

What does the Bible really say about judging?

In Matthew 7, Jesus Christ clearly says, “Judge not.”

For this reason, Christians will be accused of breaking Jesus’ command when we call out sin.

We need to know how to respond.

Jesus did say “judge not,” but there’s more to it, and that’s what we’re talking about today.

This is Worldview Legacy, the show that helps Christian laymen become the worldview leaders their families and churches need.

I’m Joel Settecase. I’m a Christian apologist and the President of The Think Institute. It’s my mission to help you, the Christian man who’s not a pastor but is trying to pass on the Christian faith to the younger generation and want to be ready to give a good answer to the questions the world is asking.

So can you judge, according to the Bible?

This is important as a Christian man trying to live a Christian life, but also as a dad and husband, trying to lead your family in living out the Christian worldview in everyday life. You want to lead them well, and that means getting a biblical understanding of judging.

This question was suggested to me by Kevin Blessum. Kevin is a board member of The Think Institute, and he’s a Christian man, trying to live a Christian life. If you’re like Kevin me, you’d like to be able to answer this question.

So today we’re going to do a deep dive on this, and we’re going to look at:

- Four ways the Bible says you shouldn’t judge.
- Five ways the Bible says you *should* judge.
- Then we’ll look at how this question connects to everyday life, and how you can live out this teaching in your local area.

If you like what you hear and you want to learn more, you need to know about our free, online community.

This is the group where you can discuss and learn from over 800 others on the same journey you’re on.

Every week we're sharing resources to help you grow as a Christian man and build a legacy in the Christian worldview.

It's been really helpful for me, and others have contacted me to tell me how much they enjoy it. It's growing, too, so this is the perfect time to join. I'll tell you more about that at the end of this episode.

Let's look at 4 ways you shouldn't judge, and five ways you should.

TEACHING:¹

How should we not judge?

- Don't judge hypocritically—judge yourself first
 - Matthew 7:1–5: “Do not judge, so that you will not be judged. **2** For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with what measure you measure, it will be measured to you. **3** And why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? **4** Or how ^[a]can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ and behold, the log is in your own eye? **5** You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.
 - Luke 6:37: “And do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; ^[a]pardon, and you will be ^[b]pardoned.
 - Romans 2:1: Therefore you are without excuse, O man, everyone who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.
 - *Summary*: Don't be a hypocrite. Deal with yourself first, then deal with others. And don't apply a standard to others that you don't want applied to yourself.
- Do not slander or speak evil of fellow Christians
 - James 4:11–12: Do not slander one another, brothers. He who slanders a brother or judges his brother, slanders the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge *of it*. **12** There

¹ The five sections: Teaching, Heart, Illumination, Now What, and Knowledge Needed, are from The THINK Method of Biblical Study, which you can get free here: <https://thethink.institute/thinkmethod>

is *only* one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you who judge your neighbor?

- Matthew 5:22: But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be guilty before the Sanhedrin; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.
- *Summary: When you speak evil of your brother, you may suppose that in so doing you are therefore promoting the law—by condemning your brother for supposedly breaking it. However, what you are actually doing is taking the law into your own hands. You are setting yourself up as judge and jury. This is actually prohibited by the Law! Jesus forbids it. Moses forbade it. It's as if you are saying, I can disobey God's law in order to uphold God's law. But you are not God; you are not the judge—and God doesn't need your help to judge your fellow Christians. So don't slander or speak evil of them. **Note: this is not the same as judging false teaching or immoral behavior the right way, which we'll talk about in a few moments.***
- Don't judge Christians on religious observances that have been done away with.
 - Romans 14:1–4: Now accept the one who is weak in faith, *but* not for the purpose of passing judgment on 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 must not view the one who does not eat with contempt, and the one who does not eat must not judge the one who eats, for God 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.
 - Colossians 2:16–17: Therefore, no one is to judge you in food and drink, or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day— **17** things which are *only* a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.
 - *Summary: we're in the New Covenant. We're not bound by the customs of Old Covenant Israel. However, if someone wants to observe those, you shouldn't condemn them for that. And neither should they condemn you. Again, Jesus Christ is the judge—because He's the master.*
- Don't judge outsiders
 - 1 Corinthians 5:11–12; **11** But now I am writing to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is a sexually immoral person, or greedy, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to eat with

such a one. **12** For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Are you not to judge those who are within *the church*?

