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MINISTRIES

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Judge Not

Have you ever been told that you can't judge others? Perhaps someone has said to you “don't judge me.” Maybe you've even been told that it's a sin to judge others. In support of the idea that it is wrong to judge, many people quote the following verse:

Matthew 7:1

Judge not, that you be not judged

Those words are so clear, right? Don't judge others or you'll be judged. Pretty simple.

But wait, what about Proverbs 3:19?

Proverbs 3:19a

Open your mouth, judge righteously,

Uh oh. Do we have a problem? Does the Messiah contradict the Book of Proverbs? The whole Word of God is true and righteous according to both the Old and New Testaments.

2 Samuel 7:28a

And now, O Lord GOD [YHWH], you are God, and **your words are true**, ...

Psalms 119:160

The sum of **your word is truth**,
and every one of **your righteous rules** endures forever.

John 17:17

Sanctify them in the truth; **your word is truth**.

Paul also tells us that the WHOLE of Scripture is God-breathed and for training in righteousness.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good

work.

How is it possible that the command to judge righteously and the admonition by the Messiah (Jesus, or in Hebrew Yeshua) to not judge, both be true? This would be what we call the pink square, meaning in a black and white checkerboard if you find one pink square then you know that something is off.

Now the prudent person would state the obvious here, we're talking about two different kinds of judging based upon context. Well, we agree...sorta.

What do we mean by that? Let's take a look at the context first. Proverbs 31:1 tells us that these are the words of King Lemuel, an oracle taught to him by his mother. His mother was giving him wisdom in how to rule; part of ruling is judging.

What is it that kings, and any other administrator, judge by? It's the law.

His mother was telling him to be a just judge according to the law. Pretty sound advice, right? This would echo other sentiments found in Scripture with a similar context.

Exodus 18:16

when they have a dispute, they come to me and I decide between one person and another, and I make them know the statutes of God and his laws

Leviticus 19:15

You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor.

John 18:31a

Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law. ...

Judging according to the law is perfectly acceptable, and is expected among God's people, and even the gentiles. It is simply the way of things.

So what about the type of judging that Messiah is referring to in Matthew 7? Let's look at that passage again.

Matthew 7:1-5

"Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. Why do you see 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,' when there is the log 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.

The same story is repeated in Luke 6.

Luke 6:37-42

"Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be

measured back to you.”

He also told them a parable: “Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye.

Does this judging appear to be the same as the other, by some measuring stick, or is it arbitrary? Well, an argument could definitely be made that there is some guide or measuring stick being used. Look at Matthew 7:2 again.

Matthew 7:2

For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and **with the measure you use it will be measured to you.**

This statement would indicate that any judgment we make will be against something, a plumb line, or a measuring stick of sorts. So if we judge another, we are using a measuring stick. By the very nature of judgment, one is held against some sort of measuring stick. So, in that way the statements are similar.

“But,” you say, “Jesus (his Hebrew name being Yeshua) says not to judge because if we do we will be judged.”

The question is, is Yeshua actually commanding us not to judge, or telling us that when we judge we better be careful what we're judging and what our measuring stick is? As we have seen, before the arrival of Messiah, it was necessary to render judgments in accordance with the Torah, the Word.

We also know that Messiah could not add to or take away from the Law of God. If he had, then he would have been a sinner and not able to be a spotless and blameless sacrifice for us (Deuteronomy 4:2). So if he could not add to or take away from the Torah, then how is it that his statement in Matthew 7:1 would be contrary to what we find in the Torah?

It could not be; which means we've misunderstood it in some way. Let's revisit the key verses in Matthew 7 that actually explain Yeshua's point.

Matthew 7:3-5

Why do you see 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,’ **when there is the log 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.

Based upon those verses, which are echoed in the Luke account, we're being warned against being hypocritical in our judgments. That is far more in line with the rest of Scripture than to say we are suddenly not to judge at all. Instead of not judging, we need to be careful that we are not judging others for the sin in their lives when we have our own glaring issues.

We also need to make sure our measuring stick is the right one (the Word, His Torah) as it may be used

against us as well. Something else to note, if Messiah was really saying not to judge at all, then why would he finish the statement in verse 5 by saying:

“...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”

He literally tells us to clean up our own sins, to be living as righteously as we can so that we are not hypocritical. When we're living righteously we are then able to help our brother live that way too! Many times when someone is feeling judged or condemned they will have the desire to lash out at their accuser. One of the ways in which they'll do that is by looking to see if we (the person “judging” them) are also living with sin in our own lives.

