

10 Questions to Ask Before Judging

Who are you to judge me?!"

This question makes the rounds frequently. On the blogosphere, in the Twitter feed, pinned and posted, the message is blaring: "You have no right to judge me!"

And in one sense, I totally agree. I have no right to judge you.

If I were the authority of the universe, I would have that right.

If I owned the corner on truth, I would have that right.

If you came into existence because of my will and creative effort, I would have that right.

If my word were the final say, I would have that right.

If I were God, I would have that right.

But the fact is, I am not God, but God *has* spoken. He *has* given His judgment on matters of ethics and morality. He is the authority of the universe. He *does* own the corner on truth. We *did* come into existence because of His will and effort. His Word *is* the final say. And God *has* the right to judge.

In fact, God is the Judge.

And He is a gracious judge.

"Should not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. 18:25).

God has provided us with His judgment through His Word. When Christians address moral issues and make a judgment based on Scripture, we are not “judging” that individual on the basis of our own authority. Our judgment is delivered from the authority of God’s holy Word—not our own fallible word. Admittedly, we can mishandle His Word; we can misinterpret it and muddy the delivery or misunderstand the context at times. But delivering clear scriptural truth is God’s Word bringing judgment.

Jesus’ Instructions

Jesus gave some pointed instruction as He warned us about judging others. He didn’t tell us *not* to deliver judgment; He told us *how* to deliver it:

“You hypocrite! First take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye” (Matt. 7:5).

He gave these specific instructions to warn us that we’d better not confront someone else’s sin until we first deal with our own hearts. This same instruction is repeated in the Gospel of Luke. Later in the book of Matthew, Jesus gave a process we refer to as “church discipline,” in which the first step involves confronting someone in their sin:

“Now if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother” (Matt. 18:15).

That sounds an awful lot like “judging” someone.

In Paul’s letter to the Galatians, he provides us with a bit of guidance in how we approach someone when we need to confront them and “deliver a message of judgment” (a word of truth from Scripture):

“Brothers, if a man is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, watching yourselves, lest you also be tempted” (Gal. 6:1).

Paul’s instruction is helpful, it places a guiding principle for us to follow as we approach someone who is “caught” or entangled in a sinful lifestyle. Paul (as inspired by the Holy Spirit) warns us that we are in danger of falling into the snare of sin and we must be careful and watchful of our own hearts. Our motive in having this conversation must be restoration.

Preparing Our Hearts

Some questions that might help with heart preparation before “delivering judgment” would be:

1. Is my motive pure? Is my greatest concern spiritual deliverance or restoration?
2. Am I approaching this issue as a self-righteous bigot, or am I offering truth as one who is equally in need of God’s transforming grace?
3. Am I more concerned about winning an argument for morality than I am concerned about my opponent’s need for salvation or spiritual growth?
4. Am I prepared to give a biblical and gracious defense of my position?
5. Am I addressing a truth issue, or is this a preference issue?
6. Is this the best time to have this conversation?
7. Have I thoroughly prayed over this conversation?
8. Am I reacting in pride or humility?
9. Are my emotions sinfully involved with this issue?
10. Can I convey love to my opponent as I deliver this message of truth?

Have you been slammed for issuing “judgment”? I hope you’ll run through the questions above when you’re tempted to confront someone. Jesus provides ample instruction for delivering the truth in love, and when we fail to do that, we aren’t being faithful to love Him or others well.

What are your thoughts on “judging others”? {eoa}

*Taken from **Kimberly Wagner’s** blog post “10 Questions to Ask Before Judging” on . Used with permission.*