

JUDGING LIKE JESUS

Those who desire to be Jesus's disciples must endeavor to learn Jesus's teachings and ways and imitate Him by walking as He walked (1 John 2:3-6; 1 Corinthians 11:1). One aspect of Jesus's life that must be imitated is the way Jesus judged. Therefore, we must consider the Scriptures that give us insight into the way Jesus judged situations and people around Him so we can learn how to walk in His footsteps in the way that we judge.

ISAIAH 11:1-5

This Messianic prophecy foretells aspects of Jesus's judgment. Specifically, Jesus's judgment would not be made through mere external appearances alone. Unlike many human judgments based on physical appearances or accusations (John 7:10-24; Acts 21:26-30), Jesus would discern the truth and judge the reality of each matter – even cutting to the heart of the person. His judgment would center around righteousness and justice. For example, Jesus would not oppress and exploit the poor and needy but would give them justice and fairness just as He would for anyone! Furthermore, you should take note of all the attributes surrounding His judgment: Wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge, delight in the fear of the Lord, righteousness, and faithfulness. Each of these is critical to right judgment that pleases God and would set Jesus's judgment apart from the judges of this world!

JOHN 5:19-30

Throughout this text, Jesus demonstrated how the Son copied the Father and was given authority from Him. Regarding judgment, the Father gave Jesus authority to judge (condemn) so the Son would be honored like the Father. Notice, therefore, that Jesus never exceeded His authority as the Judge (Acts 17:30-31; 2 Corinthians 5:10). Consequently, just as Jesus judged within His realm of authority, people must only judge what they have authority to judge (e.g. influences on their lives, matters of fellowship; Matthew 7:6, 15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 John 1:9-11; 3 John 1:9-10). Furthermore, Jesus's judgment is based on whether someone truly believes in Him (v. 24), which involves

doing what is right (v. 29). So, His judgment will be fair and righteous. Finally, Jesus's judgment will be in perfect harmony with God's will. Therefore, any judgment people make today must also be made according to God's will!

JOHN 7:21-24

The Jews in the temple who heard Jesus were amazed at Jesus's teaching and authority (John 7:10-20). Then, Jesus addressed the Jews for their condemnatory judgment against Him for healing a man on the Sabbath, accusing Him of violating the Sabbath (John 5:1-16). However, Jesus exposed their inconsistency in applying the Law according to their hatred for Him rather than pursuing righteous judgment. Jesus further noted how people would circumcise on the Sabbath (also compare Matthew 12:9-14), yet not condemn them for doing so. In this, Jesus demonstrated His fairness in applying God's law rather than misapplying the Scriptures to accomplish human perceptions, objectives, or traditions!

JOHN 12:47-48

Jesus's purpose in coming to the earth the first time was not to condemn those who did not obey Him. Rather, He came in love, compassion, and mercy to help people find the truth that would set people free from their sins and have eternal life in Heaven (John 3:16; 8:31-32; Luke 19:10). However, Jesus will come for the purpose of judgment one Day (2 Corinthians 5:10; Matthew 25:31-46). At this time, Jesus's judgment will look at each person with fairness and righteousness and evaluate how they had lived in comparison with what His words instructed them (Romans 2:5-11; Revelation 20:11-15). Imitating Jesus's judgment, therefore, should recognize that our purpose is not to find people to condemn, but people who can be brought to salvation before it is too late for them (2 Timothy 2:24-26; James 5:19-20)! Furthermore, final condemnatory judgment is not ours to make (though there are judgments we must make regarding fellowship, Ephesians 5:6-11). Rather, we must trust that Jesus will fully and fairly judge all people on the Last Day (Romans 12:19-21).

MATTHEW 15:1-9

In this confrontation with the Pharisees and scribes, we learn that Jesus's judgment included exposing sin and

hypocrisy. The Pharisees and scribes often stood in condemnatory judgment toward others, including judgment for violating their human traditions (such as eating with ceremonially unwashed hands, Mark 7:3-4). Jesus would not tolerate this judgment by human standards! Furthermore, Jesus recognized that these who would be quick and harsh to condemn others would do so hypocritically because they would not judge themselves by the same strict standard (Matthew 7:1-5; 23:1-36)! In fact, they were even violating God's law because of their tradition. Therefore, righteous judgment according to Jesus's pattern includes carefulness about the standard of judgment and the need to first evaluate oneself before condemning others. But, it also involves exposing hypocrisy and error, even when people get offended by the truth (Matthew 15:10-20)!

JOHN 8:2-11

This situation involving a woman caught in the act of adultery was used to trap Jesus (either to accuse Him before Rome for taking the authority of the death penalty or to accuse Him before the Jews as disregarding God's law). However, Jesus's judgment of the woman indicated His commitment to God's law by telling the witnesses to cast the first stones to put her to death (Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22; 17:6-7). Jesus, though, first challenged the accusers to look at themselves rather than just condemning the woman. Therefore, judgment must not be hypocritical and without mercy (Matthew 7:1-5; James 2:12-13). Furthermore, Jesus offered her mercy rather than condemnatory judgment, knowing the sacrifice He would provide (John 3:14-18)! Yet, He expected her to turn from her sinful ways, or else He would certainly condemn her on the Last Day (John 12:47-48)!

CONCLUSION

Imitating Jesus requires that you judge like Jesus judged. Although there is much more that could be discussed, we have seen Jesus's judgment being perfectly executed according to the Father's will and righteousness. Ultimately, Jesus was not looking to condemn anyone while He was on earth, but to save them, promising to execute final judgment on the Last Day. Therefore, disciples of Jesus must learn to judge with right judgment, avoid hypocritical judgment, desire to show mercy in judgment, and entrust final judgment to Jesus!

DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

What attributes were prophesied concerning Jesus's judgment?

Where did Jesus's authority to judge come from, and what were His judgments focused on?

How did Jesus judge with righteous judgment and not according to external appearances?

What was Jesus's purpose in coming to the earth the first time?

How will Jesus judge all people on the Last Day?

How did Jesus address the judgment of the Pharisees and scribes, and how did He judge them?

How did Jesus judge the adulterous woman and those who were condemning her?

What does Jesus's example teach you about judging others?

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