

Wondering About Judgment?
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John 8

Opening Discussion: Judgment is a negative idea. No one likes to be judged. Yet, there is judgment all around us in life. **What are some examples of when we are judged in life? Can you think of examples of how we benefit from how other people have judged things? Why do movie reviews; hotel and restaurant reviews; Consumer Reports or Angie's List even exist?**

If something is bad, you need to know about it before you buy it; use it; or consume it. None of us wants to be "in the dark" about those things. We want to know if they are UP TO THE STANDARDS we expect.

There's the judgment of men, like what we just discussed. Then, there's the JUDGMENT OF GOD. That one really makes us uncomfortable. Let's don't talk about God's judgment. **Why does God's judgment even have to exist?**

1 John 1:5 (ESV)

5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

Here's the big idea: Because of man's SIN, and in view of God's HOLINESS, there must be judgment. God wouldn't be Holy if He SUSPENDED His judgment. Hang on though, there's good news!

GOD, and not man, is the only one qualified to render judgment. And, He loved us so much that He sent Jesus into the world as a LIGHT in the DARKNESS to give us a way to escape His judgment.

John chapter 8. Here's the scene: Jesus is still at the Feast of Booths (or Tabernacles.) We believe he may have delivered this message just after a lighting ceremony that would have been held in the courtyard of the temple. During this ceremony, four large candelabras would be lit and the people would enthusiastically engage in singing and dancing while holding blazing torches. This ceremony reminded the people of God's pillar of fire which had guided the Children of Israel in the wilderness for 40 years. In the glow of this celebration of God's light to His people, Jesus speaks in verse 12:

John 8:12 (ESV)

12 Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

- After Jesus said, "I am the light of the world." **What did He say next? What do you think Jesus means by that word "follow?"**

- **If you and I were walking in the woods in the dark, and I had a lantern, how would the “distance” between us make a difference? How about distance in following Jesus?**
- Ever had someone follow you in a car and they couldn't keep up?

Here's the point: Because the darkness of sin is the “natural state” of mankind; we needed the light of Christ. To enjoy the light of Christ we must FOLLOW Him closely! That means to follow Him COMPLETELY as the LORD of our lives.

John MacArthur writes:

Jesus Christ alone brings the light of salvation to a sin-cursed world. To the darkness of falsehood He is the light of truth; to the darkness of ignorance He is the light of wisdom; to the darkness of sin He is the light of holiness; to the darkness of sorrow He is the light of joy; and to the darkness of death He is the light of life.

MacArthur New Testament Commentary (MacArthur New Testament Commentary Series) (p. 334). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

- **When Jesus said, "I am the light of the world," why would those two words “I AM” have made the Pharisees even more determined to kill Him?**

Saying, “I AM” over and over confronted the religious leaders with the fact that Jesus is the Son of God...that he IS God. Everyone must confront that fact about Him.

- The Pharisees in verses 13 and 14, tried to use a legal technicality to challenge Jesus saying his testimony was false because he was only testifying about Himself.
- Jesus responded that he not only had a witness, He had the JUDGE on His side.

John 8:15–18 (ESV)

15 You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. 16 Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. 17 In your Law it is written that the testimony of two people is true. 18 I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me.”

- Jesus said to the Pharisees in verse 15: “You judge according to the flesh...”
- Jesus also said in verse 15: “I judge no one.”
- We know Jesus wouldn't ignore the JUDGMENT of God the Father.
- **Why would he have said: “I judge no one?” (Check out John 3:17)**
- Jesus WILL pronounce judgment when He returns to earth the second time. When He came to earth the first time, He had a different mission, not to condemn but to save.
- **Jesus said the Pharisees “judge according to the flesh?” Why “in our flesh...our humanity” are men not qualified to judge someone's sin?**
- **Who did Jesus say is the only One qualified to judge anyone's sin?**
- Christians get labeled as “judgmental” and, like the Pharisees, sometimes we earn it.
- Sometimes we can be modern day Pharisees obsessed with keeping rules instead of loving people.

- **If Jesus didn't come to condemn and we're to be like Him, what are we supposed to do instead of condemn people?**
- Verses 17 and 18: Jesus answered the Pharisees legal argument by staking His own credibility on the the witness of the Father. (We read in Matthew two occasions where God the Father said this is "My son in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3:17 and 17:5)

That's another lesson for you and me. When Satan whispers in our ear to challenge our status as a child of God, tell Him to go talk to your Father! Jesus continues...

John 8:23–27 (ESV)

23 He said to them, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.

- Verse 23: There comes a time when everyone must be confronted with who Jesus is and who we are; and the difference between the two.

24 I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins."

- Verse 24: All people are sinful people. It's only when Jesus makes us aware of our sin that we have the opportunity to do something about it and avoid judgment.

25 So they said to him, "Who are you?" Jesus said to them, "Just what I have been telling you from the beginning. 26 I have much to say about you and much to judge, but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him." 27 They did not understand that he had been speaking to them about the Father.

Verse 30 tells us: "As he was saying these things, many believed in him."

31 So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

- **Verse 31: What does it mean to "abide in my word?"**
- Verse 32: Jesus said the TRUTH will make you free. **What is the "truth" Jesus refers to? (This could be more than one answer.)**

Chuck Swindoll writes:

"Knowledge sets us free. The enemy of our soul preys on ignorance. As long as Satan, the ruler of this world, can keep you in ignorance, he can delude you with superstition and fear...When you are growing in your knowledge of God's Word, that equips you to think clearly and see the world realistically. Study Scripture. Read it daily. Memorize key passages. Whenever I dedicate myself to that exercise, I am amazed by how my discernment is sharpened—how much better I handle life's routine trials."

John 8:42–47 (ESV)

42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. 43 Why do you not

understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. 44 You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. 45 But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. 46 Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? 47 Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God."

- Verse 42: You can't claim God as your Father and reject His son Jesus Christ.
- Verse 43: "Cannot bear to hear" - The KJV/NASB translate it "...you cannot hear my word." **Why did the Pharisees not hear God's Word?**
- **Back to verse 44...who were they listening to?**
- There's an old joke: "How do you know when a politician is lying?" That isn't true of all politicians...but it IS true of Satan! Sometimes we'll say something is a "lie of Satan, from the pit of Hell." In reality, Satan is just speaking his native language. EVERYTHING Satan whispers in our ear is a lie! The question is HOW can we know when those thoughts come from Satan? **What is a good technique to TEST if something is from Satan?**

So, What's the TAKEAWAY?

John 3:19 (ESV)

19 And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.

- Because of man's SIN, and in view of God's HOLINESS, there must be judgment.
- God wouldn't be Holy if He SUSPENDED His judgment.
- We don't have to FEAR God's judgment, though!
- He loved us so much that He sent Jesus into the world as a LIGHT in the DARKNESS to give us a way to escape His judgment.
- For us who are BELIEVERS, one more thing: Jesus said HE is the "light of the world." He also said in Matthew 5:14 (ESV) "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden."
- It's our job to REFLECT His light to those in darkness.

1 John 1:7 (ESV)

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.