

# What Are We to Judge?

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As Passover approaches, several things tend to occur—at least in my life and the lives of God's people—one of which is trials of all types. You only have to look at the last updates for the past month or so to see that the updates are getting longer and longer and more frequent. Those tend to come at this time of year.

Then I start getting calls that typically occur before the Passover. Some of those calls are concerning an individual's conversion. The call goes something like this. "I keep on sinning and I can't stop." Then the question is: Do I have God's holy spirit? The next question is: Should I be re-baptized? Then others call first thing. I've had people call that I don't even know who would say, "Could you re-baptize me?" After you talk with them and explore what is going on, their thinking is that re-baptism will solve all their problems. "I'm sinning. I'm doing this. I can't break out of it, but if I just get dunked one more time and I get hands laid on one more time, I'll come out of the water and all my problems will disappear."

Another common call is "Should I keep attending with this group?" They're asking me to make a judgment. "I'm not being spiritually fed," or "I was sick and I was laid up and no one called me. No one visited me. No one sent me any cards." Another one here not too long ago said, "I have a serious problem and my minister won't return my phone calls. I call over and over and he won't return my calls." Then I got one this morning. Basically, it was a very long email, which said, "I don't know what to do. I'm a mess. I just don't know what to do."

The brethren are asking at this time of year, as we should: How converted am I? Am I really converted? What are my sins? What are my faults? What are my shortcomings? Do I even have the holy spirit? Or, if I do, am I even exercising the holy spirit? Should I attend here or should I attend there? Or should I head in this direction or should I head in that direction?

The fact is that all of these things we've talked about so far require judgments to be made. Sometimes they ask me to make a judgment for them and I won't. I will tell them what the Bible says, but I won't make a judgment. They have to make that. All of us have to make that. And, in each of these situations, judgments have to be made.

Notice what we read. We're going to look at two scriptures here in the introduction. Let's go to Luke 6 and look at verse 37. We're going to read both of these scriptures. Both are Christ's words and these two scripture appear to contradict each other. So, let's pay attention to them. Luke 6:37, Christ says:

**Luke 6:37.** *Judge not, and [you] shall not be judged: condemn not, and [you] shall not be condemned: forgive, and [you] shall be forgiven: (KJV)*

So, the first two words tell us, "Judge not." Now hold that thought and to John 7:24. Some people who don't believe the Bible would say, "This is bogus. Look, the Bible contradicts itself. Even Christ contradicts Himself." John 7:24, again this is Christ speaking.

**John 7:24.** *Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment. (KJV)*

So, one says, "Judge not." The other says, "Judge, but judge righteously." How do we reconcile these two scriptures? What is God getting at here?

Both of these scriptures use exactly the same Greek word for "judge." It is Strong's #2919. It's the Greek word "krino," spelled in English "k-r-i-n-o." Strong's says it means *to pronounce an opinion concerning right or wrong*. And it is translated in the New Testament as *judge*, but it can also be translated *determine or condemn*. Zodhiates in his Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament says, *to form and express a judgment or opinion as to any person or anything, more commonly unfavorable*. So in the New Testament, it's used more commonly as an unfavorable judgment or opinion. Why more commonly unfavorable? That goes right back to human nature. Human nature tends to look down on somebody.

So, appropriately in these two verses, Christ make three points here. The first point He makes is "Do not judge in condemnation" (Luke 6:37). Then in John 7:24, Christ makes two points. "Don't judge according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment."

The Greek word for "righteous" is Strong's #1342, it's the Greek word "dikaios" (d-i-k-a-i-o-s), and it has three meanings. They're all about the same but Strong's gives these three meanings for "righteous" and it's good for us to understand them. So, "righteous" means *observing divine law, observing God's law*. A second meaning is *to be innocent, to be faultless, to be guiltless before God; righteous*. And a third is *thinking and acting and feeling conformed to the will of God*. That's righteousness—following God's commandments, following God's will, being innocent before God and faultless and blameless before God.

So, we're going to see today that judgment, if it is improper judgment, will condemn us. If it is proper judgment, it will keep us out of trouble. I'll say that again. Judgment can either condemn us or keep us out of trouble. If it's proper judgment, it keeps us out of trouble, but if it is improper, we will be condemned. We will see that today. And the key to this, whether we are condemned or whether it keeps us out of trouble, is the subject of the sermon,

### What Are We to Judge?

If we judge the wrong things, we're going to be condemned. If we judge the right things, it will keep us out of trouble.

