

## **Judge Or Be Judged**

**Self-Correction**

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Feels pretty good to have your stepson ask God to help you. We can all use help.

I have been asked sincerely, heartfelt to slow down. I will not comment about how long this takes, but I have been thinking about it, working on it for six months. So if I do get fast, could you do what Mr. Armstrong used to ask us to do? And that is tense up your mind, as well as mine, being tense. I want to give you what I have.

Well, I want to give you a title. And that is, “Judge Yourself, or be Judged.” Sounds pretty sober, does it not? It is sobering. It is the importance of judging yourself relative to where we are going with our lives, which we have heard quite a bit about. I am concerned for every one of us here. There are influences upon us. We and our progeny are so weak because of our backgrounds, the world we live in, what we are, and what we are not. I do not know if you feel that way, but that is how I see it, and how I understand it in the Bible; that we are weak, really weak. And the more we understand that the more we look for power, and we have been blessed to know where to look for that power.

Now most of you—I often say you (because I do not want to give a general we/us all the time) so that you will take it personally, as I also feel I need to.

Most of you did not grow up learning what absolute yes, and absolute no mean. You did not grow up that way, especially in this land, if anywhere on earth. Also, everyone in the church (let us focus on that) is being influenced by a new religion. It is not really new, but it has become new in this land to the degree it is now. It is called tolerance. The new tolerance. It is an extremely dangerous departure from the idea of absolutes. Strength and

leadership are disappearing from the nations worldwide, because man turns away from absolutes. And you know who gives the ultimate absolutes. We know, God Himself.

Those of us keeping this festival are anticipating a radical change from this to unwavering leadership—godly leadership. God knows He has to be unwavering with the forces He is dealing with, and that we are dealing with. And to prepare for this, we are required to do something that is so uncommon, it is almost totally foreign. And that is to radically deal with ourselves, compared to what you find around you.

Two thousand years ago, the apostle Paul had a focus that said (and I am paraphrasing a bit) if by any means I might attain to the resurrection, determined to tell himself yes and no, and to fiercely back it up. I mean fiercely and violently back it up. Does that not sound weird in today's society?

What if we have leadership over the country that did that? Wow. What if we do that? Wow. The founding fathers of the United States said, “Our system will not work apart from personal morality.” That is a general word for righteousness, self-control, and all of those things.

I rephrased it a little to say, “No system will ever work whose people do not rule themselves individually.” It cannot lead to something else; it has to come down to that to ever have a working world or society or church.

The Bible speaks to you and to me in very strong terms about mastering ourselves. A lot of people would not like that word. I have seen it in driving lately, and the reactions, wow. Deadly; finger given to you, all of that, if you dare even honk the horn at the most idiotic deadly driving that could possibly be done, endangering everybody around, or try to talk with anybody about it. Yes, I have even done that, appealingly.

In I Corinthians 11, verses 31 and 32, in connection with the Passover, it has principle of life forever in it.

**I Corinthians 11:31-32** For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged [if we have not done

it ourselves properly, have not understood], we are chastened by the Lord [Why?], that we may not be condemned with the world.

Of course that is God's heart and His interest.

I have got a definition from the Greek, *diakrino*, that is “judging yourself; to discriminate implying against yourself in favor of righteousness.

Now there is an idea that has spread even among the church (and I think you all know this is absolutely true) that not only should you rightly avoid condemning other people (that is not our job, not yet), but that you should not even discern evil, even when evil is supremely evident—you should not do that.

There is a great reluctance and fear to even think of seeing evil as evil. Now, I hope that does not include you. I hope that is weird to you.

Now in churchianity it is virtually a doctrine to close the mind to evaluating whether something is righteous or unrighteous—to close the mind. And yet all unrighteousness is sin. So in reality, you are not to discern sin under what has become virtually a doctrine in religion. “Do not judge” paves the way for the new tolerance, which denies sin. The new tolerance, which is not new, actually denies sin.

