1:7-9, 2 Tim 3:16-17, 1 Tim 4:11-16); while that which is evil must be avoided and resisted (1 Thess 5:22, **Rom 12:9**, James 4:7). Often people focus on the latter, failing to realize that both sides of the coin are necessary in passing judgment.

I believe this is where some Christians misunderstand Jesus’s warning in Matthew 7:1-5. Judgment isn't a bad thing as most people tend to feel. It is a necessity to withstand chaos and ensure the proper flow of things. If people fail to apply good judgment in their actions, then things will fall apart quickly. And if you fail to apply righteous sincere judgment, FIRST on yourself, and subsequently on

others, then both your blindness and theirs would end you all in a pit (again **Luke 6:39**).

There is no escaping it, we as Christians are expected to be able to distinguish between good and evil and act accordingly (**2 Tim 3:16-17**). In simple terms, we are to apply good judgment in every single thing, and every situation we face. And it so happens that our actions and lifestyle will either bring about conviction for others to REPENT (**1 Peter 3:1-2**, **1 Tim 4:12**, **15-16**); similarly, that same conviction spurred from our righteous dispositions may make people vindictive (**Luke 6:22-23**, **2 Tim 3:12**, ***1 Peter 4:3-5***, ***2 Cor 2:15-17***).

So in doing the right thing, which is you executing righteous judgment and standing for Truth, i.e. Jesus Christ (**John 14:6**), you will be judged by people (**John 15:18-22**); and their judgment may deem you “right” or “wrong” from THEIR own perspective (**Luke 16:15**, **1 John 2:15-17**, **James 4:4**). But likewise, you will be judged by God; and what truly matters is to be RIGHT from HIS perspective. And if that's the case, then He will reward your good deeds (****1 Tim 5:24-25****, **Heb 10:23-24**, **35-36**).

So either way, we must judge in accordance with the righteous standards of God, and stand for Truth, because our actions or inactions will be judged by both God and people. We just have to make sure that we are RIGHT in God's Sight, and NOT merely "right" in the sight of people (**Acts 4:19-20, 5:29**, 1 Thess 2:4, 2 Cor 10:18).

So, Jesus Christ intends for His people to be able to judge wisely in EVERY situation, and choose to do good, i.e. good as defined by God ([Isaiah 5:20, Eph 2:10], Titus 2:14, John 7:24, Matt 10:16). And He also wants us to be instruments to propagate His righteous judgments, so that people can be free from their "specks".

If you've ever had anything enter your eye, you know how ABSOLUTELY UNCOMFORTABLE it is. So you can understand that in truth, no one completely loves living in sin, because deep down there is an ache in their soul that they may not show, but it weighs heavily on them. Jesus Christ wants to relieve that ache. And He wants to use you for that purpose (Matt 11:28, *Rom 10:14-15, 17*); but FIRST He needs you to lay down your own burden of sin, before He can entrust you with His own burden of reconciling the world to God, and

setting people free from sin (**Matt 11:29-30**, **2 Cor 5:14-21**).

So whether you like it or not, as a Christian, you are an instrument of God's judgment and righteousness, both in the natural and spiritual realm **([Rom 6:18**, **2 Tim 2:20-22]**, **Eph 6:10-12**); In the natural, you are instruments to show the Goodness of God, and bring about conviction, so that people REPENT from sin (**Matt 5:16**, **Jude 1:22-23**); and in the spiritual, you are the agency that God uses to judge and confront spiritual entities (**Eph 6:12**, **Matt 18:18**, **Eph 3:10-12**).

But to SAFELY be an effective judge you must FIRST be found to be in right-standing, otherwise you will be susceptible to judgment. This is the reason behind Jesus's saying that one shouldn't judge, otherwise they will be judged. He was warning us of the consequences of judging when we haven't FIRST dealt with our own sin (**Matt 7:1-5**, ***John 8:3-9***). Let me briefly explain the "SAFELY" thing, before I come back to the thing about "right-standing" or "righteousness".