## 1. We are not to judge another human being.

This is what Luke, chapter 6 was referring to. Let's go back there. We are not to judge another human being. We're not to judge them.

**Luke 6:37.** *Judge not, and [you] shall not be judged: ... (KJV)*

Remember one of the definitions of judge can be *condemned*. Then Christ mentions it again, using a different Greek word. He says, "Condemn not and then you're not going to be condemned. And, if you forgive, you will be forgiven."

Condemnation and forgiveness necessarily require and involve other people. If we forgive, we're forgiving another person. If we're condemning, we're condemning other people. This verse tells us not to condemn others in our judgment.

James chapter 4 clarifies and adds to this. Let's go to James 4 and verse 11. The apostle James adds onto this that we just read in Luke 6.

**James 4:11.** *Speak not evil one of another, brethren.... (KJV)*

Now, James is talking to God's people, members of the body of Christ. Notice.

*11b) He that [speaks] evil of his brother, and [judges (Greek word krino, same one)] 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. (KJV)*

In other words, we set ourselves up as a judge if we're judging the law.

*12) There is one lawgiver, ... (KJV)*

And I might add "one judge."

*12b) ... who is able to save and to destroy: ... (KJV)*

Then James asks the question:

*12 continued) ... who [are you] that [judges] another? (KJV)*

Who do we think we are when we judge one another? And we judge, as we just read, our brother when we speak evil or negatively about our brother. Now, when we judge others in that way, we wind up condemning ourselves. And I don't think any of us want to be there. I sure don't want to be there.

Let's go to Romans 2 and begin in verse 1. When we judge others, we condemn ourselves. With human nature it is so easy to look down on other people, condemn

other people; thereby, elevating ourselves. And just the opposite happens. When we do that, we wind up condemning ourselves.

**Romans 2:1.** *Therefore [you are inexcusable, O man, whosoever [you are] that [judge] (the Greek "krino" again): for wherein [you judge] another, [you condemn yourself]; for [you] that [judge do] the same things. (KJV)*

And how often have we seen that or looked at ourselves and seen it? We condemn somebody and then you think, "Hey, I've done the same thing. I've been there. I'm condemning this person. Why don't I condemn myself?" That's what Paul is trying to get across in verse 1 here.

*2) But we are sure that ... (KJV)*

Notice this, "the judgment of God." Not the judgment of another human being.

*2b) ... the judgment of God is according to truth ... (KJV)*

And John 17:17 tells us that God's word is truth. So, the judgment of God is according to truth.

*2 continued) ... against them which commit such things. (KJV)*

Meaning: judging others.

*3) And [think you] this, O man, that [judges] them which do such things, ... (KJV)*

Meaning: judging someone and he winds up doing the same thing.

*3b) ... and [do] the same, that [you shall] escape the judgment of God? (KJV)*

You're judging others for the same thing that you do. Do you think that somehow you're going to escape God's judgment.

*4) Or [despise you] the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; ... (KJV)*

When we condemn others, we're despising God's goodness, forbearance and longsuffering.

*4b) ... not knowing that the goodness of God [leads you] to repentance?*

*5) But after [your] hardness and impenitent heart ... (KJV)*

The Greek means *an unrepentant heart.*

*5) But after [your] hardness and [unrepentant] heart [(you're) treasuring] up [for yourself] wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; (KJV)*

Notice this.

*6) (God) Who will render to every man according to his deeds: (KJV)*

God is the judge and God is the one who settles scores. It's not our job to settle scores. It's not our job to change the world. God is going to take care of that.

Now let's notice another scripture, James 5:9. I'll read this out of the New King James. It reinforces the fact that when we judge others, we condemn ourselves.

**James 5:9.** *Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge ... (NKJV)*

The "J" in "judge" is a capital letter, which means God.

*9b) ... [God] is standing at the door! (NKJV)*

So we're being told we can't judge another human being. We can't condemn another human being. Then the Bible goes on further to say that we will be judged with the severity we used in judging others. If we make the mistake of judging others and we're severe about that, then God will use that same severity of judgment, and we will reap what we sow.

