

newark united pentecostal church

Lesson Title: The Balance of the Spirit - Judging



Key Concept: As disciples of Christ we must learn to live a life balanced by the Spirit. God judges because of righteousness; man judges because of sin.



Scriptures:

And he ordered us to preach everywhere and to testify that Jesus is the one appointed by God to be the judge of all—the living and the dead.

(Acts 10:42 New Living Translation)

¹¹ Don't speak evil against each other, dear brothers and sisters. If you criticize and judge each other, then you are criticizing and judging God's law. But your job is to obey the law, not to judge whether it applies to you. ¹² God alone, who gave the law, is the Judge. He alone has the power to save or to destroy. So what right do you have to judge your neighbor?

(James 4:11–12 New Living Translation)

Context Scriptures: Romans 2:1–3, 5–11, 16; Galatians 6:4–5; James 1:22–24; 1 Corinthians 5:9–13; Matthew 7:1–6; Luke 6:35–42; 2 Timothy 4:1, James 5:9



Lesson Thoughts:

When a parent gives instructions to their children a phenomenon often occurs. At least one of the children makes a point to report back to the parent any deviation from the instructions by the siblings. Often, the deviation has more to do with an interpretation of the instructions, rather than a blatant disregard of them. This even occurs when instructions are given to only one child, and that child then tries to assign them to the other siblings. In both cases the child, wielding righteous indignation, seeks judgement upon the offending party with the belief that the parent will appreciate their assistance.

This same attitude can be prevalent today. A parent looks at their child in frustration when they expound the faults of their siblings, but can't see or acknowledge their own. Likewise, God looks at his children knowing that each

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of them has faults and needs redemption. Paul addresses this very issue: “Since you judge others for doing these things, why do you think you can avoid God’s judgment when you do the **same things?**” (Romans 2:1–3).

Judging others is a result of sin. It began in the garden when, instead of acknowledging their own sin, Adam and Eve blamed another. This resurfaces when we compare ourselves with someone else (Galatians 6:4–5). We should judge our own conduct by comparing it to the Word of God. When we don’t heed the words of James, we give a judgmental attitude the opportunity to take hold (James 1:22–24).

An attitude of judgment hurts us, others, and the gospel message. This happens when we fail to realize that our own vision is blurred by our past hurts, shame, sin, and temptations. We perpetuate this hurt as we try to correct others with our impaired vision. We judge them unjustly, because only God is just. When we judge others, the good news becomes bad news. Jesus said, “Don’t throw your pearls to pigs! They will trample the pearls, then turn and attack you” (Matthew 7:6b). This passage refers to judging those that do not know God, which angers them, and they lash out. They are no longer interested in the gospel and will trample it under their feet as hate speech. Instead of being introduced to the love of their Savior, they experience the judgmental attitude of his people.

**Discussion Questions:**

- 1) How does comparing breed judgment?
- 2) According to Luke 6:35–42, What should the believer do instead of judge?
- 3) Does understanding the meaning of Matthew 7:6 affect how you share the gospel with unbelievers?

Next Lesson: The Balance of the Spirit - Witnessing

Notes and Reflections

- 1) Have you been hurt by a judgmental attitude?
- 2) Have you hurt others by a judgmental attitude? How did you reconcile it?
- 3) How can you combat the temptation to judge others?
- 4) Is it easier for you to judge those in the church or out of the church?