

11 “DON’T BE JUDGMENTAL” AS I JUDGE YOU!

Opening Questions:

- Do you make judgments?
- Is it wrong to be a judgmental person?
- Should we hold fallacies as a guiding belief?
- Is all judgment wrong?
- Is it “unloving” to make a judgment about another person’s beliefs or behavior?

The fallacy of existential or ethical relativism is making people unwilling or unable to discern truth and thus leading them to believe that judgment is wrong.

Many are quick to say, “oh, you'd better be careful about judging others” or “don't be judgmental.” Like many things, that could be a true or false statement depending upon the context of the comment. One thing is for sure; most people are proclaiming, “don't judge” in a wrong way—in an extremely damaging way; a way caused by a more profound problem of denying right or wrong, good or bad exists; in a way driven by the false view of existential relativism.

The key point to understand about this topic is that *not all judgment is wrong, just various types of judgment*. In fact, some kinds of judgment are critically important, right and necessary. The types of judgments that are wrong according to Joshua include the following:

- Condemnatory judgment of groups of people based not on their ethical beliefs or practices but merely on amoral demographics. People are individuals and while they may be part of a group - “I'm a Russian” for example - it is fallacious to judge people based on an amoral group label (race, gender, nationality) because it is individuals who are morally responsible for their actions.
- Another type of judgment that is wrong is to condemn individuals based on attributes that are merely physical and thus play no part in their behavior. Examples of things people cannot change include things like where they were born or the color of their skin or how “attractive” they are other physical aspects; or how “smart” they are, or what language they speak or don't speak, some disability or handicap, etc.

- Another wrong type of judgment is hypocritical judgment. Hypocritical judgment is to say to someone, "you should not do that" or "you should do this" when I am not abstaining from or not doing the very same or similar things. For example, if I say to another person, "you should not smoke cigarettes," while a few minutes later I smoke cigarettes. Or I say, "you ought to give money to poor people who want to work" when I am not doing so.
- Another wrong type of judgment is self-righteous judgment which is to have our judgment biased by self-pride. This would mean I think of myself as more valuable or more important than other people and thus my judgments are regularly critical of other individuals, looking for their faults and weaknesses and mistakes to put them down instead of constructively discussing beliefs, principles or concepts that affect us.

On the other hand, right judgment is commended by Joshua as we will see. *Correct judgment includes the judging of truth versus falsehood; of right and wrong human behavior; the sincere and sober judgment of our faults and weaknesses; as well as the gentle, and compassionate and thus non-condemnatory judgment and correction of other's wrong behavior.* People should be judged by *their character* which character manifests itself in words and action. Here are Joshua's statements commending right judgment:

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

You have rightly judged... (Luke 7:43)

Yes, and why, even of yourselves, do you not judge what is right? (Luke 12:57)

For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through him. He who believes in him is not condemned; he who does not believe has been condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only spiritually birthed Son of God. (John 3:17-18)

As you can see above, Joshua of Nazareth *urges others to make right judgments and commends others for making right judgments.* Therefore, not all judgment is wrong.

He also says this:

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. (Matt. 7:1-5)

Are these sayings contradictory, or complementary? They are complementary.

If you look at the context of the sayings above where he is exhorting others to make right judgments or commending them for making right judgments, he is *addressing judging whether something is true or false, right or wrong* – he was not making judgments *about an individual's weaknesses or flaws*. Judging is especially critical with religious beliefs or beliefs about God. Joshua was regularly correcting people's wrong ideas about God and what God wants. This practice of his is what got him into so much trouble because people's pride was offended when he said in some form, "your belief about God is wrong" or "this thing you do for God He doesn't want" or other such corrections.

The latter saying above, where Joshua says, "Do not judge so that you will not be judged", is an excellent warning to us not to make the wrong type of judgments. In that saying, he is specifically focusing on the self-righteous type of wrong view (which often lead to hypocritical judgments), where I am overlooking my faults and problems and instead focusing on another person's.