Let's go to Matthew 7, the Sermon on the Mount. We'll begin in verse 1 and I'll read this out of the NIV. It just translates better. This is new material for the Jews who were in the audience listening.

**Matthew 7:1.** *"Do not judge (Greek "krino"), or you too will be judged.  
2) For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.  
3) "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?  
4) How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?  
5) You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. (NIV)*

Under this first point, another thing we need to establish is that judging other humans has a very bad side effect for us—the person doing the judging. Let's go to 1 Corinthians 4 and we'll begin in verse 1. Paul's talking about the fact that he's a minister of Christ, a steward of God.

**1 Corinthians 4:1.** *Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.*

2) *Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. (KJV)*

In other words, if God is going to give us something to take care of, we had better be faithful with what He gives us.

3) *But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged ... (KJV)*

This is a different Greek word. It's "anakrino," which means *to examine*.

3) *But with me it is a very small thing that I should be [examined or] judged of you, or of man's judgment: ... (KJV)*

Paul is in part referring to the civil courts of men but also human judgment. He says:

3b) *... [yes], I judge not [my] own self. (KJV)*

Meaning: I don't judge as men judge because that's bogus—using human nature to judge somebody else or even my own self.

4) *For I know nothing by myself; ... (KJV)*

And we would do well to remember that because apart from God, we can't put one foot in front of the other.

4) *For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that [judges] me is the Lord. (KJV)*

God and Christ judge.

5) *Therefore judge [the Greek word "krino:] nothing before the time, until the Lord [comes], ... (KJV)*

So, Paul is talking about judging other people. Don't judge other people before the time until Christ returns.

5b) *... who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: ... (KJV)*

That is a hint going forward.

5 continued) *make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God. (KJV)*

So, again we see that God and Christ judge. They are the ones that settle scores and not us. Going on in verse 6:

*6) And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that [you] might learn in us not to think ... (KJV)*

The words "of men" are in italics. It wasn't there originally. It's my feeling that Paul is talking not "of men" but of ourselves because that is the context of it. Let's go on.

*6b) ... that [you] might learn in us not to think ... above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.*

*7) For who [makes you] to differ from another? ... (KJV)*

We don't make ourselves different from other people. That is the way we were born. That gift came from God.

*7b) ... And what [have you] that [you did] not receive? ... (KJV)*

Did we somehow make our brain bigger? Or did we somehow make our height taller or something like that?

*7 continued) ... Now if [you did] receive it, why [do you] glory, as if [you didn't receive] it? (KJV)*

In other words, not as a gift but through your own efforts.

So, the point here that Paul is making, particularly at the end of verse 6, the side effect of judging others is puffing ourselves up, elevating ourselves in front of other people.

Let me give you an example. Back in the Worldwide days here in Washington, I was on the circuit and traveled to one church. There was one man in this particular church, it was a fairly small church. But he set himself up as the "church policeman" and the "church spot remover." He had plenty of time to do so because he didn't work and he allowed his wife to support him.

What he would do at Sabbath services would be to walk from group to group or intermingle with people and he would listen to what people were saying, make note of that, and then, during the following week, he would call people up and tell them where they were wrong. He would tell them that their conversation was not right or their interpretation of scripture was not right and he was straightening everybody out. Of course, he wouldn't straighten out a 6' 2" ex-Marine. He would straighten out a 70-year-old widow or someone like that.

The fact is that he was setting himself up as judge and jury. And guess what? When you do that, you elevate yourself above other people, above the brethren. So, the

bottom line here in this first point is we are not to judge other humans. That's not our responsibility.

## 2. Why?

Why are we not to judge other humans? Why does God not want us to judge other humans?

I think it's no secret that human beings have limitations. Don't we? We have many limitations, but God does not have limitations. Let's go to Psalm 44 and we're just going to read one verse, verse 21. This gets to the heart of why we should not judge other human beings. David asks the question:

**Psalm 44:21.** *Shall not God search this out? ... (KJV)*

Yes, God can search out anything He wants. And this is why and how He can do it.

*21b) ... For he [knows] the secrets of the heart. (KJV)*

God does. Christ does. We do not.

The Hebrew word for heart is Strong's #3820. It is spelled in English "l-e-b," pronounced "labe." And it means *the will or the center of anything*. We would say today, "It's our innermost being."