For starters, God is Righteous, so He is rightfully the Perfect Judge and Executor of Justice. However, the majority of humanity is inherently

driven by sin, i.e. unrighteous (**Gen 6:5**, **Rom 3:10**, **23**). The problem posed by this is that if God uses human beings as the instruments of His judgment, He is compelled by righteousness to also bring those people into judgment in the exact same way they were used. In other words, anyone who judges, passes a verdict, or exercises an action in keeping with their will, would be judged by the very same standards that they have acted (**[Ezekiel 18:25**, **29-32**, ***33:20***], **[Num 14:1-4**, **27-33]**, **Joel 3:4-7**, ***Luke 19:22-23***, ****Rom 2:1******, ****James 3:1-2******).

For instance, the Israelites were the instruments of God's judgment against the inhabitants of the Promised Land. The Canaanites and the other people groups in the Promised Land had **over 400 years** of grievously sinning against God (**Gen 15:13**, **16**, **[18:20-21**, **19:4-9]** - *Sodom and Gomorrah were samples of how wicked the people in Canaan were*). The nature of their sins involved idolatry, human sacrifice, and sexual sins to name a few (**Lev 18:21-25**).

Other than the fact that God made a covenant to give Abraham and his descendants the land (**Gen 15:18-21**, **17:7-8**), the other reason why the previous inhabitants were evacuated from the

Promised Land was because of their sin. God made it repeatedly clear to the Israelites that it wasn't on account of their own righteousness that they were going to get the Land, but that it was on account of the sins of the previous inhabitants, and also His Covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (**Deut 9:4-6**). God clearly told them that if they committed the same sins as the previous occupants, then they themselves would receive the same judgment of being evicted from the Land (**Lev 18:28-30**).

It turned out that Israel committed the same sins, and became even more vile than the previous inhabitants, hence God had to execute the SAME judgment on them by exiling them from the Land (**[2 Kings 17:7-9, 12-15, 17-20], [2 Kings 21:2, 6, *9-16*, 23:26, 24:1-4, Jer 15:4]**). By God's measure, the kingdom of Israel was attributed with **390 years** of sin, and the Kingdom of Judah **40 years** (**Ezek 4:4-6**).

The point is that Israel, which was once the instrument of judgment against the Canaanites, was now subject to the same judgment because she became unrighteous. I repeat, the agent or instrument of judgment MUST be righteous, otherwise they themselves would be judged.

The same scenario played out with Assyria and Babylon, the two kingdoms God used as the instruments of His judgment against Israel (**2 Kings 17:5-7**, **[24:1-4**, **Hab 1:5-7**, **2 Chron 36:15-17]**). They were both unrighteous nations, hence they themselves fell into judgment (**[Isaiah 10:5-7**, **12-13**, **15**, **37:21-23**, **26-29]**, **[Jer 51:24-25**, **Isaiah 47:1**, **3-6**, **10-12]**).

So Jesus's statement in **Matthew 7:1** was more or less trying to enlighten us about this pattern, and the way to avoid the second part of falling into judgment.

Another illustration of this pattern is how Job's friends stood in judgment against him, while Job warned them that in doing so they themselves would come under God's judgment (**Job 13:7-10**, **19:28-29**). At the end of the whole saga, God indeed judged them, and His evaluation was based on righteousness: compared to Job, the friends had not spoken what was "right" concerning Him (**Job 42:7-8** **NKJV**).

Before all these, God had already evaluated Job as being more righteous than anyone on earth (**Job 1:8**). Yet Job's friends positioned themselves as judges over him, even though they themselves

were less righteous in God's sight. In this sense, they had a "plank" in their own eye while attempting to remove the "speck" from Job's eye (**Matt 7:1-5**).

This does not mean that Job was sinless or beyond correction. God Himself later rebuked and humbled Job for speaking beyond his understanding and for justifying himself rather than God (**Job 38:1-2, 40:1-5, 8, 42:1-6**).

Nevertheless, despite Job's faults, his friends still lacked the moral and spiritual standing to condemn him in the manner they did. Thus, the very men who sat in judgment over Job ultimately came under God's judgment themselves. This is something worth taking note of, and a caution whenever you stand in judgment over anyone for any reason. Make sure you're in right-standing, and that you'll be able to stand when the arm of justice swings your way.

