

Should Christians Judge Donald Trump?

Recently I wrote a blog about Donald Trump that has been shared about 4,000 times between my site and *Charisma News*'. And as I predicted, many Trump supporters responded with the biblical admonition, "Do not judge!" In fact, I am 100 percent convinced that there will be some who chide people for judging the Antichrist when he appears.

However, sadly, the "Do not judge" passage is one of the most misinterpreted passages in the Bible. God never forbade all types of judging. Good judgment when choosing friends is commendable. Imagine if some drug dealer wanted to hang out with your son or daughter, and in response to your prohibition the drug dealer yelled at you, "You're judging me!" Well, yeah. We judge when looking for a spouse, when choosing a doctor or when choosing a congregation.

We Judge All Day, Every Day

The fact is that we make judgments of people all day long. An employer interviewing a potential employee will judge that person based on their experience, temperament and other qualifications. If the potential employee does not get the job, he doesn't accuse the potential employer of judging him—*he came to be judged*.

If we read Yeshua's comments in context we can see his meaning:

"Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged. And with the measure you use, it will be measured again for you.

"And why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye,

but do not consider the plank that is in your own eye? Or how will you say to your brother, 'Let me pull the speck out of your eye,' when a log is in your own eye? 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. 7:1-5).

People use this passage to condemn *all forms of judgment*, but Yeshua here is referring to the hypocritical, looking-down-on-others type of judging. For instance, if I said, "I don't go to that congregation. It's dead. The leader isn't a good speaker. The people are not friendly," that would be the type of judging Yeshua was referring to. However, if I said, "I don't go to that congregation because I prefer a more energetic expression." That too is judging, but not looking down on someone or saying that my way is better—it is just my preference.

Politicians

If there is one group of people that has asked to be judged more than any other group, it is politicians. The minute someone jumps into the ring to run for office, he is asking to be judged if he or she is worthy of the office. How can we not judge Donald Trump—or Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio for that matter? This is precisely what voters are supposed to do. When a Supreme Court justice is nominated, he or she must endure a hellish vetting process and then he or she is judged by 100 senators. While the process is often political, the idea is crucial. You can't just allow someone to be on the Supreme Court who hasn't been thoroughly vetted.

Donald Trump is asking to be the leader of the free world and some people dare say, don't judge? That is the height of irresponsibility.

What About His Faith?

I wrote that Trump is not a Christian. Some take offense at that: *Who are you do judge what he believes or doesn't believe?* That's a valid question. Personally, I don't think that my president must be an evangelical believer. I would prefer it, but it is not a litmus test. For Trump, the issue was that he appeared to be pandering to voters by touting his supposed Christian faith. So it is essential, since he has made his faith part of his campaign, that we seek to discover if he is genuinely a Christian. If he had not claimed to be a Christian, it would not be an issue.

In this video, he speaks in a way that seems to me to be insincere—that is my duty as a voter—to discern ... yours as well.

Reporters doing their job (and probably skeptical, as I was, that Donald really knows the Bible) quizzed him and he refused to come up with even one verse.

Now, given that most believers have a favorite verse and would gladly share it with others and that Donald Trump has an opinion of everything and everyone—it is unimaginable that if he had a favorite verse, that he would not want to share it. We must conclude he was lying when he spoke of his love for the Bible and pandering to Iowa evangelicals.

Here he quotes a nonexistent verse to show how the Bible has shaped him. If the one verse that you finally quote, after weeks of people asking you, is actually not a verse, you have a real problem. The only place Google finds these words “never bend to envy” is on an obscure website where the author writes it next to his title, “Proverbs 23: Never Bend to Envy.” Trump must've assumed it was part of Proverbs 23.

Mr. Trump also stated publicly that he is not sure if he has ever asked God for forgiveness. That is the very first act of

a believer—to ask God for forgiveness. When Frank Luntz (whom Trump now refers to as a *fat slob*) asked him the question, he paused to think. Come on friends, we are allowed to use common sense. If I asked you that same question, would you pause and think ... *hmmm* ... or would you immediately say, “Of course, every day I ask for forgiveness!”

Understand, I don’t care if Donald Trump is a Christian or not (of course I long for him to be one, and to enjoy forgiveness and eternal life—but in terms of his campaign, I don’t care). What I care about is (a) if he is lying to us and (b) if he is pandering to evangelicals to get their vote.

In closing, no, we should never look down our noses at people or be like the Pharisee who looked at the tax collector and thanked God that he was not like him, adding that he fasts twice a week and tithes (Luke 18:11-12)—which in his eyes made him better. That is the wrong type of judging.

Yet the same Bible warns us to beware of evildoers and false prophets. If we don’t make a judgment, we cannot come to the right conclusion of these people. The Bible warns us of deception—you can’t resist deception without judging. A chunk of Proverbs is about staying away from fools. Psalm 1 tells us not to hang out with the wicked, sinners and mockers—how can we identify them if we can’t ever judge?

Not only can we judge politicians, we must if we are going to make an informed decision. Let’s save the “Do not judge” admonition for the appropriate context. OK?

Ron Cantor is the lead pastor of Tiferet Yeshua congregation in Tel Aviv, a Hebrew-speaking outreach to Israelis. He is also the author of *Identity Theft*, *Leave me Alone—I’m Jewish* and his newest book coming out this spring, *The Jerusalem Secret*, a novel about the first Jewish believers. Ron blogs at .