DO WE HAVE A RIGHT TO JUDGE?
Matthew 7:1-6

Introduction:

1. Have you ever been judged by someone because you judged another person?
   a. In our politically correct society any criticism of another’s behavior, morals or beliefs is taboo.
   b. We are told that we have no right to judge another.
   c. If we do make a judgment about another, we are judged to be mean-spirited, bigoted or a nit-picker.

2. Have we no right to discern between right and wrong, good and evil?
   a. Must we accept every type of degraded behavior and say nothing?
   b. Must we accept every false religious teaching without opposition?

3. What did Jesus mean when He said: “Judge not that you be not judged?”

Discussion:

I. THE WORD FOR “JUDGE” IS ALSO THE WORD FOR “CONDEMN.”

A. To judge also means to discriminate.
   1. Life is filled with choices in which we must choose one belief or course of action over another.
   2. I once worked at an orchard where I graded apples.
      a. The best apples went into the showroom to sell.
      b. The second best were sold for canning.
      c. The worm eaten and damaged were used for cider.
      d. Only the fully rotten apples were thrown away.

B. The Bible uses the word “judge” in two different ways:
   (1)
1. Some judging is commanded.
2. Some judging is condemned.

II. THE LORD COMMANDED US TO JUDGE RIGHTEOUSLY (John 7:24).

A. He commands us to judge between truth and error.
   1. He warned of false teachers (Matthew 7:13-23).
   2. He said: “By their fruits (teachings) you will know them.”
   3. John commanded: “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1).

B. He commands us to judge between morality and immorality.
   1. The church at Corinth had a member living in open sin (1 Corinthians 5:1-13).
   2. He was living in fornication with his own father’s wife.
   3. Paul said, “I am absent but I have already judged him.”
   4. He commanded: “Put away from yourselves the evil person” (v. 13).
   5. As a result, the man repented (2 Corinthians 2:5-11).

III. THE LORD FORBIDS HARSH, HATEFUL AND HYPOCRITICAL JUDGMENT.

A. Bible scholars describe the kind of judging Jesus forbids.
   1. J. W. McGarvey said: “All judging from surmise, or from insufficient premises, or from ill-will is prohibited.”
   2. A.T. Robertson said: “The habit of censoriousness, sharp, unjust criticism *is forbidden.*”
   3. Guy N. Woods said that the judging condemned “is to impute unworthy motives to others, to put the worst possible interpretation on their works and actions....”
   4. Wendell Winkler wrote: “...the kind of judging forbidden by the Lord is harsh, hasty, unfounded, censorious, hypercritical, uncharitable, malicious, slanderous, (2)
ill-natured judgment” (Heart Diseases and Their Cure).

B. Jesus speaks of harsh, hypocritical judging in Matthew seven.

1. People will judge us by the way we judge others.
   a. If we are unjust and dishonest in our criticism of others, we can expect others to judge us the same.
   b. “What goes around, comes around;” or “What we sow, we will also reap.”

2. The “beam” or “plank” Jesus speaks of is a timber that would be used as a floor joist or ceiling rafter.
3. The “mote” or “speck” is a tiny sliver of straw, chaff, or a minute splinter.
4. The unjust critic is aware of your small fault, but ignores his own more glaring fault.
5. He cannot help you correct your fault until he has dealt with his own much greater problem.
6. The Pharisees condemned Jesus for not observing their man-made custom of ritual washing before eating, while breaking the fifth commandment by refusing to care for their aged, needy parents (Matthew 15:1-9).

IV. WHY MUST WE BE CAREFUL ABOUT JUDGING OTHERS?

A. We may not know all the circumstances in a given situation.

1. A passenger on a train berated a young father who was unable to stop his baby from crying.
   a. He shouted, “Why don’t you take that child to its mother?”
   b. He did not know the baby’s mother was dead.

2. Hannah silently prayed that God would give her a son.
   a. Eli saw her lips moving but heard no sound.
   b. He assumed she was drunk (1 Samuel 1:12-17).
   (3)
B. We cannot see the “big picture” as God does.

1. A young sailor saw an iceberg protruding above water and remarked it was a small one; an experienced sailor told him he was only seeing the tip of the iceberg.
2. God told Samuel: “For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).
3. We cannot read others’ hearts so we must be careful about impugning motives to them.

V. WHY DO PEOPLE JUDGE UNJUSTLY?

A. Some want to turn the attention away from their own sins (John 12:1-7).

B. Some criticize others for the very things they are guilty of (Romans 2:1).

C. Some criticize others because they think they build themselves up by tearing others down (Luke 18:9-14).

D. Some unjustly judge others because they are envious of them.

1. Saul envied David and tried to kill him (1 Samuel 18:6-11).
2. Haman built a gallows for Mordecai (Esther 3:5;5:14).
3. The Jews delivered Jesus to be crucified (Matthew 27:18).

Conclusion:

1. If we practice the Golden Rule we won’t judge unjustly (Matt. 7:12).
2. If we examine ourselves, we won’t judge unjustly (2 Cor. 13:5).
3. We will all stand before the Judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10).
4. Prepare now by being baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:26,27).