God knows our innermost being. He knows our thoughts. He knows our motivations, our intentions that we don't verbalize and God is the only one that does so.

With that in mind, let's go to Luke 16 and begin in verse 14. The Pharisees hated Jesus. They were jealous of Jesus. They wanted to bring Him down, ultimately wanted to kill Him.

**Luke 16:14.** *And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him [Christ].*

*15) And he [Christ] said unto them, [You] are they which justify yourselves before men; [Notice this.] but God [knows] your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men ... (KJV)*

Christ is referring to the Pharisees because they were, indeed, highly esteemed among the people.

*15b) ... that which is highly esteemed among men is [an] abomination in the sight of God. (KJV)*



Now, why is that? Because God knew their hearts. And the Greek word for "heart" is Strong's #2588 It's the Greek word "kardia," (k-a-r-d-i-a) where we get the English words "cardiac" or "cardio." It means *figuratively the thoughts or feelings of the mind.*

Only God knows that. Only God knows the heart. Humans do not. That is why when discussing who should replace Judas when he committed suicide, the disciples had a problem. Notice the solution in Acts 1. We'll just read verse 24. The apostles realized they had two men standing in front of them. They didn't know which one to pick. And they realized their limitations. They realized that they could only go so far.

**Acts 1:24.** *And they [the apostles] prayed, and said, [You], Lord, which [know] the hearts of all ... (KJV)*

The word "men" is in italics.

*24b) ... [You], Lord, which [know] the hearts of all ... show [which] of these two [you have] chosen, (KJV)*

The apostles cast lots and had faith in God for the right one in God's eyes, because He knows the heart, to pick the right one.

This is why, by the way, we do not participate in jury duty. There is a man sitting over there that two weeks ago was unshaven, unbathed, and had blood all over him, but now sitting in the courtroom, he has a haircut, a shave, and a brand new suit. And he's sitting there and we're supposed to judge this man? Then you have a shyster lawyer trying to get him off. And we're supposed to be able to judge that? That's why we can't participate in jury duty because there is no way we're going to know that man's heart. No way.

And that's why we don't vote. Look at our candidates today. Some you can kind of guess their heart. We'll get into that in a minute, but do we really know what's inside of them? Do we really know what their agenda is or what their motives are or what their thoughts are? Do we know that? No. And, therefore, we have no basis for voting because we have no basis and should not judge one another because, summing up the second point, there is no way that we can know the heart of another human being. That is why we are not to judge other human beings.

### **3. What are we to judge?**

This is the logical question that follows. If we are not to judge one another, other human beings, then what are we to judge?

Christ said to judge righteous judgment. So, there have to be some things we should be judging and the key, as I said in the beginning, gets back to what we are supposed to be judging.

### 3.A. We are responsible for judging truth from error.

That is our responsibility—to judge truth from error. Let's go to 1 John 4 and let's read verse 6. I've said it several times. I just love John's writing because he uses short sentences, very direct, very much to the point. Notice what John says.

**1 John 4:6.** *We are of God: he that [knows] God [hears] us; ... (KJV)*

Referring to John and the apostles. If you know God, you're going to hear and understand what the apostles say.

**6b)** *... he that is not of God [hears] not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. (KJV)*

There are two different spirits out there. There is the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. Obviously, we want the spirit of truth. So, the issue is: Do we hear and heed the Bible or do we not? *Your Word is truth.* If we want truth, then the spirit of truth leads us to obedience to God's word, but the spirit of error ignores God's word. I have read papers and seen, particularly regarding prophecy, where somebody will come up with a new model of prophecy but they ignore some very clear scriptures that don't fit their model. And that is a spirit of error.

Now, with this in mind, let's go to 2 Timothy 2:15. This is something that we are required to do. Paul is telling this young minister and, by extrapolation, all of God's people today:

**2 Timothy 2:15.** *Study to show [yourself] approved unto God, a workman ... (KJV)*

And study requires work.

**15b)** *... that [needs] not to be ashamed, ... (KJV)*

And what we supposed to do in our study?

**15 continued)** *rightly dividing the word of truth. (KJV)*

What does Paul mean by that? The Greek word for "divide" is Strong's #3718 and it's the Greek word "orthotomeo" (or-thot-om-eh'-o). It means *to proceed on a straight path*, not to wander all over, or in nautical terms, it means *to hold a straight course*, know the heading you want and stay on the heading. It means and is the equivalent of *doing the right thing* when it says, "divide." We have to study to show ourselves approved of God to know the word of truth to do the right thing. Zodhiates' says, *correctly teach the word of God.* Ultimately, all of us are teachers, whether we like it or not, by our example or by our outright teaching.

