

How Are We to Judge Righteous Judgement?

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Well, all of us, I think, if we look back at our lives have made wrong judgments. I know I have. Too many times to remember even! And when we make wrong judgments, we create problems for ourselves, and we create problems for others when we make judgments that are in error.

And yet, despite that, Christ says the following in John 7 and verse 24. Let's turn there. Keep this Scripture in mind because we're going to come back to it. Not turn back to it but keep it in your memory. And I know you know this. It's a very familiar Scripture, John 7 and verse 24. Christ was telling us something very important in this one Scripture, several things in this one Scripture. John 7 verse 24, He says:

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

Now if you look at this, there are three facets that are obviously apparent when you first read the verse. It says—the first one is we are to judge, because He says, "Judge righteous judgment." So we are to make judgments, but when we do judge, we're to judge righteously. That's the second thing that we see that's just obvious. We are to judge and when we do judge, we judge righteously. And then the third thing we learn very quickly is that there's a clear implication that Christ is warning us and cautioning us about judging in an unrighteous manner. That it is possible for us to do that.

Now the Greek word for "judge" is Strong's 2919 and it is the Greek word *krino*. It is spelled *k-r-i-n-o*, but it's pronounced *kree'-no*. And it means to pronounce an opinion concerning right or wrong, to give an opinion or announce an opinion concerning right or wrong. And it is variously translated in the New Testament as judge or determine. Or it is translated condemn—judge, determine, or condemn.

Now Zodhiates in his very fine dictionary says the following about *krino*. Remember this. It says, "To form and express a judgment or opinion as to any person or anything," but notice this, "more commonly unfavorable." In other words, in the New Testament, it is talking about judging in an unfavorable way. I'll read that again. Zodhiates says, "To form and express and a judgment or opinion as to any person or thing, more commonly unfavorable," and, as we're going to see, more commonly the human tendency to look down on somebody and to judge somebody in a condemning or a negative way.

So we understand the word "judge," but now let's look at the Greek word "righteous" in this verse. It is Strong's 1342 and it's the Greek word *dikaio*s (*dik'-ah-yos*). And it has three meanings, all roughly the same—observing divine

laws. Righteousness is observing divine laws. And that is obvious. If we follow God's Laws, then we take on His righteousness as we follow them.

A second meaning is innocent, faultless, or guiltless. And that obviously is a truism because if we follow God's divine Laws, then we become guiltless. We have no guilt. We have no fault. And we are innocent in His eyes as long as we follow His Laws.

The third meaning is thinking and feeling and acting in a way that totally conforms to God's will. Thinking and feeling and acting in a way that conforms to the will of God. And all of us want to do God's will and when we follow God's will, we thereby become righteous as He is righteous.

Now this verse tells us that if we are to judge righteously, we need some instruction on how to do that. And what we're going to look at in the Bible today is this whole question of judging righteous judgment. In other words, "How are we to judge?" That's one question we're going to answer. And secondly, "What are we to judge? What are we to judge?" And then "How are we to judge righteous judgment?"

And there is confusion among God's people because we see God's people judging in areas where they shouldn't be judging at all, and then not judging in areas where they should be judging. And so what we really need to do is get this whole subject of righteous judgment firmly in our head so that we follow God's way and do God's will instead of following human nature. So what are we to judge and how are we to judge righteous judgment?

Point Number One:

This is the foundation. This is something we need to cement in our brains because the greater Church of God, I'm sad to say, does not follow this and does not do this. Point Number One:

I. God and Christ are responsible for judging mankind.

It's the job that God has taken to Himself and has delegated to Jesus Christ to judge mankind.

Now if you like to outline, this is the First Point. Point A is:

A. The Father has delegated to Christ the judgment of mankind.

It's very clear in the Scripture. The Father has delegated the judgment of mankind to Jesus Christ.

Now at Christ's first coming, He did not come to judge. Let's understand that. His role, His job, His mission, so to speak, in His first coming was not to judge mankind. Let's go to John 12 and verse 47 and see that. Christ said that very plainly, just as plainly as the nose on our faces. He did not come to judge in His first coming as the Messiah. John 12 verse 47, Christ says:

John 12:47. *And if any man hear my words, and believe not, [He says,] I judge him not: (KJV)*

"I don't judge him." He says:

John 12:47b. *...for I [am come] not to judge the world, but to save the world. (KJV)*

So His mission in coming the first time was to sacrifice Himself as Savior and to pay the penalty for all of mankind's sins. He did not come to judge the world. He came to save the world.

Now when He comes the second time, it's totally different. He will judge the world when He comes the second time. Let's go back to chapter 5. John 5, we're going to read verses 21 and 22 and then jump to 27 through 30. John chapter 5, notice this. Christ says in verse 21 of John 5:

John 5:21. *For as the Father [raised] up the dead [and would raise up Jesus Christ], and [quickens] them [meaning, gives the dead life]; even so the Son [quickens] whom he will.
22) For the Father [judges] no man, but [has] committed all judgment... (KJV)*

The Greek word here means "a separating" or "a selection." It's not the word *krino*, but this Greek word means a separating as the sheep from the goats are separated or a selection as you pull out the sheep from the goats.

John 5:22. *[So] the Father [judges] no man, but [has] committed all judgment unto the Son:*

John 5:27. *And [has] given him authority to execute judgment... (KJV)*

Now that Greek word for "execute" means "to do" or "to carry out."

