

## JUDGE ... JUDGE NOT

There are two statements by our Lord which almost seem contradictory. “*Judge not, that ye be not judged*” (Matthew 7:1). “*Judge righteous judgment*” (John 7:24). The Bible has not been mistranslated, nor have the words of Jesus be misrepresented. He actually spoke both phrases. So how do we harmonize the two passages? It is obvious that Jesus must have been speaking of two different types of judging. Evidently there is a TYPE of judging that I am forbidden to engage in, and there is a TYPE of judging that I MUST engage in. Both are imperative commands, both *must* be obeyed. May I suggest the following distinction between the types of judging mentioned in these passages with some observations?

In the first instance Jesus was speaking of judging motives, inner character, or the heart. Why is such judging condemned? It seems to this scribe that such is rebuked for the simple reason that no man has the ability or the power to look at the heart of another. Paul declares, “*For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man, which is in him?*” (1 Corinthians 2:11). I cannot say, for example, that brother so-and-so engaged in some specific action because he has hatred or malice as a motive. There may well have been some other cause which brought about the actions or action under consideration. We must take care that we do not engage in judging any aspect of man which has to do with his inner being. Such is condemned by our Lord.

The second command, “*Judge righteous judgment,*” has application to actions of a specific nature. The Bible is filled with admonitions to examine certain actions and avoid engaging in them. We are to “*discern good and evil*” (Hebrews 5:14). This, obviously, involves judgment of some sort. We are to “*prove all things, hold fast that which is good*” (1 Thessalonians 5:21). Again, judgment is used to determine what is good. It seems that we are to judge those who speak and teach, judging only in the sense of determining the truth of their message. “*Prove the spirits whether they are from God, for many false prophets are gone out into the world*” (1 John 4: 1). How can we “prove” without judging? In fact, the very word used by the Holy Spirit

demands a sense of judgmental action. And what about those who engage in sinful actions? Is there any judgment on my part insofar as keeping God’s Word is concerned? Paul told the Thessalonians to “*withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly and not after the tradition which they received of us*” (2 Thessalonians 3:6). Withdrawal from someone demands a sense of judging. I remind you, however, that we are judging the ACTIONS they engage in, and upon repentance on their part, we are to extend fellowship to them once again. How can we fulfill such actions if we are not allowed to judge? Again judging is required to fulfill the very command of this verse. Then we have the command to “*mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them*” (Romans 16:17). How can one fulfill this command without “judging” whether one is causing division or occasions of stumbling? Such cannot be done UNLESS we exercise a certain amount of judging.

It is tragic that the difference between these TYPES of judging is not being honored. Those in religious error are very quick to respond when their error is exposed with, “*Judge not that ye be not judged.*” It is sad indeed that men have been misled into believing that affirmation of truth and condemnation of error is actually condemned by our Lord. If it is the case that we cannot expose false teachers due to the injunction “*judge not that ye be not judged,*” then it is the case that our Lord broke his own command, for he was quick to point out error of the Pharisees in Matthew 23. Not only have men twisted this passage, but they stand self-condemned when they use it in this fashion, for they are, in fact, being judgmental of my action of judging error.

On the other hand, there are some who have abused “righteous judgment” and have launched out on a tirade indicting the motives of some who have, for some reason or another, engaged in sin. My heart aches when I read of a brother who has taken upon himself to “look into the heart” of others and judge their motives, when in fact such is not only impossible, but such is strictly condemned by our Lord. We must point out error. We must defend the truth. We must contend for the faith. We must not give way for one moment to those who would pervert the precious truth of God’s word. But we must not be guilty of judging the motives behind those who are caught up in sin. I am reminded of

David’s coming to the battle scene to inquire as to who would face Goliath the Philistine. Upon arrival, David’s brethren judged his motive: “*Why camest thou down hither? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle*” (1 Samuel 17:28). These men judged the heart of David, an ability that many profess but none possess.