Today, too many are not rightly dividing the word of truth and they have gone aside in confusion—absolute confusion. From my perspective, this is the typical progression of going from the word of truth into the spirit of error. Often it starts with finding a way to avoid fasting, that we don't need to fast. I heard a minister say—this goes back several years ago—"Well, a fast can be just missing a meal, or even two meals, but you can still drink water. That's a fast." So, water down the doctrine and, when you get to the end of that, you don't fast at all. That, then, begins to inhibit our closeness to God.

Then, find a way of not tithing. "Well, the New Testament church didn't tithe," and "There's no such thing as tithing." Then they find a way to say, "But I'll give the equivalent of ten percent." I've heard that so many times and guess what? You can just count on it. After a year, they're not tithing, certainly not the equivalent of ten percent.

Then, comes next, watering down the holy days and changing the meaning of the holy days. There was the head of one of the larger groups that said here recently in a writing—He said, "All of the holy days point to Christ." Really? What happened to God the Father in that? That sounds like a Protestant declaration—"All of the holy days point to Christ." Then, you begin to change the meaning of the holy days over time.

And, then finally, the Sabbath occurs. Once you get rid of the Sabbath, God's identifying sign of His people, then, guess what? You're right back into the world—all the way into the world.

So, we have to judge truth from error. And we don't want the spirit of error to creep into us. It is our responsibility to know and know we know the truth of God, the truth in the Bible. That's the first thing we're to judge.

### **3.B. We must judge the fruits; the fruits of things, the fruits of people.**

We're to judge the fruits. We don't judge the individual. We don't judge the heart of the individual, but we are told to judge the fruits of either something or somebody. Let's go to Matthew 7. We were there before. This time we'll pick it up in verse 15. This was a warning from Christ to all of us.

***Matthew 7:15.*** *Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. (KJV)*

Remember in John, the second scripture that we quoted? He says, "Judge not according to appearance." And Christ is saying, "Hey, the appearance of these false prophets looks like sheep, but they're really not. They're wolves." I'm not a betting man and we shouldn't bet, but I would wager that there are more false prophets today than any other time in the history of the New Testament church, in part because of the internet, in part because of blogs, and in part because people can put anything out there. And we have no idea who the author is or what their credentials are.

The point is that Christ said to beware of false prophets. How can we beware if we don't make a judgment? He says, "Beware." Then, I have to judge whether this person is a false prophet or not. Otherwise, you can't beware. And, we cannot judge by the appearance as I said (John 7:24). But Christ gives us an answer in verse 16.

*16) [You] shall know them by their fruits.... (KJV)*

Christ is saying, "You don't need to know their heart. And, it's not your responsibility to judge their heart, but you will know them by their fruits."

*16b) Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? (KJV)*

Of course not.

*17) Even so every good tree [brings] forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree [brings] forth evil fruit. (KJV)*

Christ is saying that you can judge whether they are good or corrupt by examining the fruit.

*18) A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. (KJV)*

Here's the thing that should scare us.

*19) Every tree that [brings] not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.*

*20) Wherefore by their fruits [you] shall know them. (KJV)*

This is the second time; it's repeated for emphasis. Verse 21, then Christ goes on to say:

*21) Not every one that [says] unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; ... (KJV)*

Not everybody is going to be in God's Kingdom. Just because somebody says that they are a Christian or claims to be an apostle or claims to be a prophet doesn't make them someone who is going to be in God's Kingdom. "But," Christ says:

*21b) ... he that [does] the will of my Father which is in heaven. (KJV)*

We all have roles to play. Not everybody can be an apostle, even though some want it desperately. We all have roles to play. And we want to do God's will in fulfilling whatever role He has for us.

Judging the fruits is far different than judging the heart of another human being. What we have to do is analyze somebody's fruits. Are the fruits godly? Or are the fruits scriptural? We're not to judge their heart. We're not to judge their motives. We don't know their innermost thoughts. We just look at the fruits.

