

THE BIBLE DOESN'T SAY THAT

WEEK 6

“” These questions are designed to extend the impact of the weekend message. Use them to go deeper in your personal study time, with your family, and/or with a group or Bible class. ”

We live in a culture where no one has the right to say anyone is wrong. “You shouldn’t judge” is one of our culture’s highest values. Jesus did say, “Do not judge, or you too will be judged” (Matthew 7:1) but Jesus doesn’t mean what many take those words to mean. If by “do not judge” Jesus was prohibiting all moral discernment, then Jesus did not follow his own advice. This lesson will explore what Jesus really meant by what he said.

1 Read Matthew 7:1. For many this text has replaced John 3:16 as the most referenced verse in the Bible. Why is that so? What cultural factors have shaped the view that judging someone else is so wrong?

2 Judgement calls *have to be made*. Read Matthew 7:6-17. Taken in context, even Jesus advocated making judgment calls. It is impossible to live, much less follow the teachings of scripture, without making moral judgments. The Bible is full of calls to recognize evil, name evil, and avoid evil. The Bible says it is wrong to not call wrong wrong (Isaiah 5:20). So, on what basis is right and wrong determined by most?

3 Judgement calls *for the mind and spirit of Christ*. Read John 8:10-11. Jesus was not afraid to name sin, and he was not afraid to be known as a “friend of sinners”. His practice of “tolerance” never accepted people where they were to the exclusion of calling them to where they should be. How does one do this—live full of grace and truth?

4 JUDGE WELL! Stay with *scripture*. Too many Christians have far too much to say on matters where the Bible has nothing to say. The result is “judging” based on cultural preferences rather than scriptural principles. What are some examples of this?

5 JUDGE WELL! Start with *yourself*. There is no condemnation in Christ, but there is correction, and it must begin with a humble and thorough self-assessment. Jesus’ words in Matthew 7:1 were in the context of a greater message against religious hypocrisy. Read Matthew 7:3-5. How do these words temper our rush to judgment?

6 Read 1 Peter 4:17 and 1 Corinthians 5:12-13. What do these scriptures emphasize when it comes to judging people?

7 JUDGE WELL! Stick with *mercy*. Read Matthew 7:2 and James 2:13. We must not let being anti-sin trump being pro-people. Any judgment that focuses on condemnation rather than restoration needs to stop. When in doubt, lead with mercy. Why is the priority of mercy so critical to this conversation?

ACTION STEP Don’t use “do not judge” as a way to avoid needed conversations. This week give thanks to God that He would not just ignore our sin. God is so anti-sin that He sent His son to a cross. And God is so pro-people that the Judge took our judgment on Himself. So make judgment calls, but not with a plank in your eye. Make them with a cross in your eye. Let’s be judged for loving people the way the Judge loved us.