



Reading and Discussion Guide

For the week of February 5, 2012

“Judge, and You Will Be Judged;
Love, and You Will Be Loved”

Luke 6:37-42 / 1 Cor. 5:9-13

Read

Read through Luke 6:37-42 and then 1 Cor. 5:9-13

Discuss

1. There seems to be a contradiction between Paul's words and the words of Jesus. How do you answer this apparent contradiction?
2. There is a difference between judging and being judgmental. To properly **judge** is to make a determination between what is right and what is wrong according to God's word, and to communicate that with love, care, and a desire for forgiveness and reconciliation.

To be **judgmental** is to quickly condemn in a negative, hypercritical, disparaging way, without love, grace, care, or a desire to forgive.

Have you ever been accused of being judgmental, either by another believer or by another believer? According to the above definitions, was the accusation true?

3. Paul draws a distinction between immoral people who are not believers and immoral people who say they are believers. Intimate interaction with an unrepentant immoral Christian is more dangerous than careful interaction with an unrepentant immoral non-believer.

How will the application of this truth affect your daily personal interactions?

Share Stories

Have you ever been confronted by another believer about something they saw in your life that they didn't think was right? What was the experience like? Did you feel loved or attacked? Was the experience helpful or destructive?

PRAY Together

Jesus uses a striking metaphor to illustrate that we are often blind to our own glaring faults while at the same time we are often concerned with the small faults of others.

Before you pray for each other, there is a bold question you could ask the small group that you are gathered with that might be helpful...

"Hey, is there a plank in my eye?"

Worldly Love vs. Godly Love

Worldly love says... "Do whatever feels right to you!"

Godly love says... "Do whatever is right according to God's word."

Worldly love says... "It's your life; do what you want with it!"

Godly love says... "Your life is a gift from God and needs to be lived in obedience to him."

Worldly love says... "I'll affirm whatever you choose to do! It's all good; who am I to say?"

Godly love says... "I'll affirm whatever you do that aligns with God's word; but I'll refuse to affirm anything that doesn't."

How to Give Criticism in a Godly Way

1. I see my brother/sister as one for whom Christ died (1 Cor. 8:11; Heb. 13:1)
2. I come as an equal, who also is a sinner (Rom. 3:9, 23)
3. I prepare my heart lest I speak out of wrong motives (Prov. 16:2; 15:28; 16:23)
4. I examine my own life and confess my sin first (Matt. 7:3-5)
5. I am always patient, in it for the long haul (Eph. 4:2; 1 Cor. 13:4)
6. My goal is not to condemn by debating points, but to build up through constructive criticism (Eph. 4:29)
7. I correct and rebuke my brother/sister gently, in the hope that God will grant him/her the grace of repentance even as I myself repent only through His grace (2 Tim. 2:24-25).

Source: "[The Cross and Criticism](#)," by Alfred Poirier

We will not always agree with one another, but we can always love. John Stott had some wise words on what Christians should do when they disagree with each other:

The proper activity of professing Christians who disagree with one another is neither to ignore, nor to conceal, nor even to minimize their differences, but to debate them.

We are "to maintain the truth in love," being neither truthless in our love, nor loveless in our truth, but holding the two in balance.

Source: John Stott, [Christ the Controversialist](#)