

Are We Really Supposed to Keep Silent?

Matthew 7:1

I Judge not, that ye be not judged.

I guess that scripture pretty much sums it up—game, set, match. That is the shortest synopsis of scripture I have ever given. Is that really what Jesus was saying?

You are reading one of the most misquoted scriptures in all the Bible. Sinners use it all the time. “You’re judging me. Stop judging me.”

A commentary I have says this: “Judge not, that ye be not judged — To ‘judge’ here does not exactly mean to pronounce condemnatory judgment, nor does it refer to simple judging at all, whether favorable or the reverse. The context makes it clear that the thing here condemned is that disposition to look unfavorably on the character and actions of others, which leads invariably to the pronouncing of rash, unjust, and unlovely judgments upon them. No doubt it is the judgments so pronounced which are here spoken of; but what our Lord aims at is the spirit out of which they spring. Provided we eschew this unlovely spirit, we are not only warranted to sit in judgment upon a brother’s character and actions, but in the exercise of a necessary discrimination are often constrained to do so for our own guidance.”

Here is another example: “Judge not... This command refers to rash, censorious, and unjust judgment. See Rom 2:1. Luke 6:37 explains it in the sense of ‘condemning.’ Christ does not condemn judging as a magistrate, for that, when according to justice, is lawful and necessary. Nor does he condemn our ‘forming an opinion’ of the conduct of others, for it is impossible ‘not’ to form an opinion of conduct that we know to

be evil. But what he refers to is a habit of forming a judgment hastily, harshly, and without an allowance for every palliating circumstance, and a habit of ‘expressing’ such an opinion harshly and unnecessarily when formed. It rather refers to private judgment than ‘judicial,’ and perhaps primarily to the customs of the scribes and Pharisees.”

This is exactly what we are not supposed to do:

James 4:11-12

11 Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

12 There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

Matthew 7:3-5

3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

We aren't supposed to be going around to people and trying to set them right. The Word of God, the Spirit of God, the man of God does the cleaning. We can't look harshly at an individual overtaken in a fault; we can't condemn an individual overtaken in a fault. We most certainly can't kick an individual overtaken in a fault while they are down. **HOWEVER:** we also aren't going to pat an individual on the back and say it's okay; take your time and get back up when you feel like it. That is just as wrong as condemning them is.

James 4:17

17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

It's sin. Sin separates; sin judges; sin keeps them without the camp if you please. Do not condemn or belittle the individual; do not think you are superior to the individual. So what do we do? We pray for the individual. We can be kind to the individual, but until they come to complete repentance, we should not slap them on the back and tell them they are okay.

Galatians 6:1

1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

When one is ready for restoration, we show our true spirituality, if we are willing to help restore such an one back to God, and back into the church of the living God.

R.P.S.