And, this implies that we know what good fruits are. Some people have gotten confused about that over the years. One fellow told me that good fruits is a doctrine that was way off in the twigs. Another man said, "Good fruits is building a college in England." That's not what Christ is talking about at all. It gets back to the first point, that we need to be able to judge truth from error. Once we know truth from error, then we can look at the fruits and see if the fruits are in error or if the fruits are true. We will never know a person's heart, but we can know them by their works, by their fruits. .

#### **4. Examining the fruits can tell us if something or somebody is godly or not.**

Let me give you two examples in the history of God's church. For the first one we're going back in time to the 1930s and 1940s to the Radio Church of God, which the Worldwide Church of God was known as at that time.

##### **4.A. The old doctrine of Divorce and Remarriage.**

It was called D and R. Now, in the 1930s and the 1940s, the Radio Church of God assumed—and we'll get back to that in a bit—that God bound all marriages, even before being called into the church. So, if somebody came into the church that had been married for years, the assumption was that God bound them when they were married x number of years before coming into the church. That applied to all married couples when they came into the church [their marriages were looked at] according to that assumption and that teaching.

Let's say one spouse had been previously married and the other had not. Let's also say that the first spouse of the one who had been married and later came into the church was still alive. Then, according to the doctrine of the church, the currently married couple just coming into the church was living in adultery because that spouse that had been married previously was still bound to their first husband or wife. The current marriage, then, was illegal in God's eyes because the previously married individual was still bound to their first spouse.

This was not a big problem in the late 1930s, 1940s and even into the early part of the 1950s because divorce was so rare back then. It was not a big issue. And, the church was very small and growing very slowly. So, again, it was not an issue. But things began to change in the 1960s and early 1970s because, by that time, divorce had become more common and the church was growing exponentially. Pastors were visiting prospective members on a weekly basis and the church was growing and growing and growing.

This teaching, this doctrine put pastors into a horrible position because they would go visit a married couple, bright-eyed, bushy-tailed, had heard the radio program, got the "Plain Truth," got booklets, requested a visit. The pastors would come into the living room to see a couple and they had to ask the question: Has one of you been previously married? If the answer was "Yes," then the pastors were put into the position of telling the couple they had to separate.

You can imagine the fruits of that. The fruits were horrible. The church put itself into the position of breaking up marriages. The church put itself into the position of causing children to be without a mom or a dad in the home where previously they were happy and all were together. This started accelerating in the '60s. When it came to the '70s, it became a horrible, horrible problem because the fruits were so bad.

The principle is that God's law, God's government, should be for the benefit of the people, not the hurt of the people. So, the question began to be asked based on these horrible fruits, "Maybe our teaching is wrong. Maybe we're doing something wrong here. Maybe our assumptions are wrong."

And, in the early '70s, those in the upper levels of administration got together and they realized the church teaching on D and R was based on a false assumption. It was determined that God had not bound those marriages before they came into the church. God was not involved in those marriages. So, when a couple came into the church, if both or one of them had been divorced, God accepted them when they came into the church. And, guess what? There was great rejoicing as a result because the church was not in the business of splitting up families. So, this is an example of looking at a fruit, seeing that in this case the fruit was really bad, then going back and re-examining it because God's way doesn't issue bad fruit.

#### **4.B. The calendar issue.**

This example is more contemporary today. The calendar issue has been around for decades. It was around in the 1950s, but it seems after the breakup of Worldwide, it has accelerated. I understand people want to obey God in every way. We all do—in areas big and in areas small. After the breakup of Worldwide, and what we saw in the leadership of Worldwide, some after they left suspiciously asked: What else did the church get wrong? They were preaching the Trinity. And some people fixated on the calendar. They asked: I wonder if the calendar is right? And they began to calculate their own calendar. Then, they started keeping their calendar.

Let's stop there and let's look at the fruits. Those keeping a different calendar—those who looked at it, examined it, and realized that the calculated calendar we've had for decades is wrong; this other calendar is correct—then, one would think if God was behind that they all would be keeping the same calendar, that there is another legitimate calendar out there that we ought to look at. They would keep the same calendar, but guess what? There are dozens of different calendars out there. And those who feel that we're wrong [in using the calculated Hebrew calendar] look at all these calendars

and they can't agree among themselves which one is correct. That's why there are several feast sites around the country that have a Feast of Tabernacles that lasts a couple of weeks, in some cases even more, to accommodate everybody's view of the calendar.