Just like Job, it was a similar situation with Moses's elder siblings, Aaron and Mariam. Moses was not perfect, and this became evident when he disobeyed God and was consequently forbidden from entering the Promised Land (**Num 20:7-12**). However, in terms of comparative righteousness, Moses surpassed his siblings and everyone else on

Earth (**Num 12:3**, **6-7**). Hence, they were not in a position to judge him. So when they ventured to pass judgments on their little brother, God would NOT have it, and instead He judged them (**Num 12:1-2**, **8-11**).

The key point is that the one who judges must be in right-standing, otherwise they will be judged. In other words, if you're NOT in right-standing, do NOT judge, so that you will NOT be judged (**Matt 7:1**).

I believe it is now fairly clear what **Matthew 7:1** is actually addressing, and that Jesus Christ was NOT forbidding His people from exercising discernment (i.e. judgment), or from helping others overcome the burdens that hinder them. Rather, Jesus Christ was showing that the RIGHT way to judge is to FIRST of all be in right-standing, so that after judging you will NOT be judged.

As I said before, whether you like it or not, as a Christian you are an instrument of God's judgment and righteousness both in the natural and spiritual realm. It is an honor He has bestowed on His people to execute His judgments (**Ps 149:5-9 NKJV**). And the Church in general is the agency by which He judges the spiritual entities (**Eph**

6:10-12, **3:9-11**, **Rom 16:20**, **[Ps 110:1-3**, **1 Cor 15:25-26]**).

Speaking of the spiritual side, it's kind of like the situation in Exodus. If you don't study it closely, you would think that it was simply God using Moses to confront Pharaoh to liberate the Israelites (**Ex 5:1-2**), whom God refers to as His "firstborn son" (**Ex 4:22-23**). In reality, however, it was God using Moses to pass judgment against the gods of Egypt, the spiritual entities influencing the people and the Land; and because they refused to liberate His "firstborn son", Israel, He killed the firstborn sons of the Egyptians as judgment against the gods of Egypt (**Ex 12:12**).

In like manner, God has chosen to use the Church as the agency to reveal His wisdom and judgments long hidden from the spiritual entities (**Eph 3:9-11**). But to fulfill such a task it is imperative that the Church is found to be righteous, otherwise She is going to be judged. It is for this reason that God has to FIRST judge the Church before He judges the world through Her.

1 Corinthians 11:29, 31-32
[29] For those who eat and drink ***WITHOUT DISCERNING*** *the Body of Christ eat and drink* ***JUDGMENT ON THEMSELVES****.*

…

*[31] But if we were **MORE DISCERNING WITH REGARD TO OURSELVES**, **we would NOT come under such JUDGMENT**. [32] Nevertheless, **WHEN WE ARE JUDGED IN THIS WAY BY THE LORD, we are being DISCIPLINED so that we will NOT be FINALLY CONDEMNED with the world.** **NIV***

1 Peter 4:17-18

*[17] **FOR IT IS TIME FOR JUDGMENT TO BEGIN WITH GOD'S HOUSEHOLD;** and if it begins with us, **what will the outcome be for those who do NOT obey the Gospel of God?** [18] And, "If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, **what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?**" **NIV***

And just in case you're still wondering if indeed it is the Church that God is going to use to judge or convict the world, then consider the following Passages:

*(Pay attention to **v20, 22-25** below)*

John 15:18-27

*[18] "**If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated Me first**. [19] If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. **As it is, you do NOT belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world**. **THAT IS WHY THE WORLD HATES YOU**. [20] Remember what I told you: 'A servant is NOT greater than His Master.' If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you also. **IF THEY OBEYED MY TEACHING, THEY WILL OBEY YOURS ALSO**. [21] They will treat you this way because of My Name, for they do not know the one Who sent Me.*

*[22] **If I had not come and spoken to them, THEY WOULD NOT BE GUILTY OF SIN**; **BUT NOW THEY HAVE NO EXCUSE FOR THEIR SIN**. [23] Whoever hates Me hates My Father as well. [24] **If I had not done among them the works no one else did, THEY WOULD NOT BE GUILTY OF SIN**. As it is, **THEY HAVE SEEN**, and **YET they have hated both Me and My Father**. [25] But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: **'THEY HATED ME WITHOUT REASON**.'*

*[26] "When **THE ADVOCATE** comes, Whom I will send to you from the Father—**THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH** Who goes out from the Father—**HE WILL TESTIFY ABOUT ME**. [27] And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.* ***NIV***

Here, Jesus Christ is making the point that, as was true in His own experience, people's acceptance of our message is often dependent on whether they are willing to accept His teaching first. He goes on to show that His words and teachings would eliminate any grounds for excuse, and as such they will testify in judgment against whoever dismisses them (**John 12:47-49**, **[15:20-25** ☝, **Matt 10:14-15]**).