And in reality, religion commonly teaches (if you do not know this, you can prove it by looking into what people think and teach and are like in religion. You have been there, most of you (or a lot of you). In reality, religion teaches that Christians are to fight all discernment of sin.

Now who would love us to take on that? Who is it that would deceive us into thinking like that? I think most of all of us know about the existence of the Devil, who is opposed. And religion teaches patting yourself on the back for your ungodliness—ungodly tolerance of sin! You do not look at works. Christ has done it all for you. You just believe, Christ comes in your heart, and everything is fine.

The Corinthians had let that kind of thing come in, for there was obvious adultery among them, patting themselves on the back for their love, their form of love. God's form of love does not include that.

Well, conversely to this, one radical Bible teacher said, “You need to take yourself to the woodshed.” (I do not know if anybody goes to the woodshed for paddlings anymore) but you are to do that so that God does not have to do it for you. We just read, God will do it for you if you do not do it yourself. There is no way around it.

So, rather than fearing to be judgmental, I propose you should fear to be non-judgmental, especially regarding yourself!

In the Living Bible, I Corinthians 9:27

**I Corinthians 9:27** (TLB) Like an athlete, I punish my body [Paul speaking], treating it roughly; training it to do what it should, not what it wants to. [Is that not weird in our society? I hope it is not weird among us.] Otherwise [Paul said], I fear that after enlisting others for the race, I myself might be declared unfit and ordered to stand aside.

Now that is what it meant when Paul judged himself. He had a healthy motivation of fear. Doctor James Dobson (some of you will know about who he is, if not everybody here), gave a definition of modern tolerance, as opposed to judging, which takes a course completely opposite of the apostle Paul. Doctor Dobson said, “The word ‘tolerance’ now means, ‘A desensitization toward evil.’” Has that affected any of us, you think? Have we lost the sensitivity toward evil? Have we ever had it the way we need it? I will leave it to you to answer and deal with it. The Bible teaches intolerance toward evil in ourselves—intolerance.

To paraphrase I Thessalonians 5:21, “Hold on to the good, and hate the evil in yourself.” Praise yourself for the good but thank God for that—that you can. That is where it begins. Then the Living Bible reads:

**Romans 6:12** (TLB) Do not let sin control your puny body any longer; do not give in to sinful desires.

That brings on a war at times, does it not?

Hebrews 5:14 tells you, “Maturity, growing up in Christ, comes from having your senses exercised to judge—judge!—between good and evil.” That sounds like judging is our business, a great deal of it, and to learn to do that. In your own ongoing effort to judge and chasten yourself, how do you conduct yourself (I would like you to ask) when you are not at Sabbath services? That is how you really know how you are doing. On Saturday nights, Thursday afternoons, do you keep a strong rein on yourself? Judging? Punishing? Really mastering, as Paul talked about? Look at those words. Conduct yourself. What do you do when you conduct yourself?

I want to tell you. I went to a *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* and I found **to conduct yourself** is, “To guide; to escort; to take yourself firmly by the hand, as in charge; to lead yourself and direct yourself.” That is why how you conduct yourself. We do not think of that when you hear, “Well, how do you conduct yourself this way and that?” You do not think what the power of that word is, do you? And what it means. How you deal with yourself? If you do, you studied the word in a way I had not until now.

**To conduct** is, “To convey in a channel; to show yourself the way; to lead as in mind above body.” Synonyms are “manage,” “control,” and “direct” for conduct yourself.

**Manage** is, “Direct handling and manipulating toward the desired result.” It sounds like that is pretty active, does it not? It is not just how do you act; it is how are you actively conducting yourself? (That is a sermon in itself, is it not?)

It means **to control**, which is “regulate or restrained,” “to keep within bounds.” That sounds like you and I have a job of being the master sergeant over ourselves.

And then **direct** is, “Constant guiding and regulating; never letting go of self-control.” That is the goal. That is not what we do. We wish we did better, but we can certainly, if we have the goal in mind, work that direction, and ask for a power that is unknown in human beings without God's Spirit.