So, what is the result? What is the fruit of this? Confusion. Disunity. Division. Not good fruits, not good fruits at all. And, as with the D and R doctrine, the error was based on a false assumption. It was based on a false assumption that it is our responsibility to calculate the calendar, but it is not our responsibility.

Both examples began with a false assumption that leads to ungodly fruit. And examining the fruits can tell us if something is godly or not.

### **5. Judging the fruits of a person can be an absolute matter.**

I'm not talking things. I'm talking an individual. Judging the fruits of a person can be an absolute matter. Let's look at Proverbs 22 and verse 24.

***Proverbs 22:24.** Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man [you shall] not go: (KJV)*

Now think about this for a minute. It is easy to judge if somebody is perpetually angry or not. It's easy to judge that. Examine the fruits of a person's daily life. Either they are angry or they're not angry.

Now, why does God want us to make this judgment of judging the fruits of a person as being absolute? The point is revealed in verse 25.

*25) Lest [you] learn his ways, and get a snare to [your] soul [to your life]. (KJV)*

Why? Because some of that person will rub off on me or you. It is the same with lust, the same with covetousness, using God's name in vain, etc., etc., etc. So, judging the fruits of a person can be an absolute thing. They are either angry or they're not angry. They're a hateful, lustful person or they are not. So, in these cases, judging the fruits is clear and it is absolute.

### **6. Judging the fruits of a person can be a relative matter. It is not absolute.**

And this is something that all of us need to take into account. Let's look at two examples based on fact, but not the same person. I'm assembling scenarios.

Let's take the first one. A third generation Christian from a model home, whose grandparents came into the church as a married couple, maybe in middle age, and began keeping God's law. They had children and those children were brought up in the church keeping God's law. Then those children had children and this third generation Christian comes into the church. What has this third generation Christian experienced?

They have always kept the Sabbath. They have always kept the holy days. They have always tithed. And, in this particular example, the individual had the examples of grandparents and parents who were model husbands and wives—absolutely model husbands and wives. So, this individual comes in at a particular level let's say.

Then, let's take another example, one who comes in from an abusive family. The examples that I'm going to quote are real—not from the same person—but they are real. Let's say in this particular case that a young boy had an abusive father, verbally abusive and physically abusive. The father would punch him. The father would grab him, twist his arm. In the one case, the father got so mad in the house in the living room that he picked the boy up, threw him against the far wall. The boy hit the wall about mid-way on the wall and fell to the ground. By the time the boy hit the ground, the father was over there kicking the boy in the ribs. This is a family that is in the church.

In addition, the boy had two brothers. Those brothers did the same thing to the boy. They physically abused him and would beat him up. And, they sexually abused him as a young boy. On top of that, they got great pleasure of forcing him—on pain of being beaten—to drink alcohol and later on to snort cocaine. Then, they would watch as the boy stumbled around the room and fell over, and was incoherent. And they made fun of him. The only time some of these young kids have peace is when they are high, high on drugs, high on alcohol. Then, they come into the church.

Take these two individuals—a third generation Christian or the one that I just described. With that in mind, let's go to Matthew 25:14 and look at the Parable of the Talents. As we go through this, keep in mind these two hypothetical individuals.

**Matthew 25:14.** *For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.*

*15) And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his ... (KJV)*

The New King James says, "own ability."

*15b) ... and straightway took his journey.*

*16) Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.*

*17) And likewise he that had received two, he also gained [another] two.*

*18) But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.*

*19) After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and [reckoned] with them.*

*20) And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, [you delivered] unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. (KJV)*

In other words, he doubled his master's investment in him. Verse 21:



*21) His lord said unto him, Well done, [you] good and faithful servant: [you have] been faithful over a few things, I will make [you] ruler over many things: enter [you into the joy of [the] lord.*

*22) He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, [you delivered] unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. (KJV)*

Again, doubling his master's investment and then in verse 23:

*23) His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; [you have] been faithful over a few things, I will make [you] ruler over many things: enter [you] into the joy of [your] lord. (KJV)*

So, the point is regardless of whether someone was given five talents or somebody was given two talents, the reward was the same because they both equally grew what God had given them.