So that means Christ is the One that is actually going to carry the judgment out. He is actually the One that is going to resurrect those who are going to be resurrected to eternal life, and it's His job to resurrect those that are going to be resurrected back to a physical life to go into the Lake of Fire.

So verse 27:

John 5:27. *And [has] given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. (KJV)*

Verse 28 now:

John 5:28. *Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, (KJV)*

He's amplifying now on the fact that God has delegated to Him the job of executing judgment.

Verse 29:

John 5:29. *And shall come forth [They'll come forth out of the graves.]; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. (KJV)*

Christ is the One that is going to actually do this.

Verse 30:

John 5:30. *I can... (KJV)*

Now notice what He says!

John 5:30. *I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not [My] own will, but the will of the Father [that has] sent me. (KJV)*

So in that sense, since Christ seeks the Father's will, They are both judging because They are both of the same mind and of the same character and of the same spirit, but the Father has delegated to the Son the actual doing of the resurrecting and the actual delineating and separating of the sheep from the goats.

Now in Christ's first coming, think about this: Man judged Jesus Christ. Man decided to put Christ to death. Man decided to condemn Him. Man decided to scourge Him and to heap rebuke upon Him. So it's only fair that when Christ comes back the second time, He judges mankind because in His first appearance on this earth, man judged Him. Now the tables are turned and when Christ comes the second time, He is going to judge mankind. And it is obvious that Christ will determine or judge who will be resurrected and who will not.

So let's understand that under Point One the Father has delegated to Christ judgment of all mankind.

Point B under the First Point of God and Christ are responsible for judging mankind, Point B is that:

B. Christ judges a human's works (a man or a woman's works) according to His Word.

We are judged according to the Word of God. That is the standard upon which we are judged. Now in the physical world, men allegedly or supposedly are being judged according to written law, whatever the law is. But with God and Christ, a human is judged according to the Word of God. Let's go to John chapter 12, read verse 48. John chapter 12 and verse 48, notice what Christ says. Christ says:

John 12:48. *He that [rejects] me, (KJV)*

And many did!

John 12:48b. *...and [receives] not my words, (KJV)*

And many rejected His words.

John 12:48 continued. *... [has] one that [judges] him (KJV)*

What is it?

John 12:48 continued. *...the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. (KJV)*

Now remember, back in John 7:24, the definition of the word "righteous" was observing divine laws. And Christ is saying, "Those divine laws are what you must measure up against and in the end of the day judges you—these divine laws."

Let's go to 1 Peter 1 and verse 17. Peter reinforces what Christ said in John chapter 12. The apostles understood this perfectly and they repeat it again for our benefit. 1 Peter 1 verse 17, notice what he says about the Father. 1 Peter 1 verse 17:

1 Peter 1:17. *And if [you] call on the Father, who without respect of persons [judges] according to... (KJV)*

What?

1 Peter 1:17b. *...every [person's] work... (KJV)*

What they do—every person's work! He says, "If you understand that, then we need to 'pass the time of our sojourning in fear' on this earth because we are being judged."

Now men often judge with favoritism. I've seen that in business. And frankly, I've seen it even more in the Church. People in upper echelons judge others with a degree of favoritism. And I've seen it where two different individuals committed the same transgression. And one got a pass and one didn't based on favoritism.

Christ judges every man—and I don't care if it's the apostle Peter who wrote these words or Herbert W. Armstrong or any of us—He judges any man or any woman according to the same standard. And that standard is God's Word. No free passes! We're judged according to God's Word.

So Point B is:

B. Christ judges a human's works and compares them to His Word.

Point Number C, the third regarding God and Christ being responsible for judging mankind:

C. We, the firstfruits, are being judged now.

Now is our time, our only time! And we're in 1 Peter 1. Jump to chapter 4, 1 Peter 4 and read the familiar Scripture, verses 17 and 18. 1 Peter 4 verses 17 and 18:

***1 Peter 4:17.** For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God [the Church of God, the Body of Christ]: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end of them [be] that obey not the gospel [that don't follow the Words of Christ]? (KJV)*

1 Peter 4 now verse 18:

***1 Peter 4:18.** And if the righteous... (KJV)*

Now this is the same word that we quoted in John 7:24—those who observe divine laws.

***1 Peter 4:18.** And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear? (KJV)*

What is their fate? Well, we know what that is and it's a sad fate.

So, summing up the First Point, we clearly understand—we could spend the whole sermon on this, but—we clearly understand that only God and Christ judge human beings. Now we have to understand that as God's people. Shame on us, if we don't!

Because that leads to the Second Point—the obvious point—is that:

II. We, as human beings are not to judge one another.

That is the job God and Christ have chosen for themselves. And yet, in the greater Church today, God's people just jump in and judge one another and take over, take away from God and Christ the job that They said is Theirs! And what we do is we judge other people. We judge their hearts. We judge their motives. We judge what's going on in their head—even though we're not in their head. But God's people have done that for decades.

And so the Second Point here is that we are not to judge one another. And it's obvious because only God knows the hearts and minds of human beings. We don't. Humans cannot know the heart of another human.

Now the apostles understood that and they set an example for us in Acts chapter 2 because they prayed and cast lots on who should replace Judas because they did not know the hearts of those they were looking at, those they were

considering. They couldn't tell. Notice Acts 1 and verse 24. They were trying to replace Judas. They had two men.

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

The word "men" in the King James is in italics.

