

Judging: When? Why? How?
TS002

The Right to Judge
4077

I. How to Reconcile Apparent Contradictions of Scripture

A. Negative:

1. Matt. 7:1–5—Jesus said, “Judge not, that ye be not judged.”
2. See also Rom. 2:1–3; 14:1–4, 10–13; 1 Cor. 4:1–5; James 4:11–12

B. Positive:

1. John 7:24—Jesus also said, “Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.”
2. See also Matt. 18:15–17; 1 Cor. 5:15, 11–13; 6:1–6

C. Explanation: judging is a function of ruling, descending downward from *God*

1. Gen. 18:25—God: “the judge of all the earth”
2. 1 Pet. 1:17—God the Father judges
3. John 5:22—The Father has delegated judgment to the Son
4. Psalm 82:1–8—Human rulers (judges) represent God to His people

D. In the Old Testament, “judges” were rulers; later the rulers were the judges. There was no separation of executive and judicial function.

II. Who Has the Right to Judge?

A. Heb. 13:17—Those who have *responsibility* also have *authority* for *judging*, and will themselves *be judged*.

1. Example of authorized judgment:
Matt. 25:31–33—Jesus authorized to *rule* and *judge*
2. Example of persons not authorized to *rule* or to *judge*
 - a. Gen. 19:9—Lot in Sodom
 - b. Ex. 2:14—Moses in Egypt
 - c. Luke 12:13–14—Jesus in His earthly ministry

III. Where Are We Responsible to Judge? Whom? For What?

A. 1 Cor. 4:1–5—We are *never* responsible to make *final judgment* of anyone’s character or conduct, including our own. This is committed *exclusively* to *God* (See also Rom. 2:16, 14:10–12; 2 Cor. 5:9–11)

B. 1 Cor. 11:28–32—We are responsible to judge *ourselves*—our *conduct*, our *relationships*, our *submission to authority*. Individuals *share responsibility* for their lives with those in authority over them.

Judge Righteous Judgment
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I. Where Are We Responsible to Judge: Whom? For What?

- A. 1 Cor. 11:28–32—Ourselves**
- B. 1 Tim. 3:4—A man over his household**

C. Heb. 13:7, 17—Leaders of the church (and, ultimately, the whole church collectively—see Matt. 18:17)

1. Those within the church

a. For conduct (1 Cor. 5:1–5, 9–13, 2 Thess. 3:6–15)

b. For disputes between believers (1 Cor. 6:1–5; Matt. 17:15–17)

c. For doctrinal error (Rom. 16:17; Heb. 13:9)

2. Those with ministries or gifts (within or without)

a. Apostles (Rev. 2:2)

b. Prophets (Matt. 7:15–20; 1 Cor. 14:29)

c. Deacons (1 Tim. 3:10)

d. Spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:1–3; 1 John 4:1–3; 2 John 7–11)

II. Where Are We Not Responsible to Judge? As Individuals (see Rom. 14:1–13)

A. Our individual fellow believers where their conduct does not affect our conduct

B. Other people's children, where their conduct does not affect us

C. Other Christian groups

III. How Are We to Judge?

1. Righteously (John 7:24)

2. On the basis of proven facts (Gen. 18:21; Deut. 13:12–15; Ex. 23:1–2)

3. Accused must be allowed to face his accusers (Jn. 7:51; Acts 25:16)

4. At least two witnesses must agree (Deut. 19:15; Mt. 18:16; 2 Cor. 13:1; 1 Tim. 5:19)

5. Must be held accountable for their testimony (Deut. 5:20; 17:6–7; 19:16–21)

A. These are all *consistent principles of*:

1. Divine practice

2. Law of Moses

3. Sanhedrin

4. Roman law

5. Church practice

IV. Warnings to Those Who Judge When We Are Not Authorized to Do So

A. 1 Pet. 4:15—Classified with murderer, thief and evildoer

B. James 4:11–12—A law breaker, usurping God's function