Now, the lesson is that what counts is what I do, what you do with what you've been given. That's the lesson. This is why we cannot judge our brothers or sisters because we don't know where they started. We don't know their heredity. We don't know what happened behind closed doors in their families. We don't know their early family life. The fact is, the reality is that maybe most of us start on the first floor, but some start three or four levels down in the basement and that's their reality. So, we see here that judging fruits can be a relative matter.

Let's go to 2 Corinthians 10 and look at verse 12. Because fruits can be relative, this is why Paul says what he says in 2 Corinthians.

***2 Corinthians 10:12.*** *For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. (KJV)*

The point is that somebody could double their talents and still not be to the level where others even started. Somebody could multiply their talents by a factor of ten and still not be where somebody else started. That's why we can't judge one another. We must, therefore, cut our brothers and sisters some slack in that regard because not all of us started at the same level.

Let's go to Ephesians 4 and look at verse 2. This is why Paul writes this to the church at Ephesus and to us today for our encouragement and also for us to treat each other very respectfully and very carefully.

***Ephesians 4:2.*** *With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; (KJV)*

Longsuffering, forbearing out of love, because we don't know where they started. Therefore, we can't judge another person because of that fact. Once again, God does not want us to compare ourselves with others; thereby, judging the hearts of others, which we cannot even know.

## **7. We have to examine our own fruit.**

Here is the judging we must do. In addition to judging fruits, in addition to judging truth from error, we have to examine our own fruits.

Let's go to 1 Corinthians 11 and look at verse 31. Notice what Paul says to the church at Corinth.

**1 Corinthians 11:31.** *For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.* (KJV)

Remember Luke 6 and verse 37. "Do not judge, lest you be judged." Paul says the same thing. If we would judge ourselves, we shouldn't be judged. Here it is a different word for "judge." Here it is Strong's #1252. It's "diakrino" (dee-ak-ree'-no) and it means *to make a distinction*.

Am I following God's law? Am I like Jesus Christ or am I not? Trying to make a distinction between Christ and us, make a distinction whether or not I am in the faith. Not as the Pharisee did in the Parable of the Pharisee and the publican, where the Pharisee was looking down on the publican and said, "I'm glad I'm not like this guy," but examining ourselves, our conduct, our motives, our thoughts. Am I putting God first in my life? Am I putting God first in my life? Am I fully obeying God? Am I truly pleasing God? And am I growing to be like Jesus Christ?"

Now, with that in mind, let's go to 2 Corinthians 13 and verse 5. This is a scripture that we come to quite often this time of year, examining—not examining other people—but looking inwardly.

**2 Corinthians 13:5.** *Examine yourselves, whether [you] be in the faith;*

Examining ourselves, whether we're in the faith, whether I'm in the faith.

*5b) ... prove your own selves.... (KJV)*

"In other words, put ourselves to the test. Have I passed the test?" And the test is God's Word.

*5 continued) ... Know [you] not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except [you] be reprobates? (KJV)*

So, the examining is: Do I have God's spirit? Am I exercising God's spirit? Am I behaving like Jesus Christ? Am I thinking like Jesus Christ? Am I acting like Jesus Christ? We, the firstfruits, are being judged now. The world isn't and sometimes we can fall into the trap of judging the world, but they don't have God's holy spirit. They don't know God. Their time is going to come down the road. Our time is now. Look at 1 Peter 4 and verse 17.

**1 Peter 4:17.** *For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?*

*18) And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? (KJV)*

Now notice back in chapter 1 Peter 1:17 – this is where the rubber meets the road.

**1 Peter 1:17.** *And if [you] call on the Father, who without respect of persons [judges] according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear: (KJV)*

Men most often judge with favoritism, but God says here He doesn't do that. He judges our works irrespective of favoritism. What are our works? And knowing the heart, what's inside our head? What are the works of our head? Christ judges every man, whether it's the apostles, whether it was Mr. Armstrong, or all of us. He judges us using the same standard—God's word. That is the standard.

As we conclude and as we approach the Passover, I'll close with 1 Corinthians 11:28, primarily this is what we are to judge. Yes, truth from error. Yes, fruits, but before God judges us, we need to judge ourselves.

**1 Corinthians 11:28.** *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. (KJV)*

Having examined oneself to see whether we are in the faith and whether we are behaving like Jesus Christ. So, let's understand what we are called to judge and what we are not called to judge.