Acts 1:24b. *[You], Lord, which [know] the hearts of all, show [which] of these two [you have] chosen, (KJV)*

And they drew lots and God picked the one.

So let's understand that. And the apostles knew even in those early days that only God knows the heart of a human being. And we are incapable of judging the way God and Christ judge.

So let's ask the question then: Why are we not to judge one another? Why are we not? Because we have a problem in judging incorrectly! Remember John 7 and verse 24, the very first Scripture? We're told, "Judge not according to appearance." And human beings do it all the time! I've done it. You've done it. We judge according to the outward appearance. And God judges the heart. And we are incapable of judging the heart. Therefore, we should not be judging one another because we don't know a person's heart. We really don't.

We need to focus rather on our sins and our faults. Not on the faults of somebody else. The obvious example is in Luke chapter 18. Let's go there, verses 9 through 14. Christ understood this. He was trying to teach us in a parable that we are incapable of judging our fellowman. We cannot do that. It's God's job. It's Christ's job. Luke 18 beginning in verse 9, we know the story.

Luke 18:9. *And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and [they] despised others: (KJV)*

So the purpose of this parable—now think with me! The purpose of the parable, it is aimed at people who judged others in comparison to themselves. And we have already seen we shouldn't be doing that.

Verse 10:

Luke 18:10. *Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. (KJV)*

One was righteous on the surface. We judge according to appearance. One was righteous. He was Pharisee. He was a doctor of the Law. He wore the robes. He had all the credentials. And the other was a tax collector. You know a slimy tax collector!

Verse 11:

John 18:11. *The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, (KJV)*

Meaning the prayer never went above his head. God never heard it. He was praying with himself. He says:

John 18:11b. *God, I thank [you], that I am not [like] other men... (KJV)*

So he is judging himself versus others. And he said, "I'm so thankful, God, that I'm not like these other scoundrels out there.

John 18:11 continued. *[They're] extortioners, [they're] unjust, [they're] adulterers, or even as this publican. (KJV)*

He was already judging this man he didn't even know! Just by appearance.

And he says:

John 18:12. *I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. (KJV)*

He said, "I'm just wonderful. Look at what I do. And I just know this publican doesn't do any of this." He was making a judgment not knowing the man's heart.

John 18:13. *And the publican [on the other hand], standing afar off, (KJV)*

I'm sure the Pharisee was right up in front taking all the glory and this publican was over in the dark shadows in the corner.

John 18:13. *...And ... [he was] standing afar off, would not [so much] lift up as his eyes unto heaven, but [beat] upon his [chest], saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. (KJV)*

And then Christ says:

John 18:14. *I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that [exalts] himself shall be abased; and he that [humbles] himself shall be exalted. (KJV)*

Now we see here in this example that one man focused on the other man's alleged sins. The other man focused on his sins and not on the other person's alleged sins. One was looking to change himself. The other was comparing himself to somebody else and then elevating himself in the process. The Pharisee, there is no mention of him wanting to change or even feeling he's done anything wrong, but the other man could hardly stand before God realizing what a sinner he was. And so this tells us very clearly we're not to judge one another. We're supposed to be looking at ourselves.

We judge our brother when we speak evil of our brother or sister. When we judge somebody, which we're not supposed to do, we speak evil of them. Look at James chapter 4 and we're going to read verses 11 and 12, James chapter 4

verses 11 and 12. Direct commandment, hard to get around this one, James chapter 4 verse 11:

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

Very plain! Now he explains why.

James 4:11b. *He that [speaks] evil of his brother, [judges] his brother, (KJV)*

The Greek word for "judge" is *krino*, the same one that we looked at in John chapter 7.

He says that:

James 4:11 continued. *[He that judges] his brother, [speaks] evil of the law, and [judges] the law: but if [you] judge the law, [then you're] not a doer of the law, but [you're] a judge. (KJV)*

Verse 12, he says:

James 4:12. *There is [only] one lawgiver, (KJV)*

And, by implication, there's only one judge—God and Christ, but Christ is the one that executes judgment. He says:

James 4:12. *There is [only] one lawgiver [and one judge] who is able to save and to destroy: (KJV)*

He's asking the question: "You that judge and speak evil of somebody else are you able to save and destroy?" Do we have that power to save and destroy? Well of course, we don't! Then he says:

James 4:12b. *...who are you that [judges] another [if you don't have the power to save and destroy]? (KJV)*

He says, "So don't speak evil of your brother because, if you do, you're taking over the job of God and Christ. And boy, woe unto us if we try to take on authority that doesn't belong to us!

When we judge others, we also condemn ourselves. When we judge others we condemn ourselves. Look at Romans chapter 2, the first six verses. Paul makes this very clear in judging others, we are actually putting ourselves into condemnation because in part we're taking on a job that doesn't belong to us. Romans 2 verse 1, notice this. He says:

Romans 2:1. *Therefore [you are] inexcusable, O man [or woman], whosoever [you are] that [judge]: (KJV)*

Now that's the Greek word *krino* again, the same one in John chapter 7. He says:

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

So when we condemn another person, what we're being told here is, "You hypocrite! You do the same thing! You're condemning somebody else for the very thing that you do." Paul is saying.

Verse 2:

Romans 2:2. *But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to [the] truth [to God's Word]... (KJV)*

And we know—we won't turn there—John 17 verse 17 says, "Your Word is truth." So when he says, "Be sure that the judgment of God is according to the truth," he's just re-emphasizing "It's according to Your Word." And he says:

Romans 2:2b. *...according to the truth against them which commit such things. (KJV)*

God will take care of that. God is going to judge. God judges the deeds. God judges and knows the hearts.