If we are, they may feel justified and call us hypocrites. They might then, in their own minds, feel they have the right to disregard what we are saying to them from the Word. This can potentially ruin any chance for them to receive and accept correction in the future from that individual.

It might even ruin our own personal witness as a follower of Yeshua, at least with that individual. This is another reason why Messiah's warning is so important. We must clean up the sin in our own lives before talking to someone else about their sin.

But we're not done here, let's look at a few more verses about judging in Scripture and see if we can't glean a bit more understanding from them.

Matthew 7:15-20

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. **You will recognize them by their fruits.** Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. **Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.**”

Notice, this is just a handful of verses after Yeshua said not to judge. For more on wolves in sheep clothing, please see our teaching titled “[Fruit of Wolves](#)”.

If we are truly to not make any judgments, then how can we recognize false prophets by their fruits? Instead we're told to watch out for these false prophets. How do we know what a false prophet is or if they bear bad fruit? We have to have the right measuring stick, the Torah. Deuteronomy 13, for instance, tells us how to look for a false prophet. For more on that, please see our teaching titled “[The Deuteronomy 13 Test](#)”.

If someone is teaching contrary to the truth, and the Torah (Law of God) is truth according to Psalm 119:142, then we know their fruit isn't going to be all good.

How else can we tell good fruit from bad apart from judging with discernment?

Here are even a few more verses about the importance of discernment and judgment as believers.

1 John 4:1

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but **test** the spirits to see whether they are from God, for

many false prophets have gone out into the world

Hebrews 5:14

But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of **discernment** trained by constant practice **to distinguish good from evil**.

John 7:24

Do not judge by appearances, but **judge with right judgment**.

1 Thessalonians 5:21

but **test everything**; hold fast what is good.

Despite the verses that indicate we should judge, some want to bring up John 8:7 as a proof that we are not to judge others, not even their sin.

John 8:7

And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.

We cover this story in more detail in our teaching titled “[Should We Stone Our Children?](#)” Today we will only take a brief look at it only in the context of judging.

At the beginning of John 8 we see that the Pharisees bring a woman before Yeshua who had been caught in adultery. Leviticus 20:10 states that when people are caught in adultery, both the adulterer and adulteress are put to death, but we only see the woman present, not the man. The Pharisees are trying to trap Messiah in something, but they end up with him turning things back onto themselves with verse 7 that we just read.

So what do we do when we have the Messiah appearing to say not to execute a woman caught in the act of adultery unless the accusers were also without sin?

Well, as we just pointed out, when someone is caught in the act of adultery, both parties are to be stoned. With only one party present, were they following the requirements of the Torah? No, they were not. Capital punishment can only be carried out on the testimony of two to three witnesses, yet we are not told that there were 2-3 witnesses present. The couple in question was also not brought before elders. These are all requirements in the Torah before someone can be stoned.

Stoning someone without having followed the proper procedures would be akin to murder, not capital punishment. Murder is a pretty hefty sin for them to be overlooking. While we cannot say for certain, it’s possible that this is why the Messiah said what he did. They appear to have been committing a weighty sin one potentially weightier than adultery and very blatantly. How hypocritical!

Can you see now why Messiah would tell us to remove the plank in our own eye? We need to remove the sin from our lives before we hold another up against the Torah for their own.

By this point you may have noticed a trend in the Bible. We actually **are** supposed to be judging, but that raises two new questions. Who should we be judging and by what do we judge them?

Paul answers the first question for us in one of his letters to the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 5:12-13

For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. "Purge the evil person from among you."

We are to be judging those *inside* the body, our brothers and sisters, our fellow believers.

That leaves us with the question "by what do we judge our brethren?"

That one is easier. Just as the king or any administrator judges by his law, we should also be judging according to our king's law. What is our King's Law? It's the Law of God, His Torah. The Torah is our measuring stick, our plumb line.

It is the Torah that we are to hold others up to because the Torah defines what is sin. The breaking of the Torah is sin. When we see another member of the body breaking the Torah, they're in sin, and we are then to go to them.

1 John 3:4

Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.

In Galatians 6 we find that we are to talk to our fellow believers if we find them in sin. How can we find them in sin without judging?

