

Message: Judge Not?

Hello and welcome to JesusFamilies.org's audio messages!

The title of this message is, "Judge Not?"

Don't be judgmental. We have all heard that coming from someone's mouth. The question for a disciple of Joshua is - Is it a principle that Joshua of Nazareth teaches?

Like many things, there is some truth and some falsehood in the statement – "don't be judgmental". Please consider this example.

Imagine you are walking in a town park and you see a large adult man beating up an 8 year old girl. Will you make a judgment and try and help the girl, or will you say in your heart, "well, I know I am not to judge others, so I will just keep to my own business...after all, I don't know all the circumstances that lead up to the man beating the young girl". If you make a judgment that the behavior is wrong, will you do something about it, or will you seek to avoid conflict if you believe you might lose something by engaging the wrong individual?

Or, imagine you are attending some meeting, and the speaker says, 'you know, all people with dark skin are like uncontrolled animals'. Will you judge that statement, or will you say in your heart, "well, judge not, that is his opinion and I will make no judgment regarding his opinion". If you judge the statement to be wrong, will you do something about it, or will you seek to avoid conflict at almost all costs.

Or, imagine you know someone whose purpose in life seems to be to judge your faults and imperfections even though you are quite aware of them and would like to change them. These three examples help to address the question, 'Is Judge Not' a good principle.

Before we move forward much further, let us get one important point out of the way right at the beginning. When you say something that another person responds to with the statement, 'you should not judge', you need to understand that the person who said that to you made a judgment! Please allow me to repeat that.

What they should really say is, "I don't agree with your judgment", but that requires a willingness to discuss what is the correct judgment but sadly, most people can't defend well why they believe something is right or wrong so the easy way out is to say, "don't judge". While that might be the easy way out, it also promotes the destruction of reason and the denial of right and wrong, both of which are far worse than risking being wrong about some matter. Again and sadly, when we are guided by pride or fear instead of by faith or love, then not caring about what is true or false, or right or wrong, really is not as important to us as if we either look good or can avoid contention.

Let's move on. Many Christians will adamantly proclaim, "Judge not...Jesus says don't judge" or "Don't be judgmental". Many exposed to Christian teachings will agree and believe they ought not to judge anyone.

What does Joshua teach regarding judging? Let's clarify a few things first. Joshua taught very clearly that people ought to be careful to avoid being a hypocrite. What is hypocrisy? It is to say one thing and do another. For example, the parent telling their child, "you should not smoke cigarettes" and yet they smoke cigarettes. Here are a few of Joshua's teachings in that address hypocrisy:

"Beware of the leaven of the religious leaders, which is hypocrisy"

"Go ahead and do what the religious and legal leaders say, but don't do as they do, for they do not do what they say".

"You religious leaders are doing very badly when you are careful to keep all your minor religious rituals and yet you don't keep the more important matters of your law, like justice and mercy".

Joshua was very clear about the need for people to behave consistently with what they proclaim – that is called having integrity. Hypocrisy would be the opposite of integrity. Therefore, we can conclude that if Joshua taught something, then he lived in accordance with the teaching and vice versa...Joshua was not a hypocrite...he lived very well, meaning he lived what he taught.

So, let's go ahead and look at the teaching of Joshua that millions use to justify the "Don't be judgmental" proclamations. Here is what Joshua said in Matt. 7:1-5:

"Do not judge so that you will not be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. 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? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye', and behold, the log is in your own eye? 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".

As you can see, the statement in context teaches we must be careful when we make judgments, especially in regard to being hypocritical. Please especially note when he says, "then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye". Do you see how he says it is OK to judge with that saying. Therefore, the teaching does NOT teach, "Don't judge others".

I hope the listener can see how easy it is to pull a statement of Joshua's out of context and twist it into something it is not. Remember that Joshua teaches that we should be careful to avoid hypocrisy when judging others, but that teaching does not conclude to not judge others. We can prove this by looking to Joshua himself. Remember, Joshua lived in accordance with his teachings. What does Joshua do in regard to judging other people?

Joshua judges others and exhorts others to make right judgments. Joshua would be a hypocrite if he taught others to never judge a person, and yet judged other's himself. Listen carefully to the following words of the One whose words will judge all men, and see if you can apply the 'oh, never judge' popular belief to his sayings? The context is Joshua speaking to the religious leaders who were misleading people who were seeking to know or understand God:

"But woe to you, religious writers and leaders, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from people; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. Woe to you, religious writers and leaders, hypocrites, because you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense you make long prayers; therefore you will receive greater condemnation. "Woe to you, religious writers and leaders, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.

“Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘Whoever swears by the temple, that is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple is obligated.’ 17 You fools and blind men! Which is more important, the gold or the temple that sanctified the gold? 18 And, ‘Whoever swears by the altar, that is nothing, but whoever swears by the offering on it, he is obligated.’ 19 You blind men, which is more important, the offering, or the altar that sanctifies the offering? 20 Therefore, whoever swears by the altar, swears both by the altar and by everything on it. 21 And whoever swears by the temple, swears both by the temple and by Him who dwells within it. 22 And whoever swears by heaven, swears both by the throne of God and by Him who sits upon it.

23 “Woe to you, religious writers and leaders, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. 24 You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!

25 “Woe to you, religious writers and leaders, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. 26 You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also. 27 “Woe to you, religious writers and leaders, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. 28 So you, too, outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

29 “Woe to you, religious writers and leaders, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, 30 and say, ‘If we had been living in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ 31 So you testify against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. 32 Fill up, then, the measure of the guilt of your fathers. 33 You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell?”

Now, if the listener cannot hear Joshua make some judgments regarding people in that passage, then you are deaf dear listener. In addition, if you are honest and apply the normal American definition of someone being “judgmental” then you would judge Joshua as being extremely judgmental. Does this concern you, dear listener, that if you would be honest, you would judge Joshua as “judgmental”? Is it possible that you have the wrong understanding, and Joshua the right one?

Now some will say, “But he is the Son of God, he can make such judgments”. Well, he would certainly be at less risk of hypocrisy being the Son of God, but he does not mean that his followers must not make judgments. In fact he says the following to all people:

“Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.” John 7:24

He wants all people to make right judgments because people do in fact judge hundreds of times each day. He exhorts us to not judge by outward appearance, but rather consider as many facts as you can so you can render a right judgment.

Further, Joshua says:

“I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.” John 5:30

Here, he gives us insight into a major factor in making right judgments...if we judge people and their words and behavior in a selfless manor – in other words not seeking to gain something wrongly for ourselves by our judgment – then our judgment is more likely to be right.

Dear listener, this is an extremely important matter. Many people will tell you ‘don’t be judgmental’ or ‘oh, don’t judge’ when they hear something they don’t like...oftentimes a sin they want to justify. We should not be quick to judge another person, but we do need to judge people’s behavior and beliefs. As disciples, we judge people’s behavior and beliefs against our standard, Joshua’s teachings. One personal characteristic that is desperately needed in these times is courage. Tragically many men seem to think the only way to express courage is in an attempt to kill another person for some justifiable reason. This is a corrupted view of courage. What the heavenly Father needs is men who have the courage to do what His Son says, which will often lead to being rejected and persecuted. The best expressions of courage is to speak or live out Joshua’s teachings when we know we will lose something important to us, perhaps even our lives. Let us look at a moral example that requires both judgment and courage in order to address.

In the realm of human sexual behavior, Joshua teaches that sexual expression between humans is only approved by the heavenly Father between a male and female who are united or in close and deep unity in their lives. Let me repeat that. Here are his teachings in that respect in Matt 19:

Some religious leaders came to Joshua, testing him and asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?" (4) And he answered and said, "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning Made Them Male And Female, (5) and said, 'For This Reason A Man Shall Leave His Father And Mother And Be Joined To His Wife, And The Two Shall Become One Flesh'? (6) "So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate." (7) They said to him, "Why then did Moses command to Give Her A Certificate Of Divorce And Send Her Away?" (8) He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses (not God) permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. (9) "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for her sexual impurity before marriage, and marries another woman commits adultery.

In this saying, Joshua clearly defines the marriage relationship as consisting of the joining of a Male and Female, which union creates a unity of one flesh, which should not be separated. He then speaks of divorce, which clearly defines the “one flesh” as marriage. So, in this passage, Joshua clearly defines what a marriage is...a union between a male and a female.

Further, he says in Mark 7:

“That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man or makes a man morally unclean. 21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications (sex between two unmarried people), thefts, murders, adulteries (sex between a married person and a non-married person), 22 deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality (an person promoting themselves in a sexual manner to someone other than their spouse), envy, slander, pride and foolishness. 23 All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.”

Joshua covers the bases pretty well in this saying regarding clarifying what the heavenly Father says are wrong or sinful sexual expressions for humans. To sum up what he says, he says sexual expressions between two un-married people; or between a married person and someone other than their spouse; or to even present your self in a sexually suggestive manner to someone other than your spouse, are wrong or sinful behaviors.

Let us put the two pieces together. First, Joshua defines marriage as between a “Male and Female”. Next, he teaches that sexual expressions outside of the marriage relationship is sinful.

Therefore, the only approved sexual expression for humans is between a male and female who are married which means are in close committed unity in their lives.

