

Anybody that's been in church for a few years knows the verse in Matt. 7:1, "Judge not that you be not judged." But what exactly does that mean? And more importantly, what does the rest of the Bible say about the subject?

## How to Judge

In I Cor. 5:1 to 6:11 is an account you may want to read in its entirety. Paul is writing to Christians and he begins by saying, "It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles -- that a man has his father's wife!" And then in 5:11 he says, "But now I have written to you **not to keep company with anyone named a brother who is sexually immoral ... not even to eat with such a person.**"

I Cor. 5:12-13 continues, "For what have I to do with **judging** those also who are outside? Don't you **judge** those who are inside? But those who are outside God judges. Therefore, put away from yourselves the evil person."

Then chapter six begins, "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? Don't you know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Don't you know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that

pertain to this life?"

Listen to verses 5 and 6: "I say this to your shame. **Is it so that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren?** But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers!"

II Thess. 3:14-15, I Tim. 5:19-21, 6:3-5, Titus 3:9-11, Matt. 18:15-17, and John 7:24 are all verses that tell what to do about people who claim to be Christians, but are sinning and **not trying to stop**. The subject of church authority has been misused, so good churches are afraid to touch it at all! But if church leaders will read these portions of Scripture and seek God for wisdom, they will do the right thing and a lot of problems would be stopped.

But what is the lay person, the ordinary person in the pews supposed to do about sinning they see in fellow church-goers?

## Judge not?

What does it mean in Matt. 7:1 when it says judge not? Please remember that whenever you find an apparent contradiction in the Bible that God wrote it all, and there is harmony if you hunt for it. Find out what the rest of the Bible says about the subject. In this case, a parallel verse is in Luke 6:37-38. "Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and

you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you, good measure, pressed down and shaken together and running over will men put into your lap. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

This is the principle of sowing and reaping which is a strong teaching in Scripture, and a spiritual law -- like the law of gravity. It works when you put it to work.

I Pet. 3:9 says, "Not returning evil for evil, nor reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, blessing; knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing."

Gal. 6:7-10, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith."

According to these verses, **everything we do is a seed**. If you want good things to happen to you, then make sure you are doing good things for others. It's as simple as that.

Now concerning the subject at hand, you should understand by now that if you want criticism to come your way, then just continue being a critical person.

### **Juicy stories?**

And this includes gossip. Gossip has been labeled by some as a demon that is having a hey-day in our churches! I don't doubt it one bit! Please pray Psa. 19:14, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer." If you are guilty of gossiping, then **pray this prayer everyday until you gain the victory.** There's another one in Psa. 141:3, "Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips."

Let's go back to Matt. 7 now; verses 1-2. "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged. And with what measure you use, it will be measured back to you." And verse 12, "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."

That last verse has been misused and misinterpreted, so let's look at some parallel verses for that one. Luke 6:31, "And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise." (That verse is from the sowing and reaping section that we cited earlier.) James 5:9, "Do not

**grumble** against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned." And James 4:11-12, "Do not **speak evil** of one another, brethren."

The Amplified Bible is helpful also: Matt. 7:1-2, "Do not judge and criticize and condemn others, so that you may not be judged and criticized and condemned. For just as you judge and criticize and condemn others, you will be judged and criticized and condemned, **and in accordance with the measure you deal out to others it will be dealt out again to you.**"

### **Church discipline**

If you notice sins in the church, **do not tell anyone until you have spent a good deal of time (like weeks) in prayer about it.** Pray for love for the guilty party, and then you will not want to hurt them. Pray good things for them and love will come. Then, after that, if you think God would want you to report it to your church leaders, spend some time praying for the leader to have God's wisdom. You may give him this brochure.

But if a fellow Christian sins **against you**, then you need to follow the guidelines in Matt.18:15-17, but **please pray first, like was suggested above.**

# **What about Judging?**



**A mini Bible Study  
By Cheryl Boone**