Verse 3:

Romans 2:3. *And [do you think] this, O man, that [judge] them which do such things, and [you do] the same, that [you're going to] escape the judgment of God? (KJV)*

When you criticize others and judge others, do you think somehow, that gives you a pass on God's judgment and Christ's judgment?

Verse 4:

Romans 2:4. *Or [do you despise] the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; (KJV)*

He's saying, "When you judge somebody else, then you're condemning them." And he says, "Look at what God's done to you." I look back at my life and I see that God has been so good to me even when I was sinning. God has been forbearing me, as it says here. That's means "put up with." God has put up with me and my attitudes and my wrong thoughts for so long and He didn't judge me or condemn me. He gave me time to have the light bulb come on and to begin to see.

And yet, when we judge our fellowman, we don't give them that time. We're condemning them right then, you see. So he says, in verse 4:

Romans 2:4. Or [do you despise] the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God [leads you] to repentance? (KJV)

God gives us sometimes decades! He has for me. Sometimes decades to come to the realization of certain sins and certain wrong attitudes and wrong thoughts and wrong approaches. Longsuffering, forbearing, giving me decades to do that!

And yet, when we judge our brother, you see, we're condemning him right on the spot. We're not giving them time. We're not giving them decades. We're not allowing them to grow in God's spirit because of our condemnation.

Verse 5:

Romans 2:5. But after [your] hardness... (NKJ)

And the King James says, "impenitent" which mean unrepentant.

Romans 2:5. But after [your] hardness and [unrepentant] heart [you treasure] up unto [yourself] wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

6) Who will render every man [or every woman] according to his deeds: (KJV)

Make no mistake. At the end of the day, we're judged. Our deeds are stacked up against God's Word and we're judged accordingly. God does that. Christ does that. Not each one of us.

Now let's go to James 5 and verse 9 and see another Scripture—just a second Scripture—about when we judge somebody we condemn ourselves. I'm going to read it out of the New Kings James. It's a little more clear. James 5 and verse 9, we're talking about when we judge others, we actually are starting to condemn ourselves. James 5 verse 9:

James 5:9. Do not grumble against one another, brethren, (NKJ)

Don't do that! Why?

James 5:9b. ...lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door! (NKJ)

Peter said, "Judgment is on the house of God." James is saying, "Don't grumble and complain against each other because you're going to be condemned. You're condemning yourself when you do." So when we judge others, we condemn ourselves.

Also we're told that we're going to be judged with the same yardstick we judge others. We're going to be judged with the same severity that we judge others, or we're going to be judged with the same mercy that we show others. Christ said

this on the Sermon on the Mount. Let's go to Matthew chapter 7, read the first five verses. I'll read it out of the NIV because it's a lot more plainly rendered in modern English. Matthew 7, first five verses out of the NIV. First verse, we are told:

Matthew 7:1. *"Do not judge, (NIV)*

That's the Greek word *krino*. Remember Zodhiates said "to form and express an opinion or judgment unto any person more commonly unfavorable"? So:

Matthew 7:1. *"Do not judge, or you too will be judged.*

2) For in the same way [as] you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. (NIV)

Meaning, if we have a harsh yardstick and we measure others according to our harsh yardstick, Christ says, "I'm going to use that same yardstick against you. You want to be harsh with your brethren? You want to be condemning? You want to cut them no slack?" He says, "I'll do the same to you." That's a scary thought!

Verse 3:

Matthew 7:3. *"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 [in my wonderfulness and righteousness] take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? (NIV)

We've all done it! We've had it done to us by hypocrites. And all of us have been hypocrites in doing it to others. Hopefully, we're not doing that now, but I used to years ago. And you just didn't think twice about it. Just hypocritical!

Verse 5, He says:

Matthew 7:5. *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)*

I can remember years ago in Washington. One of the Churches—I won't tell you which, but—we had a church in a certain area here in Washington. And we had a man who was the self-appointed "church policeman". And he was the self-appointed "church spot remover".

And so we would have a Sabbath Service and then during the week, he would go around, primarily to widows and housewives and all. And he would call on them and tell them in a monologue of what their sins were at Sabbath Services or what their sins were during the week. And he would sit down with them and he would correct them in that sense.

And so I started getting reports from people who were offended by this. Obviously! We all would be! And so, I was given the job of sitting down and talking with this man. Now the hypocritical thing is the reason—one of the reasons—this guy did it is he had plenty of time because he didn't work. His wife supported him. And so he had plenty of time to go around and criticize others.

And you see it never occurred to him that he was going to be judged with the same severity that he was judging people in the Church every day. And he felt quite free to point out everybody's faults. And he had these gigantic, gigantic spiritual blind spots in his own character. One of which is 1 Timothy 5 verse 8, "You're worse than an infidel if you don't support your family." Couldn't see that!

And so we need to understand that boy, if we're severe in our judgment of others, Christ and God are going to be severe with us.

Judging other humans has a very bad side effect. There's one gigantic side effect. So let's go to 1 Corinthians chapter 4 and see what that side effect is. We'll read the first seven verses of 1 Corinthians chapter 4.