So, it is His very words and teachings that we are Commissioned to share (**Matt 28:19-20**, **Mark 16:15**). And this Gospel must be taught to the whole world before the end comes (**Matt 24:14**);

because it would serve as a TESTIMONY for those who CHOOSE to reject it. So those who reject the Truth do so without excuse (**Rom 1:18-21, 32**). And even in the face of God's judgments, knowing fully well His righteous demands, they will still reject the Truth and refuse to REPENT (**Isaiah 26:10-11, 2 Thess 2:10-12, Rev 9:20-21, 16:9-11**). The point however is that they are left with NO excuses.

2 Corinthians 2:14-16

[14] But thanks be to God, Who always leads us as captives in Christ's triumphal procession ***AND USES US TO SPREAD THE AROMA OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIM EVERYWHERE****. [15] For* ***WE ARE*** *to God* ***the pleasing AROMA of Christ*** *among those who are* ***BEING SAVED*** *and* ***THOSE WHO ARE PERISHING****. [16]* ***To the one WE ARE AN AROMA that brings DEATH; to the other, AN AROMA that brings LIFE****. And who is equal to such a task?* ***NIV***

Bear in mind two things: first of all, our responsibility is to share and demonstrate the Gospel (**1 Cor 2:1-5, 1 Thess 1:4-5**). We are not responsible for how people respond to it. Some may accept the Message, while others, driven by fear or the love of their sinful lifestyle or greed, would reject the Message (**Acts 24:24-27** - *note Felix's response to the Gospel was that of fear, but at the same time he was greedy for money, because he sought to be bribed by Paul, hence he*

loved darkness more than Light, **John 3:19-21**, **Luke 16:13**). Their response is NOT our responsibility; ours is to share the Gospel Message honestly, with Love, and with a clear conscience (**Eph 4:15**, **2 Cor 2:17**, ****4:2-6****, **5:11**, **14-15**, ***1 Cor 4:1-2***). Their response is entirely their CHOICE, but the Gospel would serve as a Witness and Testimony that leaves them with no excuse on the Final Day of Judgment (**Matt 24:14**).

Secondly, know that we are part of the reason why God will judge the world (**Joel 3:2**). In other words, how people treat God's own people will incur retribution and judgment from Him (**Matt 18:6-7**, **Ps 105:15**, **Rev 16:4-7**).

So anyway, we are charged to righteously handle the Word of God, because it is the means by which the world will be judged.

2 Timothy 2:15
[15] Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does NOT need to be ashamed and ***WHO CORRECTLY HANDLES THE WORD OF TRUTH****. NIV*

Deuteronomy 12:32
[32] See that you do all I command you; ***do NOT add to it OR take away from it.*** ***NIV***

Hebrews 4:12-13
[12] ***FOR THE WORD OF GOD IS ALIVE AND ACTIVE.*** *Sharper than any double-edged sword,* ***it penetrates EVEN to dividing soul and spirit****, joints and marrow;* ***IT JUDGES the thoughts and attitudes of the heart****. [13] Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight.* ***EVERYTHING is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to Whom WE MUST GIVE ACCOUNT****. NIV*

But it must be ABSOLUTELY clear that the goal of the judgment that the Church is used to execute is NOT along the lines of shame and condemnation, but rather to bring about restoration. Indeed it will expose the "specks" of sin, but it would NOT stop there, because it would go on to show how through Jesus Christ those "specks" can be removed. This is the nature of the judgment that must emanate from the Church.

The judgment of condemnation is EXCLUSIVELY reserved for God, Who would execute His prerogative on the Final Judgment Day, when everyone has had the opportunity to CHOOSE their fate (**Matt 24:14**, **John 3:18**, **36**, **Rom 5:8-9**, **Rev 20:11-15**).

