

# Judging vs Not Judging | Versus #1

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Are Christians supposed to judge? Most people think not. But what about when someone is clearly sinning – and they claim to be a pursuer of God? Are the rules different for someone who doesn't claim to follow Jesus? Jesus himself was once caught in this predicament (see [John 8](#)). And the truth is, we've all probably been there. So... are you supposed to judge or not?

## Don't make judgments... until your heart is right

One of the most misunderstood passages in Bible comes from Jesus' sermon on the mount in Matthew.

**Matthew 7:1** *Do not judge, or you too will be judged.*

If you stop reading there, you've missed the point. Jesus is NOT telling us to never judge; he IS saying not to be a judgmental hypocrite. A later verse makes that clear:

**Matthew 7:5** *Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye.*

Jesus' point is that we should deal with our sin first before we start worrying about what other people are doing wrong. We do this by trusting Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins. Then we receive the Holy Spirit which leads us to honor God in our everyday lives and habits. Ultimately we begin to look outward and help others to pursue God – graciously pointing out the speck in their own eyes and leading them to trust Jesus for salvation.

[\[Related: Are You Christians Supposed to Judge Each Other?\]](#)

## Be courageous about making judgments inside the church

Jesus later gave step-by-step instructions for calling out another person who claims to be a follower of Jesus.

**Matthew 18:15-16** *If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back. But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two others with you and go back again, so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses.*

Some people misunderstand this instruction and consider it too harsh. But read the passage again and list out the steps. Jesus was actually setting up a process that gave the offending party the greatest chance to be restored to a healthy relationship with the offended party. Making judgments inside the church is always about helping the other person get back into right relationships with both God and others.

## Be careful about making judgments outside the church

Though Christians are called to make judgments inside the church for the benefit of fellow believers, it's not their

place to make judgments on those outside. Paul made that clear in his first letter to Corinth.

**1 Corinthians 5:12-13** *It isn't my responsibility to judge outsiders, but it certainly is your responsibility to judge those inside the church who are sinning. God will judge those on the outside; but as the Scriptures say, "You must remove the evil person from among you."*

Paul confirms the teachings of Jesus about judging insiders, but he clarifies our role with outsiders. Those who are far from God do not live by the same playbook as Christians, and holding them to a biblical standard simply wouldn't make sense. We need to learn to share the right truth at right time with people outside the church, doing everything we can to win them to Christ.

When Jesus encountered the woman caught in adultery, he did not jump to make judgments. He challenged her accusers first, and then when he was alone with her, he graciously forgave her sins. But at the end of the encounter, he challenged her to "sin no more." In Jesus' response we see how to live in the tension and share the truth in love.

[\[Related: Going Out | Grid #5\]](#)

### Discussion Questions:

1. Watch the video together or invite someone to summarize the topic.
2. What is your initial reaction to this video? Do you disagree with any of it? What jumped out at you?
3. Share about a time when you felt judged. In retrospect, do you think the person was right to say something? Explain.
4. Read [Matthew 7:1](#). Why is this such a misunderstood verse today? How does [Matthew 7:5](#) clear up the confusion?
5. When offended or sinned against, most people fail to go to that person in a loving, intentional way. What do they do instead? What is the result?
6. Read [Matthew 18:15-16](#). In your own words, describe Jesus' steps toward reconciliation. Have you ever tried to apply these steps in a conflict? What happened?
7. Read [1 Corinthians 5:12](#). Why does the Bible give different instructions for judging non-Christians than it does for judging Christians? Give an example of when judging a Christian according to Biblical standards wouldn't make sense.
8. Did Jesus judge the woman caught in adultery in [John 8](#)? Explain.
9. Write a personal action step based on this conversation.