Paul was on the receiving end of this side effect. And he was trying to correct it in this very troubled Church in Corinth. They had all kinds of problems. And if you put it in modern terms, Corinth was basically a combination of New York City and Las Vegas. And it was a very reprobate town. And Church members came in, Brethren came into the Church—Jews and Gentiles—as part of that system.

1 Corinthians 4 verse 1, Paul says:

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

One of the mysteries, of course, is Christ living in you and the Gentiles being called into the Church.

Verse 2:

1 Corinthians 4:2. *Moreover it is required in stewards [meaning ministers], that a man be found faithful.
3) But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, (KJV)*

Now that Greek word is not *krino*. It's *anakrino*, which means to be examined. We would say "to be put under a microscope" today.

And so Paul is saying:

1 Corinthians 4:3b. *[But with me it's a small thing. It's of no big deal] that I should be [examined] of you, or of man's judgment: (KJV)*

He's referring to the courts of men. And we see that all the time. We see crooks getting time off. We see guilty people getting a pass. And we see people that

are innocent being convicted. And Paul says, "It's no big deal if you examine me according to the way man examines." He says:

1 Corinthians 4:3 continued. ... *[Yes, I don't even] judge [myself]. (KJV)*

That meaning: "as men judge." I don't judge myself according to the ways of man.

Verse 4, he says:

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

He says, "I don't care what you say about me because you don't judge me. Christ judges me."

Verse 5:

1 Corinthians 4:5. *Therefore judge... (KJV)*

Now this is the word *krino*.

1 Corinthians 4:5b. ...*judge nothing before the time, until the Lord [comes], who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness [in our hearts], and will make manifest [or apparent] the counsels of the hearts: (KJV)*

You can't do that. You don't know that, but just hold off. Don't judge because Christ is going to make it all apparent when He comes. He says:

1 Corinthians 4:5 continued. ...*and then shall every man have praise of God. (KJV)*

Those who are worthy of praise will have the praise. Verse 6:

1 Corinthians 4:6. *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 above that which is written, (KJV)*

Now let's just stop here because I'm going to read it again. He says:

1 Corinthians 4:6b. ...*that [you] might learn in us not to think... (KJV)*

The King James says, "of men." And that's in italics and that was inserted by the translators. I believe that's an error. I think it would be "think of 'yourself'— not of men—above that which is written."

1 Corinthians 4:6 continued. ...*that no one of you be puffed up one against another. (KJV)*

He says, "Don't think of yourself above what ought to be thought about. Don't think of others below yourself that you be not puffed up one against another." This is the side effect of judging humans: is when we do, we puff ourselves up. We aggrandize ourselves because we think, "Oh, I'd never do that!" Therefore, we're above them and they're below us. We get puffed up. And it's very easy then to put on the whole mantle of self-righteousness. "I wouldn't do that."

So let's read it again.

1 Corinthians 4:6b. *I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that [you] might learn in us not to think of [yourself] above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up one against another. 7) For who [makes you] to differ [one] from another? (KJV)*

He's asking the question. He says:

1 Corinthians 4:7b. *...and what [have you] that [you did] not receive? (KJV)*

In other words, "You can't change your looks. You can't change your mind in the sense of the way your brain is built." He says:

1 Corinthians 4:7 continued. *...now if [you did] receive it [if it was a gift], why [do you] glory, as [though you hadn't] received it? (KJV)*

In other words, as you earned it or you worked for it or because of your goodness, you got it as through your own efforts because remember what James 1 and verse 17 says? We won't turn there. James tells us that every good and every perfect gift comes from where? The Father of lights with no variableness and no shadow of turning! Every good thing that we have is a gift from God.

We didn't earn it because of our righteousness. We didn't get it because of our hard work. We didn't get it because somehow we're superior to our fellowman.

Repentance is a gift. Forgiveness is a gift. Salvation is a gift. Calling is a gift. God's holy spirit is a gift. Faith is a gift. It's all a gift! We don't earn it.

And so what Paul is saying here is that who are we to be puffed up when we compare ourselves to somebody else about gifts that we didn't earn in the first place. He said, "Don't do that! Look to God because God is the Father that gives us everything." So how can we exalt ourselves and puff ourselves up when we're handed the gift in the first place?

Look at 2 Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 12, very, very clear Scripture about the Second Point that we shouldn't be judging one another. 2 Corinthians chapter 10 verse 12, Paul in his second letter to the Corinthian Church now is trying to get them to forgive this man that they/he had kicked out of the Church before. And he's trying to get them off their high horse now of self-righteousness. He says:

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

Because they're comparing a human against a human; they're not comparing a human against God's Law because God's Law is what we're judged against. We're not judged against the conduct of another human being. We're judged against God's Law.

And when we judge somebody else, we imply—whether it's overtly stated or not—we imply that, "Oh, I wouldn't do that! I'm too good for that. I wouldn't do that." And, thus, we elevate the self. We become puffed up.

So, but the question was as aside: What do we do if we see a Brother in error? Now we had the spot remover in the Church. Finally, that man, when he was corrected couldn't take the correction, and finally left the Church, but if we're not to be spot removers, which we're not, what do we do if we see a Brother in error?

Very simple! Galatians 6 verse 1 gives us the answer. Let's remember the answer because we're not here to judge our brother. We're here to help our brother. Galatians 6 and verse 1, look at this:

Galatians 6:1. *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, (KJV)*

Or a woman, it doesn't make any difference. "Brethren, if a man [or a woman] be overtaken in a fault," here's what you do:

Galatians 6:1b. *... [you] which are spiritual, (KJV)*

Now that's a huge label right there and we better be able to live up to the label before we execute what he's talking about.