It is ABSOLUTELY important that you do NOT overstep your bounds and enter into this kind of judgment over people, by condemning ANYONE to

hell (**Rom 14:4**, ***2:1-4***, **1 Cor 4:4-5**, **Rom 11:17-27**). Naturally, we hate evil-doers and would love nothing more than to see them suffer or be judged by God (**Ps 139:19-24**). But the fact is that God does NOT desire for ANYONE to perish, NOT EVEN the wicked, because He would rather that they REPENT (**Ezek 18:23**, **32**, **Matt 18:14**, **5:43-45**, **2 Peter 3:9**, **Rom 2:4**).

So He ALONE knows if there is a chance for someone to REPENT or not, because He ALONE sees the heart (**Isaiah 42:3-4**, **[1 Kings 8:39**, **1 Chron 28:9**, **Prov 17:3]**). And He also knows when to close the window of repentance, so as to implement His judgment (**Rev 2:21-23**). That prerogative is ENTIRELY His, NOT ours (***Rev 6:9-11***).

So again I say, this kind of judgment is EXCLUSIVELY reserved for God (**John 12:48**). The realm of your judgment is standing upon what God has revealed in His Word (**1 Cor 4:6**, **Ps 149:9 NKJV**, **1 Peter 4:11**); and what He is revealing by His Spirit, especially via prophecy (**Rev 19:10**, **Acts 19:6**).

1 Corinthians 14:24-25
[24] But if an unbeliever or an inquirer comes in ***while EVERYONE is prophesying****,* ***they are CONVICTED***

***OF SIN and are brought under JUDGMENT BY ALL**, [25] **as the SECRETS of their hearts ARE LAID BARE**. So **THEY** will fall down **AND WORSHIP GOD**, exclaiming, "**GOD IS REALLY AMONG YOU!**" NIV*

Again, this ☝ is one of the major kinds of judgment the Church is called to administer towards the world. We are to expose sin and give the people an opportunity to be saved through Jesus Christ, so that they get reconciled to God (**2 Cor 5:18-20**). And for the Church to be used as an instrument to administer this kind of judgment, she MUST be righteous, otherwise she will be susceptible to judgment (**Rom 2:2-3**, **17-23**). I mean salt that loses its saltiness will be useless and trampled by men (**Matt 5:13**).

We as the Church and as individuals cannot afford to be found wanting. Our lives ought to be the billboard of righteousness so that people have a reason to turn to God (**1 Peter 2:12**, **3:15-16**).

Now let's talk about the aspect of "right-standing" or "righteousness", which is required for anyone to "SAFELY" execute judgment.

The righteousness of Jesus Christ is what has afforded us the privilege to be agents and instruments of judgment (**2 Cor 5:21**, **2 Tim**

2:20-21). But we ourselves must be disciplined in righteousness, able to judge between good and evil (Heb 5:14); so that after we have carried out our roles as the instruments of God's judgment, we would NOT be judged as well (1 Cor 9:25-27, 2 Tim 2:5).

I will say it again, the righteousness of Jesus Christ puts you in the office of a judge. But it is your righteous living in alignment with the life of Jesus Christ (1 John 3:3, Col 1:9-10), that allows you to SAFELY execute the responsibilities of that office without falling into judgment.

By God's Grace I'd get to adequately address this in a follow-up study, but let me say it briefly here, that righteous living is ONLY possible through the Holy Spirit.

First of all, Jesus Christ said that our righteousness must SURPASS that of the Pharisees (Matt 5:20); but this CANNOT be accomplished by works of the flesh, which is the mantra of the Pharisees (Phil 3:5-6, Gal 1:14); it is ONLY possible by faith (Rom 9:30-32, 1:17).

Faith is an action word (James 2:17, 26); faith is also how we receive the Holy Spirit (John 7:38-39,

Gal 3:2-6); and faith entails actively keeping in step with the Holy Spirit (**Gal 5:24-25**). It is then through the Holy Spirit that the fruit of righteous living is manifested, even the aspect of self-control (**Gal 5:22-23**). And then finally it is such an individual, who is carried along by the Holy Spirit in righteousness, that can then JUDGE ALL THINGS while NOT being liable to judgment.

