

How Should we Judge?

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Romans 14:1-12

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1 Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters. 2 One person's faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. 3 The one who eat everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them. 4 Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand. 5 One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. 6 Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. 7 For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. 8 If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. 9 For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. 10 You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you

treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. 11 It is written: "As surely as I live," says the Lord, "every knee will bow before me; every tongue will acknowledge God." 12 So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.

"Judge not, lest ye be judged." The way that we judge others is the same way that we will be judged. "Don't worry about the speck in your neighbor's eye while you have a log in your own eye." These are the sayings that people love to quote. They say that we are not supposed to judge others because we are only supposed to love unconditionally. "God is the only one who can judge me!" Is this what the Bible says for us about judging? Are we to never judge anyone, ever? I don't think that would be possible. In fact, there is Scripture that tells us to hate what is evil. How can we understand what is evil without casting judgment? We read about how we will know them by their fruits. To "know them" would mean that we are judging them by the fruit that they produce. It sounds like the idea of judgment is not too farfetched for us to do. In fact, it almost sounds like we are told to judge. However, the question is...how shall we judge? Let's dive into that today.

1 Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters. When someone comes to the faith brand new, we have very little expectations of them. We don't anticipate them to know everything there is to know about the Bible. We don't expect them to be able to discern in quite the

same way that a mature Christian would. They may have lots of questions that drive us nuts to answer because we just wish they would know. We must have lots of patience with them. We can't expect that it will be evident of all the changes that have transpired in their life. They may not have given up their struggles completely when they first come to Christ. How long did it take for people to notice a change in us? Did people not pass judgment upon us as we matured in order to notice that we have changed? If we were to be ourselves as we are now, and we went back in time, are there people who would have a hard time believing that we are Christian? I know that when I was trying to win the heart of a woman who was into witchcraft in my teens, there is no way that she would believe where I have gotten to now. I also know how hard it is for me to believe that someone who majorly hurt me could earn my forgiveness because I can see them as someone different now. I had a girlfriend that I was dating when I first met Sarah that truly hurt me and damaged a friendship I had by telling me lies, that now is someone else entirely when I see her. I can talk with her without seeing the girl who hurt me, instead I can see the woman who has learned her lessons and carried that guilt for a long time. No matter what we do in life, there are people that we will hurt and there are people who will hurt us, the difference is how we will treat these people after we have come to Christ. We pass judgment on whether or not we have changed and whether or not they have. Without judgment, we can never tell if someone has gone from milk to solid food.

There are also things that we judge as what makes service better. We have judgments we pass on what a particular passage may say. We will not all 100% agree on absolutely everything. However, some of those things are not worth tearing apart our relationship with each other and pass judgment upon someone's relationship with Christ. If we are arguing about the color of the carpet, then that is not enough to pass judgment upon someone's faith walk. If we are arguing about where the children's sermon fits into Sunday service, the same conclusion can be made. If we are arguing about what kind of floor needs to be put into the parsonage or who will pay what bill or anything so meaningless, then again, the same conclusion can be made. However, if we are arguing about whether some Scriptures should never be taught in church, then perhaps there is something to judge there.

2 One person's faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. 3 The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them. 4 Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand. We may argue about what food is clean and what food is unclean. We may argue about many of the things that I mentioned above. However, Paul reminds us that there are sacred things that we must never disagree on. We must agree on the miracle of the virgin birth. We must all agree on Jesus rising

from the dead physically. We must all agree on how everything within the Old Testament and the New Testament are necessary for salvation. We must agree on those things or else there is trouble. We may not understand everything or agree on what something means, but we must all agree that we need Jesus to enter heaven. He is the only way there. “No one may come to the Father but by Me.” When Paul wrote this letter, he was addressing the fact that there were many who were more enslaved to the traditions of the many festivals than they were interested in giving themselves to Christ. They claimed to follow God but were instead followers of rituals that stopped them from truly knowing God. Paul cast a judgment because they were not true followers of Jesus because he could see the evidence by their fruits. There are people today who exist within our churches who do not produce good fruit. There are people who would rather see dissension within our walls than they would to see the light of Christ being taken out into the world. There are some who are so busy being angry about things not being done their way that they can’t see God at work in what is actually transpiring. If you are one of those, then you need to have a come to Jesus moment. The altar is here.

5 One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. 6 Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains

does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. There are two types of people who exist within our churches. There are those who know every Christian holiday and make a big celebration and recognition of them, but there are also those who don't even know what the Christian holidays are. Does knowing the holidays make one more of a servant than the other? Does knowing them make one more important or more of a believer than another? Absolutely not!