Galatians 6:1b. *... [you] which are spiritual, restore such a one [the one who is sinning] in the spirit of... (KJV)*

What? Haughtiness? Arrogance like the publican received from the Pharisee? Is that the way you go approach somebody? No. He says:

Galatians 6:1 continued. *... [you] which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering [yourself], lest [you] be [tested—lest it come to you]. (KJV)*

Now what this is saying is this is not judging your human brother. This is not condemning your human brother. It's attempting to help your brother in a pure and a humble spirit. Just going and saying, "Look, I saw you do this. And I love you. And it really worries me and can we sit down and talk about it?" No condemning. No judging somebody's heart, but, as we'll see, you were judging somebody's actions.

So the Bible makes it very plain that we're not to judge one another. That is the job of God and Christ. So that's the Second Point.

That leads us to the Third Point.

III. Rather than judging one another, we are—instead of judging—we're to be merciful, forgiving, and patient.

Rather than judging one another, we're to be merciful, forgiving, and patient.

Let's go to Luke chapter 6 and we'll read verses 37 and 38. Luke again uses the word *krino* in the very first word of verse 37 of Luke chapter 6. "To form or express a judgment or opinion more commonly unfavorable," as Zodhiates says. Luke 6 verse 37, it says:

Luke 6:37. *"Judge not, and [you] shall not be judged: condemn not, and [you] shall not be condemned. [He says,] forgive [though, if you forgive, He says, you're going to be] forgiven. (NKJ)*

Notice verse 38. He says—rather than judge—He says, "Give." Rather than judge or condemn, He says:

Luke 6:38. *Give, and it shall be given [back] to you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, running over, shall men give your bosom. [Meaning it's yours to hold onto.] For with the same measure that [you use] it shall be measured to you again. (KJV)*

So He says, "Rather give, and forgive!" rather than judging or condemning.

Look at Colossians 3 and verses 13 through 15. This is an exhortation of what we should be doing rather than judging or condemning, Colossians 3 verses 13 through 15. God and Christ are forbearing with us. Meaning they put up with us, our wrong attitudes, our wrong words, our wrong thoughts. And here we're being encouraged to do the same thing. Colossians 3 verse 13:

Colossians 3:13. *Forbearing one another, (KJV)*

That means putting up with one another.

Colossians 3:13b. *...and forgiving one another, if any man [has] a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so do [you]. (KJV)*

If you're in the middle of a squabble, forgive! Forbear! Verse 14:

Colossians 3:14. *And above all these things put on [love], which is the bond of [perfection]. (KJV)*

Love, it's a bond. The Greek word for "bond" means ligament. It's the Greek word that we translate today as "ligaments." Ligaments are what hold bones

together. Without the ligaments, your thigh bone would fall off your shin bone. They would not be connected. And what he's saying is that love is the connection between two human beings. It's the bond of perfection.

Verse 15:

Colossians 3:15. *And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also [you] are called in one body; and be thankful. (KJV)*

And so what he's saying is that forbearing one another and forgiving one another bring peace. Not strife! And where strife is, I guarantee you, you don't have patience and kindness and gentleness and forgiveness and forbearing.

Now remember what Christ said—we won't turn there—you know the model prayer in Matthew chapter 6. He says, "Forgive us our debts as we, to the extent that we forgive our debtors, because if you forgive men their trespasses against you, then God's going to forgive your trespasses against Him." And Christ said, "If you don't forgive, God's not going to forgive." So let's remember that. Rather than judge, we're supposed to show mercy and a forgiving attitude and be patient.

One final Scripture under this Third Point is in James chapter 2 and we're going to read verses 10 through 13. Our job, rather than judging, is to learn mercy, forbearance, forgiveness, kindness, goodness, gentleness. James 2 verse 10:

James 2:10. *For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. (KJV)*

You break the Law. Many people in the greater Church categorize sin and that is not true. Sin is sin! And he's saying, "You break the Fifth Commandment or you break the Seventh Commandment, or you break the First Commandment, you're guilty of breaking the commandment of God and you come under the death penalty. You're guilty of all.

Verse 11:

James 2:11. *For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, [Don't] kill. Now if [you don't] commit adultery, [but] if [you] kill, [you're] become a transgressor of the law. (KJV)*

God does not categorize sin. Verse 12:

James 2:12. *So speak [you], and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. (KJV)*

We established earlier that the Law that judges us, the standard, is the Word of God.

Notice verse 13 though!

James 2:13. *For he shall have judgment without mercy [on the person] that [has] showed no mercy; and mercy [rejoices] against judgment. (KJV)*

Meaning if we are merciful in our conduct with one another, if we're ready to forgive, if we don't take offense, if we turn the other cheek, if we walk the extra mile, God will do the same with us. But, boy, we should pray to God; cry out to God because, boy, if we don't show mercy, God's not going to show mercy to us. So we better cry out to God and pray to God to give us a merciful spirit, a kind and a gentle and a forbearing spirit. We need to be merciful and forgiving. That concludes the Third Point.

Now the Fourth and Last Point: We said earlier in the very beginning that we are to judge. Remember Christ said, "Judge righteous judgment." Well we've, up to this point, discussed the fact that God and Christ judge mankind and we're not supposed to judge mankind, but yet Christ said, "Judge righteous judgment." So that begs the question and leads us to the Fourth Point.