- John 3:18: **18** He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the ^[a]only begotten Son of God.
- *Summary: Those outside the church are already judged! Whoever does not receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord is already judged. We may acknowledge this fact, without trying to become their judge ourselves. These verses aren't saying we shouldn't point out sin, or discern between good and evil. But it does mean that we are not given the authority over society outside the church, simply by virtue of our being Christians. We may have a prophetic voice, without thinking we can render final judgment or cast people out of society. That is for the civil government, not the church.*
- **THERE ARE WAYS WE SHOULD JUDGE THOUGH. LET'S TALK ABOUT FIVE OF THOSE.**

How *should* we judge?

- 1. Judge yourself
 - 1 Timothy 4:15–16: **5** Take pains with these things; be *absorbed* in them, so that your progress will be evident to all. **16** Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.
 - Motive: desire to be effective and make clear progress. Paul says to Keep a close watch on your life and teaching, so you will save yourself and your hearers
 - 1 Corinthians 11:31: **31** But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged.
 - Judge yourself rightly (especially during the Lord's Supper!)
 - 2 Corinthians 10:12: **12** For we do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with ^[a]some of those who commend themselves, but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding.
 - By a true standard; don't make yourself the standard
 - 1 Corinthians 4:2–4.
 - The goal is to be found faithful
 - In this case, moreover, it is required ^[a]of stewards that one be found faithful. **3** But to me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you, or by *any* human ^[b]court. In fact, I do not even examine myself. **4** For I am conscious of nothing against myself,

yet I am not by this acquitted. But the one who examines me is the Lord.

- *Summary: Examine yourself regularly. Test your thoughts, words and actions by the perfect standard of Jesus Christ, laid out in the Bible. But you have to keep in mind that God is the final judge. Even if you aren't aware of any faults, God knows. So be in prayer about this; ask the Lord to reveal these things. Stay humble.*
- 2. Judge false and divisive teaching
 - 1 Corinthians 10:15: I speak as to prudent people. You judge what I say.
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:21: but examine all things; hold fast to that which is good
 - 1 John 4:1: Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.
 - Romans 16:17: Now I urge you, brothers, to keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and stumblings contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.
 - Titus 3:10: Reject a factious man after a first and second warning
 - 2 Peter 3:2–3: that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior *spoken* by your apostles, **3** knowing this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with *their* mocking, following after their own lusts,
 - Scoffers who mock biblical teaching
 - *Summary: As a Christian man, it's important not to accept teaching passively. Instead, you need to be like a good guardsman—watching to make sure no teaching gets in to your own beliefs, or your family, or your church, that is not true according to God's word. The fact that this is important is highlighted by the many passages warning about false teachers. This isn't a "what if" situation; it's a "when this happens" situation. False teaching is going to come in, and you need to be ready for it.*
- 3. Judge unrepentant sinners in the church:
 - Disorderly, undisciplined, unrepentantly sinful and sexually immoral people:
 - 2 Thessalonians 3:6: Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you **1a** keep away from every brother who walks in an **1b** unruly manner and not according to the tradition which **1c** they received from us.
 - 2 Timothy 3:1–5: But know this, that in the last days difficult times will come. **2** For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, **3** unloving, irreconcilable, **4a** malicious gossips, without

self-control, without gentleness, without love for good, **4** treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, **5** holding to a form of ^[b]godliness, but having denied its power. Keep away from such men as these.

