

Text: Various

Title: Minding Your Own Business and the Judgment of Others

Truth: We must restrain ourselves in the matter of judging others.

Date/Location: April 15, 2023 at FBC

Introduction

I have shared in recent conversations some thoughts about this topic, but I thought it would be valuable to expand those thoughts and put them into writing.

I. Avoid Meddling in the Lives of Others

A. 1 Thess 4:11, 2 Thess 3:11, 1 Tim 5:13, 1 Peter 4:15

B. This teaching is very clear. It implies that the person has too much time on your hands. Lazy. Such a person is gossipy, meddlesome, getting into the business of all sorts of other people.

II. Remember God's Servants are His, not Yours

A. Romans 14:1-4.

B. The weak judging the strong, thinking they are liberals, etc.

C. The strong judging the weak, despising them, looking down on them as uninformed or foolish.

There is a level of individuality that is Scripturally *commanded* here.

Yes, there is a corporate aspect as well, but we need to keep corporate things corporate, and individual things individual.

Christians do not support collectivism as such because it washes out differences between people and tries to level differences between people, when that is in fact impossible to do.

D. Have a big measure of humility that you do not know all of the factors going on in someone else's life. Prov. 18:13, 17.

E. Of course, there is the balancing truth that there are some issues that a person can claim are debatable, or claim that they are strong or weak so as to make excuse for themselves, but reality is otherwise—it is a clear Scriptural matter.

III. Be Measured in Judgment of Even Your Own Self

- A. 1 Cor. 4:3-5. In this portion, Paul is making the case that he is a *servant*, not a bigshot. He is not the focal point of followers of Jesus (1 Cor. 3:4-8). He is in effect *nothing*. They should not be dividing up over their following of Paul or Apollos or other human *ministers*. He is a servant—a slave. He is a steward, a manager of a master's goods. We all are that, by the way.
- B. As a servant, he is required to be faithful to the master. Neither the Corinthians, nor any mere human court could decide properly if he is discharging his duties faithfully. They might have a good idea based on external evidence. But to Paul, it was a very small thing if they judged him one way or the other. The main word in that clause means *insignificant, trivial, it is of little to no importance to me*. He is downplaying human judgment. It almost means nothing to him. Of course, he is concerned to do things right in the sight of man as well as God (2 Cor. 8:21). But a human court can hardly properly judge a man who is serving God as to his total faithfulness. They can carefully evaluate his conduct (1 Tim. 5:19), but not know the full extent of information that they need. As such, they ought to be careful to answer the matter before they hear it.
- C. Verse 3: Human judgment is of such little consequence that the human being who knows the most about Paul's faithfulness, motivations, love for God, diligence, etc. does not even qualify to make a perfect and sound judgment about him. And who is *that* person? It is the apostle himself. If he is not able to do so—in all honesty and forthrightness—then neither can outsiders.
- D. But in verse 4 he says that although he does not know of anything that would be charged against himself, this does not acquit him or justify him. Remember that Paul knows very well that he himself is a sinner and that he has sinned and does sin and will sin. But he also knows that he is washed by the blood of the lamb. Furthermore, he is living as a good man, a good Christian man, a holy man. He is working hard to keep himself in subjection (1 Cor. 9:24-27), and to live with a clean conscience (2 Tim. 1:3, Acts 23:1). He honestly believes that, given his status as a sinner, he is still

living a God-honoring life. He does not have patterns of sin in his life, or unconfessed sin, or sin that he is hiding from others.

BUT that does not prove anything in the final analysis, because God is the one alone can make that judgment. “He who judges me is the Lord.” When we stand before God, He will reveal *everything* to us, including the hidden motivations of the heart. It is only at that point when the right level of praise will be given for the person being judged. Undoubtedly, we all have hidden faults, particularly those hidden to our own eyes (Psalm 19:12). Some may see those things more accurately than we do.

- E. If Paul thinks that he cannot judge himself completely accurately, then do you suppose that *you* can judge yourself completely accurately? I would venture an educated guess: NO!

And if you cannot judge yourself accurately, how do you suppose that you have even a chance of judging *another person* in the right way?

Focusing on others may simply be an excuse for your own poor conduct and choices. You must judge yourself. Examine yourself to make sure you are in the faith (2 Cor. 13:5). Consider yourself lest you fall into temptation (Gal. 6:1). But even your own self-evaluation is necessarily incomplete.

Conclusion

One of the teaching points here is that we must constrain ourselves when it comes to looking into the situations of those around us, or other institutions, or other churches. We do not have to be in everyone’s business to be relatively well informed or worry that we will be accused of having our head in the sand. There is enough that we must deal with in our own lives, families, and church that we do not need to be keeping busy about other men’s matters. There are many things we simply do not know that prevent us from making an accurate evaluation of those situations outside of ourselves. Examine yourselves, not everyone else.

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