I feel you and I have a serious problem; an urgent challenge—all of us. You do not accurately judge and chasten yourself. Had you already come to that conclusion? I do not either, and it is serious, because it does not grow up in Christ, it does not live by every Word of God.

You and I—now this one is really something—we too often wait for judgment and chastening to come from somewhere else. We will drive right, or we will quit doing what we are doing, if we are stopped by the patrol. We will not do it (as a young person) if the parent stops us, or the teacher catches us, or you know what I mean. We wait for judgment and chastening to come from elsewhere. And likely not, when it comes, what do you do? You bristle internally, if not externally, which shows your heart really is not in there as it should be on the matter!

In the Bible we are plainly told that we are in practice now to judge angels. (I think that may have been referred to this morning.) How are we going to do that if we cannot even deal with ourselves? Are we going to judge angels? Will you hear it said, “You finished well, good and faithful master of yourself?” That is how you are going to hear it, meaning it is going to relate to that.

In closing, I have got a question, and some observations.

The question first, of course: Why do so many so strongly avoid judging that someone else is wrong, when someone else is obviously wrong, from the least to the president? Why? Why do we do that? We are very reluctant to judge wrong when it is obvious that it is. We know it is, but you cannot really say that.

Well during the impeachment hearings relative to habitual sins of the president—habitual sins—Doctor Laura Schlesinger made a very powerful, scathing comment in her assessment of why so many American people were

approving of the man occupying the office of the president, no matter how he habitually sits. She said, approximately (that is pretty close; the meaning is here), “The reason so many of you are so tolerant of the lifestyle of the current president of the United States (and what she worked up) is that two-thirds of you *are guilty of the same things he is guilty of*. And you cannot bear the thought of judging yourself.” That is what she finally said. You cannot bear the thought of judging yourself, so you will not judge anybody.

Many people in the church—I am not striking at the church, I am in it. I have to wrestle with me. Ask my wife, I am as tough as any of you to wrestle with. Scottish Irish type, do you know anything about them? Wow! They have a hard time learning to spell *quit*. Well, many of the people in the church are very sensitive about judging in any of its meanings. You have met it, you know it, you may have practiced it, you may have done it up till the time you are hearing me; being very sensitive about it. And surely this anti-judging bias is partly due to the societal doctrine of the so-called new tolerance. But perhaps the biggest reason for anti-judging bias among us is a strong desire to avoid getting serious about judging yourself—judging ourselves.

God commands ongoing repentance, does He not? Could you agree that God commands ongoing repentance? You keep repenting the rest of your life as you learn, and as you see yourself doing it again, you hate the sin all the more. Well, He commands that. But you cannot even practice repentance apart from judging. Somebody had to judge what is right and wrong, and we have got to understand it, and apply it.

So many want to delay judging themselves, and to delay changing until judgment comes crashing in from the outside. Now I ask you: which is tougher? To get tough with yourself, or somebody else to get tough with you? Which do you react better to? Which can you put your heart into more immediately? There is no way out. Let me repeat that. There is no way out of being judged and chastened, because of what we are, and that high hill we climb.

It is so much better to judge and chasten ourselves than to wait for it to come from outside and come crashing down on us to wake us up to get tough on ourselves. Cannot a number of you along with me—I wish I could say

cannot all of you, but I know not everybody's reached that point—that you got to where you determined, “I am going to do the right thing, and I am going to do it before I am told again to do it. I am going to enjoy being the kind of person to have the fruits of doing it before I am absolutely pressed on to do it.”

In the New American Standard Version we are told:

**Matthew 11:12** (NASV) "From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force."

Well, we have already been talking about the kind of force that has to be involved, and that is force against yourself, and ruling yourself, leading yourself. This includes the personal use of force when dealing with yourself. To take the Kingdom by force, in your case and mine, will include using force on yourself.

I would like to submit to you as a final statement here, that one evidence of Christ in you is your ongoing effort to rule yourself in accordance with God's law and His standards found in the Bible.