For example, if I see someone from another nation or who speaks another language or who is wearing clothes I don't like, and I say, "Oh, that person is inferior or wrong or bad or 'low class'" then I have made a wrong judgment. Unfortunately, I will be accountable to the same degree of strictness for things that do matter! Dear reader, you don't want that, because all you will do is condemn yourself—and if you can't see that, then you are bound by self-pride, and you are in a wrong place.

Inevitably you have either been accused yourself or have been the accuser, saying to someone something like, "you had better be careful, you are judging someone, and Jesus says we are not to judge." Typically, this response comes when you have said (or have heard someone say) something perceived as negative (in reality probably corrective) about some person's behavior or belief or event or organization.

The simple truth is we all make many judgments each day.

If you see a man beating up a young child, you will make a judgment that his behavior is wrong and needs to be stopped. If you hear a person say something you perceive as negative about your mother or children, then you will immediately judge that person's words! If you decide not to go into a specific neighborhood during the evening hours, then you are making a judgment. As you listen to some preacher say that God commands you this night to give your entire savings account to "his ministry," you will make a judgment. As you are reading my words in this book, you are judging them against your understanding of what is true. This type of judgment is a good

thing, for Joshua commands it (John 4:24, 8:32), and it is part of the rational mind that God gave us to sort out that which is true from that which is false.

Those that are quick to say, "Don't judge" or "you are judgmental," are generally those people who don't hold to any objective truth or ethic, but instead believe that *their* beliefs are correct and others are wrong with no objective standard to rationally defend that. The whole stance or response of "Don't judge" or "you are judgmental" is a way to try and force others to their existential relativistic view that no objective or absolute truth exists. As followers of the One who says, "I am the truth," we reject that view and instead believe Joshua.

Telling people not to judge is irrational and wrong from two perspectives. First, as we have seen, all people make judgments, thus making the statement "you should not judge" without a qualifier, is at best poorly stated. More importantly, those who make the statement, "you should not judge" are being hypocritical because they have judged another's words or actions, and that is why they told them not to judge! As soon as you tell someone not to judge, you have judged their opinion or judgment as somehow wrong, and that is irrational - this practice can make for an irrational go around of accusations of "you better not judge."

The real issue that must be recognized before the emotions get too impassioned is what is the truth regarding the matter at hand. Instead of accusing one another of "judging," what should happen is the clearer thinking person should ask the question, "can we use reason to try and sort this issue out?" This approach is almost always the proper way out from accusations of "you are judgmental." Sadly, in many circumstances, those accusing another of "judging" are not interested in truth, but rather in protecting their own incorrect opinions or tightly held traditions of men.

Here is another example of a wrong understanding of "judgment." A contentious issue these days is "gay marriage." If a person says, "gay marriage is wrong," then they are highly likely to be subjected to people rebuking them saying, "you are a judgmental person" or "you should not condemn homosexuals" or "Jesus says to love, not hate."

All of those rebukes are fallacious.

Knowing right behavior from wrong behavior is critical for any people group who want to hold to some unifying moral ethic. Those who listen to the real Joshua of Nazareth know he teaches that marriage is defined as, and intended by, the Creator as between one man and one woman for life.

In the case of the "you are a judgmental person" rebuke, a proper response could be, "well, in context, thank you! It is critical that we judge right behavior from wrong behavior".

Regarding the "you should not condemn homosexuals" rebuke, a proper response could be, "I did not say that I condemn homosexual persons, I said I don't believe God's definition of marriage includes two same-gendered people."

Concerning the "Jesus says to love, not hate" rebuke, a proper response could be, "yes, he does teach that, and I did not say I hate homosexual people; I

merely said that I don't believe God's definition of marriage includes two same-gendered people. Why do you accuse me of hatred when I don't hate homosexuals or any other kind of person?"