There are arguments about which day Church should be on. Some say that it should be Sunday because that is the recognition of when Jesus returned from the dead and visited the disciples. Some believe that church should be on Saturday because you can then give the first day of the week completely to God with no work. Some feel that having church on Sunday is giving the ability to start the week with Jesus. There are many views about church and its start, but ultimately, it doesn't mean anything if having a particular day means more than what that day represents. It is time spent worshiping God with fellow believers. Is there anything more important than that when it comes to being a Christian? No, and yet, this very rule can be enough to separate fellow believers from being able to form a good relationship. We tend to spend time casting judgment about why we are right and the other is wrong. "We are not told exactly how to keep the day, but it is to be observed in worship as a special day."¹ There is no reason to pass judgment upon a

¹ Accordance App, The Complete Biblical Library

believer deciding which day should be given to the Lord, but we can pass judgment upon someone never giving a day to the Lord.

7 For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. 8 If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

How we decide to live each day matters! Are we living each day like it is our last? Are we living a life that if Jesus came back today, we would be ready to enter heaven? If we judge correctly, are there people who we feel are not ready for that adventure? If so, then are we not casting judgment? If we feel that there are people who still need to hear and accept the Gospel of Jesus dying and resurrecting, then we are casting judgment that they are not going to enter heaven at this point in time. If we are not supposed to judge at all, then why did Jesus tell us to “Go and make disciples of all nations?” Why couldn’t Jesus just accept everyone right now? If we are not supposed to judge, then how do we know that we will be accepted into heaven and someone else will not?

We only know that we will be accepted when we are willing to live for the Lord and have accepted Him into our life to reign over us. Some will make this choice, but some will not. We can’t force it, but without casting judgment, how do we know who will need it? However, remind me again about how we are to “judge not lest ye be judged.” Each day belongs to God and He is omnipotent and omniscient. He knows all. He knows

everything. He holds the power over life and death. He also knows that we can't live this life by ourselves. We need our fellow brothers and sisters in order to continue in this life. Gathering together should bring us joy. Gathering together should provide support or comfort when it becomes necessary. When we see God in others, then we can see Him in ours so much easier. We need others who can help us stay on the straight and narrow, but without judgment, then how can we discern when someone needs corrected? When someone is broken about something, then by the world's definition of love, we should just agree with every terrible thing the person says about themselves because we are affirming their beliefs. However, by God's definition of love and judgment, then we acknowledge why something has broken our sibling, but we also have love to guide them to the path that will bring them back on the side of God. Without judgment of something being sinful and why it is sinful, then we could not have any hope of having Godly wisdom to guide them the right way.

9 For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. 10 You, then, why do you judge your brother and sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. 11 It is written: "As surely as I live," says the Lord, "every knee will bow before me; every tongue will acknowledge God." 12 So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God. This type of judgment that is

being referenced here is of the mindset that you are better than someone else. This judgment is someone who says that “I am going to heaven and no one else has the type of chance that I have.” “No one is as good as me.” These people think that they can decide who is a Christian and who is not. These people believe they hold the keys to the afterlife. These people are full of hypocrisy. They can’t see any good in anyone else. They have decided that someone has done something wrong and will forever hold that against them. We want to view people the way that other humans view people instead of viewing them the way that God views them. We can be like Abraham who wanted to rescue the people of Sodom and Gomorrah before destruction came upon the land, or we can be like Jonah who was angry that God decided to save Ninevah. Both served a purpose for God. I would rather spend my life hated by man if that means that God has accepted me. I believe in the miracles of Jesus. I choose to judge by the way God has instructed us to do. If someone has decided that they refuse to believe in the existence of Jesus and the miracle that He accomplished, then I judge them as deciding that hell is where they will go unless they are willing to repent. If someone believes that sin should be celebrated, then those individuals will have no hope without repentance. I will judge that there is a right way and a wrong way to be a follower of Christ.

When I stand before God to explain myself, I want to explain that I desired to live according to His Word. Will I succeed on

everything? No! The things that I am successful on, will I be perfect? No! When God judges my heart, it is my hope that He will see that I lived by His Word in it instead of living with a heart full of the world. I have seen people say that they would rather be in hell for who they choose to accept and love than be accepted in heaven for neglecting people. The love they reference is the love of the world because they see God as hateful. I don't see God that way. That doesn't sound like the God I serve. That doesn't sound like a God who can judge righteously. As much as people don't want me to cast judgment, I'm afraid that I will disappoint them because judgment exists within me. Will you judge righteously through the lens of God, or will you reject judgment at all through the influence of the world? You have the Holy Spirit. You have the Word of God. You have everything that you need to judge righteously. It is up to you to decide how you wish to respond.