1 Corinthians 2:15
[15] ***THE PERSON WITH THE SPIRIT MAKES JUDGMENTS ABOUT ALL THINGS****, BUT such a person is* ***NOT*** *subject to merely human judgments,* ***NIV***

In **Matthew 7:1-3**, Jesus Christ admonished people NOT to judge especially when being deficient in righteousness, otherwise they would be judged. But in the Passage above, we see that WITH the Holy Spirit, and it is important to emphasize that it is in association WITH the Holy Spirit, we are instructed to JUDGE ALL THINGS, without fear of being judged ourselves. I believe you're getting the message clearly.

This further shows that believers are called to be agents and instruments of judgment, even while we're here on earth. We don't argue about the fact that we would serve as judges in the life to come (**Luke 22:29-30**, ***1 Cor 6:3***); but for some reason

we struggle to accept that while on earth we are to execute the functions of righteousness by judging between good and evil (**1 Cor 6:1-8**).

It should be clear that as Christians we do have that ordination to judge in righteousness. But if it hasn't sunk in yet, let me try to further illustrate.

I uploaded a post not too long ago titled, "***How Can Jesus Pay For the Sins of Others?***" It was primarily a study on priesthood, showing how priesthood makes such a thing possible, thus answering the question posed in the title. And regarding priesthood, it was clearly shown that this was part of Jesus's ordination (**Heb 5:5-6**). But not only that, Jesus Christ in turn made us to be priests (**1 Peter 2:5**, **9**, **Rev 5:9-10**). And the reality of all this is that part of the responsibilities of the priesthood is to teach the Word of God, and serve as judges (**[Lev 10:10-11**, **Malachi 2:7**, **2 Chron 15:3]**, **[Deut 17:8-13**, ****Ezek 44:23-24****]**).

So it stands to reason that if we have been made priests, then we as well have the responsibility to teach the Word of God and proclaim His righteous judgments.

Among other things, this current post is a charge for you to rise to your priestly ordination in Christ, and also your role as an administrator of God's Word and judgments. With the obstacle of misunderstanding **Matthew 7:1** being removed, I believe you are open to embracing this responsibility as a judge. The Lord permitting I'd follow up this post to further explore how to properly discern and judge through the Holy Spirit.

But in the meantime, step into this role of being a judge. And remember that you must FIRST subject yourself to judgment, before you venture to help someone else walk in the path of righteousness before God (**Gal 6:1-5**). This means you allow the Word of God to judge you and set you aright (**Ps 139:23-24**, **19:12-13**, **51:7**, **13**, **Jer 10:23-24**), before you administer judgment to others to turn them from sin.

So with intentionality, if you're a husband, let the Lord show you how to Love and treat your wife (**Eph 5:25-33**, **Col 3:19**, **1 Peter 3:7**). As the cited Passages show, God has consecrated the husband and wife as one flesh (**Matt 19:6**), hence maltreating your wife is an indictment against yourself, and can stand as a hindrance for you to execute you other priestly responsibilities, like

prayer (Mark 11:25-26 **NKJV**). And if you're a father, let God show you how to raise and discipline your children in LOVE and NOT with harshness (Prov 22:6 **NKJV,** Eph 6:4**,** Col 3:19).

If you're a wife; love, respect, and submit to your husband (Eph 5:21-24**,** 3:18), and build your home wisely (***Prov 14:1***). Wives have more power than they realize, and this power can either be: beneficial to preserve the home (Prov 31:10-31**,** 1 Sam 25:4-35**,** *v32-34*); or it can be a raw destructive force that no man can withstand (Prov 21:9**,** 19**,** *Eccl 7:26*). Wife, the choice is yours, judge wisely and determine the outcome you prefer for your home.

And for children, be sure to obey, honor, and respect your parents (Eph 6:1-3**,** Col 3:20); and do NOT despise your parents, especially in their old age (Prov 23:22).

And in your workplace, you are sure to be diligent, honest, and trustworthy (Col 3:17**,** Luke 3:12-14**,** Eph 6:6-8**,** Daniel 6:3-4).