IV. If we're not to judge one another, then, what on earth are we supposed to judge?

We're not supposed to judge one another, but Christ said, "Judge righteous judgment." Okay, then that means we should be judging something. What should it be? Point A, we're going to find out there are three things. Point A:

A. We must judge truth from error.

That's a big job. Not judging our brother or our sister, we're supposed to judge truth from error. Look at 2 Timothy 2 and verse 15. We know this Scripture by heart. We must judge truth from error. 2 Timothy 2 and verse 15, it says:

2 Timothy 2:15. *Study to show [yourself] approved unto God [Yes!], a workman that [needs] not to be ashamed, (KJV)*

We don't have to be ashamed of studying God's Word. But notice this last phrase!

2 Timothy 2:15b. *...rightly dividing the word of truth. (KJV)*

Study allows us to do that.

Now the Greek word for "divide" is Strong's number 3718. And it means to proceed on a straight line, or in nautical terms meaning to hold a straight course. You know by a compass. You just follow a compass heading. Or it's the equivalent to the Greek word of doing what is right. So, to hold a straight course, to follow a straight path, or to do what is right.

So we rightly divide the Word of Truth. We divide it so we understand, "What is the course that God wants me to walk on? What is the path He wants me to walk on? What course does He want me to take?" That's why we study the Bible.

We apply it to ourselves. Not to compare ourselves to somebody else, but we study the Bible to know how we should live.

And that's what used to aggravate me in years past. We opened the Bible up and we condemned everybody. We condemned the Jews. And we condemned the Muslims. And we condemned the Africans. And we condemned the Nazis. And we condemned this and that and the other. And we weren't looking at ourselves to say, "Well, am I following the right course? Am I on the right path?" And that's what we need to be doing and not judging other people.

And today in the greater Church of God., too many are not rightly dividing the Word of Truth. They have gone astray. And without getting into any details, I'll just give you one example of several people I know over the last few years that have completely jumped off the track.

What they first started to do is they had a burr under their saddle about tithing. They didn't want to tithe really. And so, they looked into the Bible with an already drawn conclusion that "I don't have to tithe. And so how do I go about proving that?" Well, that's not an open mind. So you go with an axe to grind and so you start pulling Scriptures out of context and then you prove that you don't have to tithe.

Well, in every case that I am aware of, it didn't stop there. Then it went to the Holy Days, went in there and proved that "No, the Holy Days were done away with the Old Testament and therefore, we don't have to keep the Holy Days."

And then guess what happened next? It was the Sabbath. Do away with the Sabbath. And this little progression of not rightly dividing the Word of Truth, this little progression of not being able to judge truth from error took them right out of the Church. And right now guess what? They're right back in the world!

And there have been tens of thousands in God's Church who have done that. It starts with one thing, leads to another and leads to another because now they are in a spirit of error and not a spirit of truth.

And so, it is our responsibility to know and to know that we know the truth in the Bible. That means we have to study to show ourselves approved, but the goal of the study is to know what the truth is relative to our behavior and our thoughts and our deeds. And not look into God's Word to condemn other people. And we've had a bellyful of that in God's Church over the years.

So Point A is:

A. We have to judge truth from error.

Point B is:

B. We are told we have to judge fruits.

Look at Matthew chapter 7. We're going to read verses 15 through 21. Christ made this very clear. We are to judge fruits. We're to judge truth from error and then the second thing is we're to judge fruits. Matthew 7 verse 15, notice the context of judging fruits. Christ said:

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

That's the context. Verse 16, He says, "How do you know a false prophet? How do you know a wolf in sheep's clothing?" He says:

Matthew 7:16. *[You] shall know them by their fruits. [He says,] Do men gather grapes of a thorn bush, or [can you pluck a fig off] of [a thistle bush]? (KJV)*

Obviously no! Verse 17:

Matthew 7:17. *Even so every good tree [brings] forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree [brings] forth evil fruit. (KJV)*

It's very clear. Verse 18:

Matthew 7:18. *A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. (KJV)*

Now that's not to say all of us bring forth evil fruit sometime in the day. We say something we shouldn't say. We think something we shouldn't think, but He's talking about "Look at your fruits. Look at this individual's fruits over time." Don't take a snapshot of five seconds in their life when maybe they said something they shouldn't have said. And we all regret doing that and repent of it, but look at their fruits over a period of time.

Verse 19:

Matthew 7:19. *Every tree that [brings] not forth good fruit is [cut] down, and cast into the fire.
20) Wherefore by their fruits [you] shall know them.
21) Not every one that [says] unto me, Lord, Lord, [is going to] enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that [does] the will of my Father which is in heaven. (KJV)*

Since God doesn't judge us at one moment in time—God could condemn us if He picked out any five minutes of our life. Or we could go to the Kingdom if He picked out another five minutes of our life, but God doesn't do that. God judges us over a period of months, years, decades to see what the fruits are over that period of time.

And so we need to analyze the fruits. We need to—it means judging the fruits. He says, "Look at the fruits. You shall know them by their fruits." So we're supposed to judge fruits. Are they godly? Are the fruits of this individual godly?

Are they Scriptural? I'm not talking about one moment in time. I'm talking about a pattern over time. Do they generally follow God's Word and strive to follow God's Word? Are they godly?

And when you do this, you're not judging the heart. You're not judging a motive. You're just judging the fruits. You're seeing what the fruits are. Are they good or are they bad?

