

judgment of others.” As hypocritical judgment is condemned, the last part of **verse 5** commands sincere and honest judgment, “Then shall thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brothers eye.”

A hypocrite is simply a play actor, pretending to be something he is not. The judgmental hypocrite has his vision blinded by his own sin and is in no position to judge others. He must first deal with his own sin before he can be of help to others. So, the “*Judge Not*” in **Matthew 7:1** is dealing with hypocritical judgment. This verse should never be used to say that a Christian cannot speak for God’s Word in truth and righteousness. Every believer has the right and responsibility to judge what is right and wrong.

In closing, not only are we not to judge others in a hypocritical manner, but also we must not judge in a hasty or presumptuous way. That is, we must investigate a matter before we pass judgment. Never suppose something is true without the facts. Even the Lord came down to investigate Babel before He scattered the people (**Genesis 11**) and the same is true before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (**Genesis 18:20-27**). The Devil passed judgment and assumed that Job served God for gain (**Job 1:8-11, 20-22, 2:10**). No true judge in a court of law will hand down a judgment before he has heard all the evidence. Neither are we to be guilty of unscriptural judgment. We should never go beyond or above the law (Word of God) to find fault (**James 4:11-12, Romans 14:1-4, I Corinthians 4:5**). If we would judge sin in our own lives, then with a pure heart and attitude, we can be a blessing to our brother and help him judge the error in his life. May we always speak the truth in love and at the same time be compassionate and forgiving as our Lord and Savior. May the Lord open our eyes to the issue of judgment, Amen.



Victory Baptist Church
Pastor Robert W. Reed
14473 Bellingrath Road
P.O. Box 257
Coden, Alabama 36523
(251) 873-4422

**" Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,
and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."
Acts 16:31**

The Riches OF GRACE

"hath appeared to all men." Titus 2:11

Robert W. Reed
February 2005

Judge Not

"Judge not, that ye be not judged."

Matthew 7:1

+ UNLAWFUL JUDGMENT +

This verse is a warning against unlawful judgment. It prohibits a condemning critical spirit toward other people. But the command not to judge does not mean that a Christian can never form an opinion about others. The context (**verses 1-5**) clearly shows that the Lord is dealing with a particular kind of judgment, that is, hypocritical judgment. The text must not be removed from its context in order to understand the true meaning (A text without a context is a pretext). This is why this verse is quoted more in our time than any other verse, whereas in time past, the most quoted verse was **John 3:16**. Many have lifted the verse from its immediate context saying it is wrong to judge period, thereby, teaching heresy. May we approach this important subject prayerfully, Amen.

*"Judge not according to the appearance, but judge
righteous judgment."*

- John 7:24

The word judge means to weigh carefully and form an opinion (**I Corinthians 11:13**), to consider (**Hebrews 11:11**), to draw a conclusion (**Luke 7:43**) or to pass sentence (**John 7:51**). It also means to discern, to try, to condemn, to give a verdict, to examine, to decide, to give sentence, to distinguish, or to come to a decision. The Greek word for judge is translated many ways into English (condemn, avenge, decree, go to law, damn, determine, etc.).

In the context of **Matthew chapter seven** where we find the words in **verse 1**, “*judge not*”, we are also told to judge ourselves in **verse 3** and to judge or discern the lost in **verse 6**. We are to judge false prophets in **verses 15-20**. According to **Matthew 16:19**, judgment was given to the church. The following Scriptures will clearly illustrate the fact that Christians have a right and a responsibility to make certain judgments. In **John 7:24**, we are commanded to judge, “*Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.*” In **Luke 12:54-57**, we are told to judge what is right. The Bible says in **I Corinthians 2:15**, “*He that is spiritual judgeth all things.*” In the context of **I Corinthians 2**, judgment and discernment is a sign of maturity. The Apostle Paul told the Corinthians to, “*Judge ye what I say*” in **I Corinthians 10:15**. If we never form judgments as to what is true or false, how can we ever embrace the one and avoid the other? We are told in **Philippians 1:9-10** to increase our judgment and prove all things that are excellent. In **I John 4:1-3**, we are commanded to try (judge) the spirits. Christians are to judge between those who do and do not preach the true doctrine of Christ. In **Hebrews 5:13-14**, the Lord said that we are to judge between good and evil. The Psalmist (David) said in **Psalms 119:66**, “*Teach me good judgment.*” If we do not judge, how can we prove all things (**I Thessalonians 5:21**)? According to **I Corinthians 6:2**, the saints shall judge the world in the kingdom and are to judge matters in the church now. We are told to mark (judge) false preachers and avoid them in **Romans 16:17**. We are told in **II Corinthians 13:5** to judge our ourselves, “*Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*” (also consider **I Corinthians 11:31-32**). The Bible in the Old and New Testaments are full of examples of judging.

The context of **Matthew 7:1-5** is dealing with hypocritical judgment. These verses are addressed to a hypocrite, not someone who truly

desires to discern truth from error. Hypocritical judgment is pretending to be free from fault or judging others when we are more guilty than they. According to **Romans 2:1-3, 17-29**, certain Jews were judging Gentiles of certain sins and at the same time they were guilty of the same sins. The Lord Jesus told the Pharisees who had judged the woman taken in adultery, “*He that is without sin, let him cast the first stone.*” David was ready to put to death a man who had stolen his neighbor’s lamb and yet David himself was guilty of the sins of adultery and murder (**II Samuel 12:1-4**).

In **Matthew 7:2**, it is clear that when we pass judgment on others, we are in reality judging ourselves, for God will deal with us as we have dealt with others, “*For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.*” This principle of judgment should restrain us from being tempted to pass unlawful judgment on others.

In **Matthew 7:3-4**, the reality of hypocritical judgment is illustrated with the two words, mote and beam. “*And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?*” The mote is a speck, splinter, dust, or any tiny particle of foreign matter. The beam is a large piece of wood like a branch or two by four. We are in no position to pass judgment or to help someone else when our sins are greater than theirs. We must first take care of our own sins, and then we can be of some help to others.

In **Matthew 7:5**, the word hypocrite is used to illustrate the self-righteous brother in his judgment of others, “*Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.*” This same word (hypocrite) is used of the Pharisees who set themselves up as judges of other people. As one writer put it, “*They do this while they themselves were outwardly clean but inwardly filthy.*” The writer goes on to state that, “*The word hypocrite was not used of those guilty of the scarlet sins of society, who did not appear to be self-righteous.*” In dealing with the pride of the Pharisees, the writer further states that, “*Flesh sins destroy the body, spiritual sins destroy the spirit.*” While God abhors all sins, He looks with most disfavor on sins of the spirit: pride, prejudice, and