Galatians 6:1-2

Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

We find others in their sin by judging the outside, their fruit. We see where their actions break the Torah; then as Messiah said we make sure we are not in sin ourselves before we go and talk to them.

Here's an important component in all of this. Before we approach our brother about their sin, and after we've made sure we're living as righteously as we can, we need to examine something else. Our motives.

We need to stop and ask ourselves the reason we are judging someone. What is our intent? What is our purpose in judging them? Are we simply trying to make them look stupid or feel bad?

Are we trying to put them down so that we feel better about ourselves? If the answer to any of those questions is "yes," then we need to stop and check ourselves.

We have the ability to speak life or death in this world. (For more on that topic, please see our blog post titled "[Are We Speaking Life or Death?](#)")

We are either tearing down, or we're building up people. We are speaking death when we tear them down to make ourselves feel better. If we simply want to hurt someone's feelings, then we are not being a child of YHWH, we are not showing love (1 Corinthians 13).

If our intent in judging others is anything other than to show them love, compassion, and help them

overcome an area of struggle so they can live a more righteous life, we have a problem.

We should be offering them a lifeline when we judge them, not tying the noose around their neck. We are to help to bring them back into the way, the truth, the light, the life. We are to go to them in love and show them love as we help them identify the sin in their life and help them come out of it.

In the same way that we should judge others because of our love for them and our desire for all of His people to live righteously before Him, we should also want them to do the same for us.

There's a great saying that applies here, and it is a good illustration of what our attitude should be regarding others judging us. "I can't fix what I don't know is broke." Now take that concept and apply it to the sin in your life. We cannot get rid of the sin in our lives if we don't know it's there.

Yes, sometimes we are aware that we are sinning, and other times we may not be aware. The fact of the matter is, we need to be aware of the sin in our lives so that we can fix it by removing it.

No one can fix the foundation of their house, or a wall, if they aren't aware there's a problem there. No one attempts to fix a priceless but broken vase if they don't know it's broken. But once they are aware, then they can go and get the glue and attempt to put it back together.

At the same time, we also don't attempt to fix that broken vase with a sledgehammer. It won't get the job done and will only make things worse. Likewise, if we go to our brother with anything other than love in our hearts, the chances are high that we'll end up doing more damage than good.

Again, remember, being judged is a good thing, when we are being judged in love by our brethren, and only according to the Word of God. We should want that judgment in order to become more like our Messiah, our perfect example of how to live.

Continuing on.

1 Samuel 16:7

But the LORD [YHWH] said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD [YHWH] sees not as man sees: **man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD [YHWH] looks on the heart.**"

Jeremiah 17:10

"I **the LORD [YHWH] search the heart**
and test the mind,
to give every man according to his ways,
according to the fruit of his deeds."

Did you catch what YHWH said there in Jeremiah? Even He judges our fruit which He equates to our ways, our actions. A difference between the judging that YHWH does and what we are to do, is that we cannot judge the hearts, only the actions. However, the bar He uses to judge is the same; His Torah.

Deuteronomy 28:1-2

And if you faithfully obey the voice of the LORD [YHWH] your God, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, the LORD [YHWH] your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake

you, if you obey the voice of the LORD [YHWH] your God.

Deuteronomy 28:15

But if you will not obey the voice of the LORD [YHWH] your God or be careful to do all his commandments and his statutes that I command you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you.

You see the Torah, the Instructions (or Law) of God only does 3 things. It defines what sin is as we mentioned earlier, it brings blessings for obedience to it and curses if we do not obey it. YHWH uses His Torah in order to know if we should receive blessings for our deeds or curses.

We should not be in sin of any kind, however, we all fall prey to the desires of the flesh at one time or another, but thankfully we have our Messiah, the spotless lamb. The sinless one who walked, talked, and lived out the Torah perfectly.

By grace through our faith in him, the living Word, we may receive forgiveness and eventually eternal salvation when we repent and turn from our sinful ways and to His perfect ways.

We've kind of taken the long way around here, but hopefully you can see why we are actually supposed to be judging others just as we should want to be judged by others. The caveat here, is that we should only be judging them if they are believers, and then we can only judge their actions against what the Word of God, the Torah, states, and to do so in love.

There is no other authority or measuring stick that we have to use. The Torah defines for us how to live our lives the way YHWH intended.

