

Chapter 2: Render Not Judgment

Introduction

One of the most repeated commands of Jesus is, "Judge not." Yet few biblical commands are more misunderstood. Many people assume this means we should never confront sin or hold one another accountable. Others believe it simply means we shouldn't have opinions about right and wrong. Neither interpretation captures what Scripture is teaching.

Before we can obey Jesus' command, we must first understand what it actually means to judge someone.

What Does It Really Mean to Judge Someone?

To judge someone is more than simply observing their behavior. It is making an evaluation about the value, quality, capability, or motives of another person. It is believing that we know why someone does what they do, even when we lack the knowledge to make that conclusion.

(Page 11)

Judgment often sounds like:

- "They knew exactly what they were doing."
- "They don't have any business doing that."
- "They think they're all that—but they're not."
- "They're only doing this because..."
- "I know what kind of person they are."

These statements go beyond observing actions. They assume motives, assign intentions, and pronounce verdicts about another person's heart.

Reflection: Read the examples on pages 16–19. Have you ever made similar assumptions? Have others ever judged your motives incorrectly?

Beware of False Conclusions

Scripture repeatedly warns us against drawing conclusions from incomplete knowledge or claiming certainty where we have none.

- James 4:11
- Exodus 20:16

Many of our judgments are built on assumptions rather than facts. We often believe we know more than we actually do.

The danger isn't simply being wrong—it is placing ourselves in a position that belongs to God alone.

God Alone Knows the Heart

The Bible consistently teaches that only God truly knows the inner thoughts and motives of every person.

- 1 Kings 8:39
- Jeremiah 17:9
- Psalm 44:21
- Acts 15:8

God searches hearts.

God tests motives.

God understands what no one else can see.

When we claim certainty about another person's intentions, we step into territory reserved for God.

When You Judge, You Place Yourself in Judgment

A judgmental spirit is more dangerous than isolated moments of criticism.

When we constantly operate in judgment, we slowly become convinced that:

- We are always right.
- Our perspective is complete.
- Others are easily understood.
- We couldn't possibly be mistaken.

Judgment creates spiritual pride because it elevates our opinions above humility and grace.

The Economy of Judgment

Jesus presents a spiritual principle in Luke 6 that connects several attitudes together.

Forgiveness

(Luke 6:27–31, 35–36)

Those who receive mercy are called to extend mercy.

Humility

Humility recognizes the limits of our understanding. It acknowledges that we rarely know the whole story.

Judgment

(Luke 6:37–38)

Jesus warns against condemning others because the measure we use toward others often becomes the measure applied to us.

Judgment often includes:

- Evaluating another person's value
- Assessing their quality or capability
- Assuming motives that only God knows

Mercy, however, leaves room for God to do what only He can do.

Understanding Biblical Judgment

The Bible does speak of judgment, but not all judgment is the same.

The prophets of Scripture were not delivering their own opinions.

They were delivering God's message.

Their authority came from God—not from their personal conclusions.

God's judgment always had one of two intended outcomes:

- Repentance (turning back to God)
- Death for those who refused Him

His judgment was never rooted in pride or personal offense. It was always aimed at righteousness and redemption.

Our Responsibility When Confronting Sin

There are times when believers must lovingly confront sin or hold one another accountable.

But we must recognize our limitations.

We cannot change hearts.

We cannot produce repentance.

We cannot save anyone.

As Paul reminds us:

"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth."
—1 Corinthians 3:6–11

Our responsibility is faithfulness.

God is responsible for transformation.

The Outcome of Our "Judgment"

How we approach another person can produce very different results.

Our words may:

- Lead someone closer to Christ.
- Push someone further away from Christ.

This should cause us to carefully examine not only what we say, but why we say it.

Examine Your Motives

Before speaking into someone else's life, ask yourself:

- Am I trying to help them—or prove that I'm right?
- Am I speaking from love—or frustration?
- Am I seeking restoration—or vindication?

Sometimes our judgments are motivated by things we haven't acknowledged:

- Settling our own fears
- Validating our existing assumptions
- Protecting our pride
- Masking our insecurities

The heart behind our correction matters just as much as the words we speak.

Matthew 18:15-20

Genesis 50:19

Genesis 33:4

Key Takeaways

- Judgment is more than identifying behavior—it is assuming motives and assigning value that belong to God alone.
- Only God fully knows the human heart.
- A judgmental spirit produces pride and diminishes humility.
- Biblical confrontation should always aim toward restoration, not condemnation.
- God changes hearts; we simply plant and water.
- Before correcting others, examine your own motives first.