**Is It Right To Practice Biblical Judgment?**

Terry Wayne Benton / Gospel Grapes e-blog



 One of the most misused verses in the Bible is, ***"Do not judge so that you will not be judged"*** (**Matthew 7:1**). Every scripture verse should be read in its context, if we are to properly understand the true meaning. In **Matthew 7:2-5** of this same chapter it is evident that **Matthew 7:1** is referring to hypocritical judgment. A brother who has a log in his own eye should not be judging the brother who may have a speck in his eye. The lesson is plain, you cannot judge another for his sin if you are guilty of the same sin.

 Those who cling to ***"Do not judge so that you will not be judged,"*** to condemn those who expose error should read the entire chapter. Jesus said, ***“beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing..."*** (**Matthew 7:15**). How can we know false prophets unless we judge them by the Word of God? If we know the false prophets, how can we fail to exam the sheep of these "ravening wolves?" All through the Bible we find proof that they should be identified and exposed.

 ***“You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit."*** (**Matthew 7:16-17**). Did the Lord mean that we could not judge the tree (person), by the fruit of their life and doctrine? Certainly not, for you cannot know without judging. All judgment should be on the basis of Bible teaching, not according to whims or prejudices.

 ***"Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."*** (**John 7:24**). Here our Lord commands that we are to ***"judge righteous judgment,"*** which is judgment based upon the Word of God. If judgment is made upon any other basis, other than the Word of God, it is a violation of **Matthew 7:1**. Webster's Dictionary says that a judge is: one who declares the law. The faithful Christian must discern or judge on the basis of God's inspired law, the Bible.

 A fornicator is described in **1 Corinthians 5:1-13**. Paul "judged" (**1 Corinthians 5:3**) the man even though he was absent, and he told the church at Corinth that they were to "judge" (**1 Corinthians 5:12**) those that were within. The Greek word for "judge" is the same here as in **Matthew 7:1**. Paul did not violate ***"do not judge so that you will not be judged,"*** in judging the man, nor in instructing the Church to judge also. All of this judgment was according to the Word of God.

 A person who is able to discern between good and evil, has at least one of the major marks of spiritual maturity. ***"But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil."*** (**Hebrews 5:14**). W.E. Vine says of the meaning of discern: a distinguishing, a clear discrimination, discerning, judging; is translated 'discerning' in **1 Corinthians 12:10** of discerning spirits, judging by evidence whether they are evil or of God." Strong’s also agrees that it means: to judge.