That goes back to Point A of analyzing truth from error. Are the fruits showing that this person is in error? Going off in a wrong way, an ungodly way? Or does this analysis of the fruits show that they're following God, following the truth, following what's in God's Word? That's how we judge the fruits. We're not judging a person's heart. We're judging the fruits that they exhibit over a period of time.

So Point A is:

A. We must judge the truth from error.

Point B is:

B. We must judge the fruits.

And that leads us to the Third and Last Point of what we are to judge and this is the most important one!

C. We must judge ourselves—our conduct, our motives, and our heart.

We must judge ourselves. Not other people. We must judge ourselves. 1 Corinthians 11 and verse 31, Paul told the people at Corinth, "You're judging this other guy. You let him get off by having wrong relations with his step-mother. You're making horrible judgments;" good or bad in 2 Corinthians, but they switched and were condemning the guy after he already repented—horrible judgments! 1 Corinthians 11 verse 31, he says it plainly.

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

Now think about that! If we spend our time comparing ourselves to God's Word and then we measure up to God's Word, then God's not going to judge us harshly. He's not going to condemn us.

Now the Greek word for "judge" here—"if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged"—is Strong's 1252, and rather than *krino*, this is *diakrino*. And it means "to make a distinction."

So we judge ourselves and we make a distinction. Am I following the faith? Am I following God's Word? Or have I strayed from the path? We're making that distinction. That's why—we won't turn there—2 Corinthians chapter 13 and

verse 5 where it says, "Examine yourselves." It says what? "Examine yourselves." It doesn't say, "Examine others, your brother or sister." It says, "Examine yourselves."

And what does it go on to say? "Whether you be in the faith." So that's what we should judge ourselves on. Am I in the faith? Am I really with it? Am I really following God? We have to make a distinction of whether we are in the faith. That's the Greek word for "if we would judge ourselves," that's the Greek word *diakrino*.

"We should not be judged" in that last word is *krino*. So let's understand the difference. And let's understand that we should not do as the Pharisee did to the publican.

We should look at ourselves. We must judge ourselves on the following:

- Am I putting God first in my life? That's the First Commandment! Am I putting God first in my life?
- Am I fully obeying God? Not just a portion of God's Law! Am I obeying all Ten Commandments?
- Am I obeying the spirit of the Law as well as just the physical side of the Law?
- And am I pleasing God with my attitudes, my thoughts, my deeds, my interaction with His people, my interaction with my brothers or my neighbor? Am I pleasing to God in that regard? Or do I fall short?
- And the real big question is: Am I growing to be like Jesus Christ? Because Christ is not going to marry somebody He cannot recognize. And our job is to prepare the Bride, which is ourselves, to marry Jesus Christ. And Christ is to go to marry somebody who's totally different. Christ is not going to marry somebody who has a different set of values or different standards of conduct or behavior. Christ is going to marry somebody that's like Him.

And so when we look at ourselves, when we judge ourselves, we have to judge ourselves according to God's Word and whether or not we measure up to the image of Jesus Christ. God is the Master Potter. We're the clay and we should allow God to mold us into something that looks like Jesus Christ. And at the end of the day when Christ returns, then He will be happy to marry somebody who looks like Him—same values, the same standards. So let's understand we must judge ourselves—our conduct and our motives. We have to judge truth from error. We have to judge the fruits, but let's judge ourselves.

So in conclusion—let's wrap this up—we have seen that God and Christ have taken to Themselves to judge mankind. And that human beings are not responsible for judging one another. And let's learn that. And every once in a while I have to bite my tongue because you say something that's judgmental about somebody else and we just can't do that. If we do that, then we're assuming Their job. We're taking over Their job. And who are we to take over the job of God and Christ? You want to bring down the wrath of God? Go try to

take over Their job. That's what Satan did and he was cast down. We don't want to put ourselves in that position at all.

And so we learned that righteous judgment, judging righteously, judging according to divine Law is: We have to judge truth from error; we have to judge the fruits; and most importantly, we have to judge ourselves. Are we measuring up or not—our thoughts, our actions, our deeds? How do we compare to the Word of God and how do we compare to our elder brother Jesus Christ?

So rather than judging one another, let's look at one another, let's look at one final Scripture that tells us what we ought to be doing in our relationships with our brothers and sisters in God's Church. Let's go to Ephesians 4 and we'll read verses 30 through 32 as a final Scripture. Rather than judge one another, we're told very plainly in Ephesians 4 what we should be doing. Ephesians chapter 4 verse 30, it says:

Ephesians 4:30. *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, ((KJV)*

The word "grieve" in the Greek means to offend. Don't offend the standards, the principles of God's spirit. In other words, when we judge, we are offending God's spirit. We're offending God's spirit in the sense that that's not our job.

Ephesians 4:30. *[So] grieve not the holy Spirit whereby [you] are sealed unto the day of redemption. (KJV)*

And how do we not grieve the holy spirit? Verse 31 tells us.

Ephesians 4:31. *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking [which is judging], be put away from you, with all malice: (KJV)*

All of these in verse 31 involve judging in some form or fashion.

Now verse 32. Instead of doing all that, Paul says:

Ephesians 4:32. *Be [you] kind one to another, [be] tenderhearted, [be] forgiving [of] one another, even as God for Christ's sake [has] forgiven you. (KJV)*

Let's remember that. And let's remember how to judge righteous judgment.