Therefore, dear listener, when someone says to you, “oh, aren’t you glad that homosexual people are getting more and more freedom from the bigotry they have been exposed to in the past”, you have a choice to make. Will you express a right judgment and exhibit courage, or will you take the “don’t judge” route to maintain your personal comfort by avoiding likely conflict?

No, this does not mean you are to hate homosexuals, which accusation they will be quick to level at you. Rather, it mean you listen to Joshua of Nazareth to know right from wrong, and you made a judgment about a person’s belief who contradicts Joshua...that their belief regarding what is proper human sexual expression, is wrong. This type of judgment is sorely needed in the US where the moral decline of the people could not be more evident. What is the cost of moral decline? The pain and destruction that is accompanied by the destruction of people’s lives due to their living wrongly. Is there any evidence this is happening? Well, suicide is now the leading cause of injury related death in the US, with drug overdose in third place. Are people killing themselves either directly through suicide or indirectly through drug overdose, evidence of living wrongly? I would argue strongly, yes, and furthermore, that there are many wrong judgments that are made by those who kill themselves.

OK, let us take a look at some elements that can guide us in making proper judgments, or judging things rightly.

1. It is OK to judge, in fact, you make judgments many times each day, so you might as well make the right one! It is better to acknowledge you do make judgments each day and do so rightly then to deceive yourself into thinking you do not judge. It is an essential part of the human experience to judge what is true or false, real or fake. Do so properly by making Joshua of Nazareth – NOT the bible – as you standard of what is true or false, right or wrong;
2. Do not judge someone for something they cannot change or some physical characteristic like their skin color, nationality or where they were born, language, accent, physical abilities or capacities, etc. Those who judge others negatively for these things are making wrong judgments according to Joshua;
3. Be careful not to judge hypocritically, that is to say to judge someone as wrong for some words or behavior that we ourselves do...hypocrisy works hard against compassion, the most important element of love;
4. Try and judge from a selfless perspective – understand that we will be judged according to how selflessly or graciously we judge others, or according to how selfishly or harshly we judge others...the measure we use will be used to judge us when we stand before our Creator.

Let us review these again, dear listener, for this matter is extremely important.

The American culture and many who promote its ways, insist that judging other people is wrong and ‘judgmental’. It is wrong to make a practice of judging others for things they cannot change, or for their personal faults or failures when we share the same faults or failuresin this way, being ‘judgmental’ would be wrong. But just because there are many making wrong judgments DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE ACT OF JUDGING ITSELF IS WRONG. Those who preach the wrong belief that all judgment regarding human beliefs or behaviors is wrong are in serious error on two points:

- 1) They are judging others as wrong for judging, and thus they themselves are making a judgment, and thus they are playing the hypocrite at a fundamental level, basically saying, “I can judge but you should not”.

2) When they say ‘you should not judge’ because they have a belief or behavior they want to protect against other’s disagreement, they have a wrong motivation for trying to get other’s to not judge...they want others to share in their view or belief (whatever it is)...and if you won’t do that, then you should not have the right to judge.

The “don’t judge” belief is often used as a clever tool used by one person or group to silence another who opposes some human belief or behavior. Perhaps the most prevalent or widely promoted use of this tactic was briefly looked at earlier in this message in terms of the homosexuals promoting their beliefs and behavior. Clearly the homosexuals preach that those who oppose their views are “judgmental bigots who oppose human rights”. That is some clever and emotive language that sadly is devoid of reason. Are the homosexuals making any judgments by labeling their opponents as “bigots” and “against human rights”?

On a higher level, it is very important for the listener to seek what is true and false, right and wrong, and to make good judgments. If you have children, do you judge what is appropriate for them to view on a video screen? How can you make right judgments in that regard? If you are a young person seeking a spouse, how can you make good judgments in that regard...after all, choosing a life companion is one of the most important judgments you will make in your life. And in case you have not noticed, it seems that most people these days make the wrong judgment and the relationship fails. The good news is there is a way to avoid those bad judgments.

On the highest level, how can you judge what is the right way to live each day or the wrong way to live each day? Do you have a standard to make such judgments? Most people say, ‘oh, you need to listen to your heart in order to make those judgments’. Well, given the state of mankind – just how much conflict is there on any given day amongst humans? – I would urge you to reject that belief, and instead turn to a much more reliable method.

I strongly urge the listener to consider making the one who called himself – the Son of Man – a title that essentially means, “the model for mankind” – as your one and only standard for how to live your life the right way. And I must add that making Joshua of Nazareth your standard is not the same as making the bible your standard. Don’t listen to the bible, for many of its authors contradict what Joshua teaches. Instead, listen to the one who calls himself the way, the truth and the life. If you do that, your ability to make right judgments will improve so much, you should understand this saying of his will keep personal affection:

“If you continue in my teachings, then you are my follower, and then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free”.