And then after submitting yourself to judgment and refinement by the word of God, you are then licensed to be an instrument of judgment to others

(**1 Tim 3:4-5**). So then in society, you can advocate for that which is right, and resist that which is evil. The major reason why evil continues to prevail is because the righteous do not courageously rise to their ordinations (***Prov 25:26***). All that can begin to change with you.

So practically speaking: Judge what would be the appropriate use of your time and resources; Judge what would serve as wholesome entertainment and recreational (**Eph 5:4**); Judge how best to conduct yourself, and manage relationships and boundaries; Judge everything that pertains to life, and determine what is right (**1 Cor 2:15**, **6:3**). And take responsibility for everything happening around you. Keep watch, and partner with God to see to it that only the right things are established (**Matt 18:18**, **[Jer 6:16-19**, **Isaiah 56:10-12]**, **Isaiah 62:6-7**, **Ezek 3:17-21**).

God OWNS the Earth and everything (**Ps 24:1**). But He has given mankind the Earth (**Gen 1:27-28**, **Ps 115:16**); and entrusted him to take care of it, and all the creatures in it (**Gen 2:15**). So we are primarily responsible for the outcomes on Earth. God is willing to help, but we must also discharge our duties and make it possible for Him to intervene in

our affairs on Earth (**Matt 6:8-10**, **Ezek 22:30-31**, **2 Chron 7:14**).

If there is unrighteousness on our part, we limit His range of intervention because inadvertently He may have to judge us as well, because He is the Righteous Judge. He will not give you a free pass because He Loves you, instead He would prune and discipline you so that you can be holy and righteous like Him (**[John 15:1-2**, **Heb 12:7-11**, **Rev 3:19]**, **1 Peter 1:15-17**, **Eph 4:20-24**). That way when He comes to judge, you wouldn't be found wanting.

The reason why we still see evil and good in the world, even though God is Good and all powerful, is that if God were to totally eradicate evil, then He would be forced to destroy us as well, because we are ENTANGLED with sin in one way or the other (**Rom 3:23**). Hence He has allowed good and evil to exist so as to spare us from immediate judgment (**Matt 13:24-30**, **37-43**).

But ever so often, before the final Day of Judgment, He has to judge sin; so He ensures that He disentangles us from it by way of disciplining and giving us an opportunity to REPENT (**1 John 1:9**, **Prov 28:13**), before He passes judgment. So that

when He uproots the evil, we are NOT weeded out along with it due to any entanglement (**1 Cor 11:31-32**, **Heb 12:1**).

That is why you find all through Scripture that God always sends out warnings before executing judgment, because He wants people to REPENT, so that they are not destroyed (Ezek 18:31-32, Jonah 3:1-10, 4:11). And that is precisely why He is sending out the Gospel to the whole world (Matt 24:14, 4:17, Luke 24:46-47, John 3:16-18, 36, Rom 5:8-11). It is a warning to preserve people from the Final Day of Judgment that is inevitably going to come (Rev 20:11-15).

So, God doesn't want to destroy mankind. However, we must acknowledge that the current state of the world is a result of our actions or inactions. If we do our part, the world prospers and we would enjoy it; but if we fail to do our part the world decays and we would suffer for it (Jer 29:7, Rom 8:19-22).

In conclusion, Matthew 7:1 is a directive that shows the consequence of judging and how to avoid it by FIRST being in right-standing. It is NOT to stop you from judging in righteousness, but rather to show you how to do it SAFELY and wisely.

As we wrap up, I'd like to find out from you, which section of this study stood out most to you? Do you believe Christians are called to judge righteously today? What are your thoughts on Christians being involved in shaping policies that affect the society? What would you like to see from Christians, or what expectations do you have of them?

I'd love to hear your thoughts and questions on these and more in the comment section. If this has blessed you, like and share with your friends and Bible study groups. Thanks for the privilege and opportunity for me to share this teaching with you.

I pray you rise to everything that God has ordained you to be, and that you become a beacon of righteousness and justice in every aspect of your life, and in every realm of influence. All of creation awaits your fullness and maturity (**Rom 8:19**, **1 John 3:1-3**). May God manifest His Goodness and Glory through you, that people may get to know Him and be reconciled to Him (**2 Cor 5:17-21**). To God be all the Glory.

God bless and Shalom!

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