- 1 Corinthians 5:9–11: I wrote you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people; **10** I *did* not at all *mean* with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the greedy and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world. **11** But now I am writing to you not to associate ^[a]with any so-called brother if he is a sexually immoral person, or greedy, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to eat with such a one.
- 2 Peter 2:10–16 warns of those who “those who go after the flesh in its corrupt lust and despise authority.”
 - These are false teachers who practice immorality.
- *Summary: It's not wrong to judge the actions of someone who claims to be a Christian and yet refuses to turn from their sin. As believers, we're never going to be completely sinless. However, there should be a conscious “putting off of the old man” and turning from the former sins that used to define us. When that doesn't happen, there's a real danger that these people's sin will spread and infect and corrupt the church community. So we have to “judge” in this way—we have to be discerning. And make sure that we don't fall into this camp as Christian man!*
- 4. Judge disputes within the church
 - Matthew 18:17 says that, when two believers cannot settle their disagreement, they are to tell the dispute to the church. This often gets understood as “elders,” but it says church. That means that members of a congregation are supposed to be able to corporately decide disagreements within their fellowship. This is a good form of “judging.” When done right it's supposed to lead to healing and reconciliation.
 - 1 Corinthians 6:2–4; **2** Or do you not know that the ^[a]saints will judge the world? If the world is judged by you, are you not worthy to ^[b]constitute the smallest law courts? **3** Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life? **4** So if you have law courts dealing with matters of this life, do you appoint those who are of no account in the church as judges?
 - In other words, Christians should be well equipped to handle arguments between one another. We shouldn't need to resort to law courts.

- 1 Corinthians 5:13: But those who are outside, God will judge. REMOVE THE WICKED MAN FROM AMONG YOURSELVES.
 - If someone won't listen to reason, and if a person is clearly in the wrong, the church is actually to disfellowship that person.
 - Cast them outside the church—where God will judge them! (This is not saying those outside the church will not be judged. Rather it is not the place of the church to do this).
- *Summary: believers in their local church bodies need to be able to handle conflicts among themselves, and to judge right from wrong between disputing parties. God has given churches a mechanism for disciplining members who don't repent after sinning against their fellow Christian. This might seem harsh to some, but again the goal is reconciliation.*
- 5. Judge sin, anywhere and everywhere.
 - Ephesians 5:11–12: And do not participate in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead even **11** expose them. **12** For it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret.
 - 1 Corinthians 6:9–10: Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither *the* sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor **10** effeminate, nor homosexuals, **10** nor thieves, nor *the* greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. **11** And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.
 - *Summary: we should be able to discern right from wrong, and to label things as good and evil. This is good, healthy judgment.*

HEART:

- We want to judge others because it makes us feel better about ourselves.
- It allows us to avoid dealing with our own sinful stuff.
- It's easier and less painful to condemn others than to work on ourselves.

ILLUMINATION of the GOSPEL

- Jesus allowed Himself to be condemned for us.

- He was judged guilty so that we may be judged not-guilty.
- He has secured us our position, by grace through faith, in the kingdom of saints.
- That means we have a glorious future wherein we will judge the world and even the angels!
 - In the future, the saints will judge the world and angels!
 - 1 Corinthians 6:2–3

NOW WHAT:

- Leave final judgment of the world in God's hands.
 - Romans 12:19
 - *There is a wrong way to judge, and there is a right way to judge.*
 - *Don't be a hypocrite. Don't hold others to a standard that you aren't willing to hold yourself to.*
 - *Judgment should work outward in concentric circles:*
 - *Begin with yourself (Matthew 7)*
 - *Then pay close attention to your church*
 - *1 Peter 4:17–18 is relevant here: For it is time for judgment to begin [a]with the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? **18** AND IF IT IS WITH DIFFICULTY THAT THE RIGHTEOUS IS SAVED, [b]WHAT WILL BECOME OF THE GODLESS MAN AND THE SINNER?*
- Speak up against evil when you see it.
 - Ephesians 5:11 again—expose it.
- Don't worry about how others judge you, especially those in the world.
 - The spiritual man judges all things but is himself not judged: 1 Corinthians 2:15
- Teach your kids to discern right from wrong
- Teach them to begin by discerning between right and wrong in their own hearts.
- Practice this in front of them; repent when needed.

Want to learn more? Join the conversation in the ThinkSquad.

I think this is the best group on Facebook.

Join the ThinkSquad today

To get access to the group, all you have to do is open up Facebook and search for ThinkSquad. That's t-h-i-n-k-s-q-u-a-d. Answer the short membership questions, and that's all it takes. Thanks for listening to Worldview Legacy. Thank you to Kevin Blessum for asking this question. This episode was produced by Yours Truly, Joel Settecase, and is a production of the Think Institute.

We equip believers to explain, share and defend the Christian message.

And we are based. By God's grace.