

## Don't Judge Me!

Jesus' words found in Luke 6:37 are likely some of the most misunderstood and misapplied in today's culture: **"Judge not, and you will not be judged ..."**

Whether in the church or in the world, the mantra that is voiced and heard repeatedly is, "Don't judge!" The sentiment is as follows: "You have no right to have an opinion on what I do. You cannot disagree with how I live my life, because only I know what is right for me. So, you have no right to judge me." But is this really what Jesus is teaching His hearers? And what are the practical implications of His instruction?

Prior to Jesus' teaching recorded in Luke 6, the Wise Rabbi called his disciples together (Lk 6:20). He had previously chosen twelve from the multitude that had gathered from far and wide (Lk 6:12-16). Now, He specifically addresses His disciples more than He does the assembled crowd and introduces His instructions with the word "blessed." This is essential in understanding the rest of the chapter's content, because whenever this word is used it seems to tint the surrounding context. It is also noteworthy that this word is descriptive (adjective) rather than active (verb). To be more clear, **"blessed" describes an inner spiritual quality that separates Christians from unbelievers** - fruitfulness, stability, and happiness. It calls Jesus' followers to reject the things this world has to offer in favor of the goodness and safety of God. As King David wrote,

I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure... You make known to me the path of life; **in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.** (Psalm 16:8-11)

Here, during His sermon on the plain (Lk 6) Jesus turns this twisted world's perspective rightside up! To be blessed means treasuring Jesus above all this world has to offer (vv. 20-26), loving enemies with a love that is selfless and supernatural (vv. 27-36), obeying Jesus alone (vv. 46-49), **and** judging our own heart before judging others (vv. 37-45). Which brings us back to where we began: first, what is Jesus teaching us, and second, what are the practical implications of His instruction?

First, Jesus is not teaching indifference when it comes to sin. As a matter of fact, it would be unloving and immoral not to warn and help sinners in need. This demands wise and careful judgment. However, Jesus' teaching on judgment carries

practical implications. His instruction addressed His followers and is antithetical to the way the Pharisees, Sadducees and other religious sects treated sinners. In contrast to their judgment, condemnation, heartlessness, and stinginess, Jesus demands His followers to be generous in offering forgiveness, because they too have received forgiveness (vv. 37-38). In addition, His followers are to carefully choose whom they follow, since students inevitably become like their teacher (vv. 39-40). Also, Jesus' disciples are to pay attention to their own sin issues first, otherwise, their judgment smacks of hypocrisy (vv. 41-42). Only then, after tending to their own hearts first, Jesus' disciples are to carefully evaluate the lives of others and the judgment is to be based on the fruit that is present (vv. 43-45). When we put this into practice, we are much less likely to rush into judgment and much more likely to work toward redemption. We are also greatly blessed!

Blessing comes from living a rightside-up kind of life in the eyes of God and an upside-down kind of life in the eyes of the world. It is a Jesus-treasuring, Jesus-loving, Jesus-fearing, Jesus-obeying kind of life! Are you going to live for this world or the next?

***Titus 3:3-7 (ESV) - "For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life."***