

#14 Northside Natter

24 June 2020

Today I want to look at **Judging**.

We're often accused of judging others, particularly when we're witnessing, or talking to our families. The accusation that we are judgemental comes at us like this; 'you can't tell me I'm not saved! How dare you? That's judging me.' But they don't understand. There is a huge difference between judging someone and knowing when someone is or isn't saved. They are obviously thinking of the following scripture.

Matthew 7:1 *judge not, that ye be not judged.*

It's not our place to judge another man's heart, what he carries in it or what motivations drive him. That is the Lord's business. But we have every right to determine whether or not a person is saved. That is not judgement. It is a fact embedded in scripture.

The Lord told us that unless we are born again, we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. He made it clear that being born again pertained to water baptism and the infilling of the holy spirit (with evidence). These two things together will put us on the path that leads to eternal life.

It's easy for us to see who is not on the path with us. They confirm it when they confess that they cannot speak in tongues and/or disbelieve baptism by immersion is what God requires. They have told us with their own mouths that they are not saved. Judgement is not involved nor needed. Some people we meet have been given the holy spirit but have not experienced water baptism. We can suggest they do so. Some will listen, others will not because they believe their church is right and their church will save them. All we can do in this situation is to pray that the Lord opens their eyes and hearts to the truth, and move on.

Judgement is different. There are two types of judgement that we normal folks, not being 'legal eagles', can engage in:

1. The process of forming an opinion, or drawing conclusions, based on what we see and hear.
2. The kind of judgement which is related to using common sense, tact, or discretion. This is the ability to read a situation and use one of those three things to respond.

However, we are specifically looking at the first type of judgement. The one that is based on individual personal impressions, feelings and opinions rather than external facts. Here's a story to illustrate.

Gloria came to work, as she usually did, but she wasn't her normal bubbly self. She was polite and smiled to people who greeted her but other than that, she remained quiet. After a week of this, colleagues began to talk about her behind her back. Early in the second week, a woman approached Gloria and accused her of being hateful towards her and the other workers. 'I know you don't like me,' she accused, 'but your ignoring of us is just being nasty'. Gloria was astonished. She looked around at the faces of her colleagues who were now staring back and waiting for a response. It was clear by their stern looks that they all

agreed. Gloria saw no option but to apologise and share her very personal secret. With a tearful eye, she quietly told them that she had recently miscarried, for the third time this year, and was fearful that she would never be able to have the child she desperately wanted. The following silence was deafening.

In the absence of a clear motive for a person's behaviour, some people will grasp any motive they feel best suits the situation to explain that behaviour. This is a very rocky footing to put oneself on. The chances of being correct are pretty slim.

Some years ago, I worked with a guy who would actually *tell* people what their motive for doing something was. He was arrogant and completely convinced that he was right. He never was but it didn't stop him loudly voicing his opinions. I'm sure we've all met people like that. But the important thing is that we don't become like that ourselves. We can never know the motivation of another person unless they tell us.

To judge is to condemn. If we share our judgement or contrived opinion of another person, we are publicly condemning that person and influencing the opinion of others about that person. This kind of thing happens a lot in the workplace and can be difficult not to be involved in. We should reconsider even listening to this kind of talk let alone contributing to it. Sadly, this type of thing happens wherever humans gather; having itching ears. This includes fellowship. Let's develop a habit of shutting down this kind of talk around us. It only thrives because we listen to it. Walk away, or urge that speaker to talk directly to the person they are concerned about. This speaker is assassinating the character of another. The Lord looks upon that kind of thing very seriously. There are many scriptures cautioning us about what we say. Here are just a few:

Matthew 12:36-37 – *but I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgement.*

Ephesians 4:29 – *let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*

James 3:5 – *even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!*

James 4:1 – *speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.*

We know that the measure we use to judge others with will be turned back to judge us. Let us remain blameless in the Lord and let us also be found the same way in the world. Speak no evil or judgemental opinions of anybody. We will be held accountable if we do. Let's go before the Lord and ask his forgiveness for any time where we have done this and ask for his help to cease from being involved in such activities. We do need his help. It can be very difficult sometimes to abstain from listening or participating in this. We're clouded by our feelings, or respect, for the person who is telling us, or we're pushed on by our own inner turmoil to speak out against another. Praying instead will help us change that situation around and is always the best place to start in any circumstance.