



Week 17b – Judging Well

This week we look at Jesus' instruction and warning to His disciples on the topic of making judgements or assessments of other people. This is one of the most difficult aspects of the Christian life but also a skill we must use more than any other. It is not surprising that God's scripture is filled with examples and instruction on how He expects His people to judge well. In our Life Group we will be looking at judging from the perspective of the church, where we should see judgement in action and what the outcomes should be.

Examples of where to use judgement properly:

Read Colossians 2:16-17. We will start off considering a negative example. Where not to judge. According to this text what sorts of things should Christians not get hung up on? Why does it say Paul is not very concerned with these outward things? What are more modern examples? What forms of worship or Christian practice have you run into that seemed very different than your expectations.

Read 1 John 4:1. John says that Christians have a very important judging role. What are we to judge in this case? How do we judge them? (see Matthew 7:15-16) Why is this important?

Read Romans 16:17-18. Along with John, Paul also emphasizes the important role good judgement plays in the church. According to this text who are we to identify and avoid? What will we need to know ourselves in order to identify them, or recognize them? Have you every encountered someone like this in your life (inside or outside the church)? How did you deal with them?

Read Galatians 2:11-14. In these verses we have a sort of case study of godly judgement taking place in the midst of ministry. Who is judging



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whom? What is it about? What effects of the behaviour prompted the judging to take place quickly, and publicly? What was the biggest concern? (see verse 14). Do you think the course of action was correct? What kinds of things are non-negotiable and need immediate action in churches today? What is the danger of not judging and acting?

Those are some examples and a case study, now let's consider what scripture says about the people and process of judging in the church.

In the church:

Read 1 Corinthians 6:1-4. According to this scripture who should Christians turn to for judgements? Who shouldn't we go to for judgement/discernment/wisdom? How often have you turned to Christians for counsel vs non-Christians? Have you seen a difference in their assessments?

Read 1 Kings 3:9, James 1:5. Where do we go to seek the ability to judge rightly (other than scripture) according to these texts. What are the benefits of the process of prayer, beyond the supernatural wisdom we also gain?

Read Matthew 18:15-17, 1 Timothy 5:19-21. Both of these texts lay out a process for resolving very specific cases. Matthew is dealing with typical believers in the body – have you ever been a part of a process like this? How did it go? Paul (in Timothy) is addressing elders. What is similar about the process? What does Paul emphasize is an important action to take if there is no repentance? What is the purpose?

Read James 5:19-20. We have another text that implies judgement is required. What do we need to know in order to be able to judge the person in this text. And then to be able to “bring him back”? If we are diligent to identify, and discern (judge) error, and apply judgement correctly, what is the result?

This kind of accountability is incredibly important to our church, but also to each of our individual Christian lives. Take time to consider how your group can “Judge Like a Christian” for each other, and how you can model judging well in the wider church.

Pray for our church and the hearts of our people that we judge compassionately, competently and capably.

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