Now here is the real catch. It seems that when some, who are concerned about the looseness of doctrine, the unauthorized practices by some of our brethren, and the general tendency to drift from the faith, rise up and speak out against such, that there are others who are quick to judge their motives. “He’s a scoundrel, just wanting to stir up trouble.” “He gets some sort of thrill out of catching people in error and exposing them.” How do we know that? Since when did God give us the ability to determine such inner character? It may be true that one is a scoundrel or that others get some sort of thrill out of stirring up controversy, but such judging on our part is forbidden. Where does one come off indicting the motives, character, and heart of another? It seems that some have taken upon themselves a position that even Michael the archangel refused to accept when he disputed with the devil about the body of Moses. If anyone’s motive could have been indicted, or if ever there was anyone who could rightly judge the motives of another (besides our Lord), surely here was a situation that warranted such. But the inspired writer points out that Michael the archangel did not bring a railing accusation, but left the judgment unto God.

Beloved, let us get away from indicting the motives of our brethren. I would hate to stand before God on the judgment day having judged one of impure motives or heart, when in fact they were actually caught up in error due to some misunderstanding of the scripture. Point out the error? ABSOLUTELY! Stand firm for the faith? TO BE SURE! Rebuke ungodly practices? POSITIVELY! But do not be guilty of taking upon yourself the role of judging the hearts of men. That is God’s business and we must leave it in his hands.

**Tom Wacaster**

## BIRTHDAYS

Evan Pflugradt, 07-07; Jeff Nemechek, 07-09.

## ILL

**Sunday:** Millie Robertson (PM); Tom Tucker (PM).

**Wednesday:** Millie Robertson; Allen Scott.

**Those battling cancer:** David Cole, Ledgia Campbell, Betty James and Cleo Stone. Remember these in your prayers along with: Millie Robertson and Allen Scott.

## HOME BOUND

Bob Adams resides at Room D-4 of the Johnson County Nursing Center in Olathe. Marion Stone is at home. Please remember these in your prayers and visitation.

## OUT OF TOWN

The Parish family was in St. Louis, MO last weekend. Evan Pflugradt was in Austin, TX. Trent Thrasher is in Owensville, MO this weekend. Joel, Cindy and Jared Nelson are to be away on vacation this week. Lauren and Lindsey Brown, Chelsea Nelson and Erin Stillwell are enrolled at Little Blue Bible camp for this week.

## POT LUCK DINNER

Our monthly Pot Luck Dinner will be held this Sunday, July 6, following our AM worship. Come and enjoy the good food and good company!

## MEN'S BUSINESS MEETING

Our monthly Men's Business Meeting will be held next Sunday, July 13, following our AM worship. All men of the congregation are encouraged to attend.

## FAMILY BIBLE STUDIES

The themes are: *"Walking In Son Light"* for Teens-Toddlers and *"Makeover for the Christian"* for Adults. The dates are July 28 – August 1. Flyers are in the foyer!

## ATTENDANCE

Sunday AM, 48; Sunday PM, 37; Wednesday PM, 33.

## Those To Serve

July 6, 2008

**BUILDING AND COMMUNION..... Nemechek**

### MORNING WORSHIP

**ANNOUNCEMENTS..... George Thomas**  
**SONG LEADER..... Trent Thrasher**  
**OPENING PRAYER ..... Joel Nelson**  
**PRESIDE..... John Dodson**  
**ASSIST..... Chris Edwards**  
**ASSIST..... Dave Parish**  
**CLOSING PRAYER..... Steve Brown**

### EVENING WORSHIP

**OPENING PRAYER ..... Jared Nelson**  
**CLOSING PRAYER..... Jeff Nemechek**  
**LORD'S SUPPER..... John Dodson**

### WEDNESDAY 9th

**SONG LEADER..... John Cody Carter**  
**INVITATION ..... Steve Brown**

## WORSHIP SCHEDULE

### Sunday

Bible Study ..... 9:30 AM  
Morning Worship ..... 10:30 AM  
Evening Worship ..... 6:00 PM

### Wednesday

Ladies Bible Study ..... 10:00 AM  
Bible Study ..... 7:00 PM

**Preacher: Ted J. Thrasher**

**Phone: (913) 764-2325**

**E-mail: olathecoc@sbcglobal.net**

**CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**515 WEST PARK**

**P.O. BOX 482**

**OLATHE, KANSAS 66051**

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