

Contents

Introduction.....	6
1. Scriptures against Judging	7
2. Scriptures Advocating Judging.....	11
3. The Resolution of the Paradox.....	13
4. The Delegation of Judgmental Authority	20
5. Judging without Authority	23
6. Judging and Ruling	25
7. What We Are Not Responsible to Judge	28
8. The Judgment Seat of Christ.....	31
9. What Are We Responsible to Judge	35
10. Judging Others	38
11. Those in the Church.....	40
12. Moral Standards.....	42
13. Disputes between Believers	46
14. Doctrines and Ministries.....	50
15. A Warning to Dumb Dogs	52
16. How to Identify False Ministries	55
17. Spiritual Gifts and Manifestations	58
18. Whom Are We Not Responsible to Judge?	62
19. How Are We to Judge?.....	63
Appendix 1: How to Recognize Apostles.....	69
Appendix 2: True and False Prophets.....	74

Introduction

Judging is one of the most difficult subjects in the Bible to grasp, but it is also very important. It is a subject on which there is tremendous ignorance among Christians at large—and consequently tremendous disobedience. It costs us all dearly. Multitudes of Christians, partly through ignorance and partly through disobedience, often act contrary to Scripture in the ways they do or do not judge.

There is an apparent paradox in the statements of Scripture, primarily in the New Testament, about whether or not we are to judge. A number of passages say that we are not to judge and just about as many say that we are to judge. Which are we to follow? We will look at some of the Scripture passages on both sides. Then I will offer a principle by which we can understand in any given situation whether we are to judge or not to judge.

Scriptures against Judging

First let's look at some of the Scriptures against judging. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said,

¹Judge not, that you be not judged.

²For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

³And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?

⁴Or how can you say to your brother, "Let me remove the speck from your eye"; and look, a plank is in your own eye?

⁵Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye; and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

(Matthew 7:1–5)

Here, Jesus was saying very emphatically, "Do not judge. If you do, the judgment you use will come back to you." Judging will evoke this, I believe, from two sources: human and divine. In the long run, people judge you as you judge them. In addition, God will judge you in accordance with the way you have judged people.

¹Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.

²But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things.

³And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God?

(Romans 2:1–3)

Romans 2 addresses essentially religious people. The Jews are the example in this case, but this passage applies in many ways to most religious people. Have you ever noticed that religious people often think that because they know what is right and can prove others wrong, that proves them to be right? But, this is not so! In fact, the people who are always judging others are usually wrong themselves.

¹Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things.

²For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables.

³Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats: for God has received him.

⁴Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

(Romans 14:1–4)

A little further on in the same chapter, it says:

¹⁰But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. ¹¹For it is written: "As I live, says the Lord, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God."

¹²So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.

¹³Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.

(verses 10–13)

Paul wrote this to the Corinthians:

¹Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

²Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

³But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.

⁴For I know nothing against myself, yet am I not justified by this.

(1 Corinthians 4:1-4)

That's a remarkable statement! Paul was saying, "I am not conscious of anything against me; I'm not aware of anything I've done wrong." But that did not justify him. It did not prove him righteous!

⁴He who judges me is the Lord.

⁵Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.

(vv. 4–5)

One final passage against judging, taken from the epistle of James:

¹¹Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a

brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.

¹²There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?

(James 4:11–12)

James makes a point that many Christians have overlooked: Speaking evil of another believer is judging that believer. As believers, we are specifically warned not to speak evil of each other. Yet many Christians regularly do just that! It is contrary to Scripture.