There's one last thing we'd like to bring up relating to judging and being judged by others. If you were living in sin (breaking the Law of YHWH), knowingly or unknowingly, would you want others to be concerned for you? Would you want them to come to you in private and mention it, maybe even asking if there's anything that they can do to help? Do you welcome correction from a wise man when he uses the word of God to light areas of darkness you're living in?

If not, why not? What does that say about your heart? If you don't want loving correction using God's Word, what does that say about your heart? Where does that put you in your personal walk with YHWH?

Remember, Paul told us we are to go to our brothers if they are in sin, Galatians 6:1. Messiah taught us how to handle a situation if a brother sins against us in Matthew 18.

Matthew 18:15-17

If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

We should want our brothers to come to us and show us where we are in error that we may take it before YHWH, repent if we find we are in sin, and continue growing in a deeper walk with the Creator.

In the same way we should judge the fruit (actions or way of living) of our brothers against the Torah so that we may help them if they are not living according to the ways of YHWH. Paul seems to have practiced the same thing.

1 Corinthians 5:3

For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing.

Remember what Paul said in 2 Timothy 3? All Scripture is profitable for reproof and correction! We are called to rebuke and correct. Who would want others living in sin? Sin is bondage!

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NKJV)

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and **is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness**, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

We are to embrace correction from others as it is for our benefit. Who would want to be living in sin? Do you want to live in bondage?

Proverbs 10:17

Whoever heeds instruction is on the path to life,
but he who rejects reproof leads others astray.

Proverbs 12:1

Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge,
but he who hates reproof is stupid.

Proverbs 15:10

There is severe discipline for him who forsakes the way;
whoever hates reproof will die.

Jeremiah 5:3 (NKJV)

O LORD [YHWH], are not your eyes on the truth? You have stricken them, But they have not grieved; You have consumed them, **But they have refused to receive correction.** They have made their faces harder than rock; **They have refused to return.**

A final thought before we conclude here, did you know that by obeying our Creator we can receive blessings and are showing Him how much we love Him?

1 John 5:2-3

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. **For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.** And his commandments are not burdensome.

So, when we are living in sin we are actually doing the opposite of loving YHWH. If we claim the title of being a child of the Most High, then shouldn't we live the way He wants us to live? To actively love Him? If we don't, what kind of light and witness are we being to the world? What message are we sending our Heavenly Father?

If we let our brother remain in their sin, we are letting them live in opposition to the Creator. If we let them remain in their sin without saying anything, and they claim to be a follower of YHWH, we are allowing them to represent YHWH with their sin.

Is that loving our Creator? Is that loving our brother if we let them live in sin?

No...it isn't.

We started this teaching discussing how different verses in Scripture appear to both encourage us to judge others and command us not to. This caused us to pause and look at things a little differently because we know that YHWH does not change, and His Word cannot contradict itself.

Upon further examination it became clear that throughout Scripture we actually are told that we are to judge, but to judge our brethren.

We are to hold each other as fellow believers and members of the same body, accountable to what the Word teaches us on how to live. We saw that what Messiah was teaching us in Matthew 7 was that when we judge, we need to make sure our own lives are clear of sin before approaching our brother about theirs.

What do we judge by? We need to be certain that we are judging according to the only righteous measurement, the Word. We don't want to hold someone accountable to anything less than truth, and the Torah is truth, not our opinions.

In the end we saw how letting our brothers live in sin and not judging them is actually not showing love for them. We are allowing them to remain in a state of opposition to the Creator, in a state that leads to death instead of showing love for YHWH. We are also letting someone who is a representative of the Creator be a poor example of how YHWH wants His people to live.

In a way, when we don't judge our brother according to the Word, and others know they claim to be a child of YHWH, we are letting them make common the reputation of the Almighty. They are profaning His name.

Just as we are to judge our fellow believers according to the Word, we should want to be judged by that same standard. We should want to live a life that reflects the perfect love and greatness of YHWH, not our sinful flesh.

If we don't want to be judged according to the Word, maybe it's time we ask ourselves why? Why wouldn't we want to live as a child of the Most High?

So the next time someone tells you not to judge them (and you have already examined yourself to make sure you aren't living in sin) you can tell them that you love them and the Creator too much not to.

We hope you have enjoyed this teaching.

Remember, continue to test everything.

Shalom!

For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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