The real issue is that people in general, and by the millions, are leaving behind any concept of a higher being or deity giving absolute truth. According to this belief, since a God or higher being does not exist (or he/she/it cannot be known), then the only source of truth regarding right or wrong human behavior is we human beings. Only people make up our moral standards, and those standards will vary from one culture to the next and even from one person to the next. Therefore, it is wrong to try and say other people will be held accountable to some higher ethical standard; or stated another way, it is wrong to say people will be held to some moral standard of behavior. Ethical relativism is the "new belief" of the masses. And this belief generates many, "don't judge" or "you are too judgmental" responses to people who can identify true from false or right from wrong according to some standard.

Finally, any person who holds to the belief that God exists and provides rules or guidelines for human behavior will ironically be judged wrongly as "hateful" by relativists because relativists so desperately don't want to believe that there is a God who will hold people accountable for how they live their lives. You should wonder why this is so.

How do we untangle this mess about "judging"?

The solution is not difficult to understand, but it is difficult to live by. If you remember and live by these next five principles of Joshua regarding judgment, you will be doing well in this crucial matter of judging.

- First, *it is critical that we do judge what is true versus what is false in all areas of our lives with Joshua as our Standard and using good reason and logic.* This is a critical aspect of what it means to be a human being, and when people abandon this, the result will always be the same—chaos, confusion, ruin and the strong or powerful ruling over and using the weak or powerless.
- Second, we are to *judge people's behavior, words and beliefs against Joshua's words-teachings-truths*, for Joshua the Creator's messenger is the standard of truth (John 14:6; 17:17).

(Regarding this principle, it is imperative to distinguish between a person's beliefs and behavior versus their amoral behaviors or physical characteristics. We are to carefully judge all God beliefs and ethical beliefs against Joshua's teachings, and we are *not* to judge people's amoral behavior. Amoral behavior means customs, traditions, ceremonies or actions that have no moral or spiritual implication. For example, the way someone brushes their teeth, or how or what someone eats, or the manner of their speaking, etc. We are also not to judge someone's physical appearance, i.e., their body shape, skin color or facial features.)

- Third, when judging other's behaviors and words, we are to be *careful that we are not committing similar sins or errors* (Matt. 7:1-6). To be

correcting someone for behavior that we have not gained control over is hypocritical and Joshua taught that hypocrisy significantly blinds us and prevents us from becoming better human beings.

- Forth, we are to be *slow to judge others and quick to listen and to forgive* (Matt. 7:1-6, 6:14-15). Be gracious; give people the benefit of the doubt; listen carefully and slowly weight the matter—treat others the way we want to be treated.
- Fifth and finally, we are *not to condemn anyone as hopelessly beyond the reach of God's love* (Luke 6:37). The follower of Joshua should never tell someone, "you're going to hell." Not even Joshua - the only one to ascend into heaven (John 3:13), and thus could justly give that judgment, and who certainly knew many people who were going to end up destroying themselves in hell - brought that condemnation to individuals. We can always change! There is always Hope!

In the next chapter, we will take a look at one of the most popular concepts in U.S. culture at this time – what it means to be a tolerant person - and try and make some right judgments!

Chapter Summary:

- All people make judgments – making judgments is not wrong and making judgments is very much a necessary part of being a functioning human being;
- If we do not judge what is true versus what is false, we will fall into deep darkness;
- If we do not judge what is ethically right versus wrong, we will be cowards who are utterly selfish;
- We should be careful in what judgments we make regarding other people – we should make judgments that avoid hypocrisy; in most normal social circumstances we should make judgments that are gracious and provide the benefit of the doubt;
- Our Standard for judging human behavior and beliefs ought to be Joshua of Nazareth;
- Correcting or rebuking false beliefs or views or correcting or rebuking wrong behavior is not wrong – even when people who are trapped by this fallacy call it “being judgmental” - but we should typically correct other individuals we know with sincerity, humility, and compassion.