

one

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus teaches:

Do not judge, and you will not be judged yourselves; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned yourselves; forgive and you will be forgiven. Luke 6:36

Are we to judge nothing? If so, then how can we discern right from wrong and make decisions? What does Jesus mean by this?

God designed our mind to make judgments.

There are three steps to making good decisions:

1. First, we Deliberate, we gather all relevant information;
2. Then we make a judgment – we make a decision, this is the right thing or that is the wrong thing;
3. Finally, we take action.

All decisions involve these steps, so all decisions require we make judgments.

two

We can and must judge **ideas or propositions**: this is true and that is false.

We can and must judge **behaviors**: this is a good behavior, and this is a bad behavior. However, we can never judge persons. We can never say this is an evil person.

Why can we not judge persons?

Because we cannot see or know the heart.

We can know their ideas if they express them, therefore we can judge ideas as correct or incorrect.

Likewise, we can judge behaviors, because we can see them. Hypothetically if I see my grandson tackle another kid getting on the slide, I must judge that as bad and tell him so. Hypothetically.

But we cannot judge or condemn persons as evil.

three

Why can we not judge persons?

To answer this, we need to know the three things that determine whether an action is good or bad, right or wrong:

- A. The Act itself – what you do;
- B. The Intention or motive – why you did it;
- C. The Circumstances surrounding the decision.

We can and must judge *actions*.

But we cannot know the *intentions* of another for they are hidden in the heart.

And we often do not understand their *circumstances*.

So, we can and must judge whether an action is good or bad, right or wrong.

Still, we can never say, this is a bad person.

four

Jesus said, **“The judgements you give are the judgements you will get, and the amount you measure out is the amount you will be given.”**

How often have we been judged, and said to ourselves, “How can they do that? They don’t know me or why I did this or what was going on in my life.”

That holds true for every person we condemn.

We are quick to judge others, and we do so harshly, on very little evidence. By this we are setting ourselves up for our own very harsh judgment. By condemning others, we condemn ourselves.

Is that what we want?

five

Instead of making hasty judgments of other people, practice the virtue of Good-Will

Good Will is the virtue that conquers rash judgment

Practice this:

- a. Always want good for others: even competitors, even enemies;
- b. Always think good of others:
 1. You can see their actions or the results of their actions but the motives and circumstances are all hidden from you – you cannot judge accurately.
 2. So give them the benefit of the doubt
- c. Always speak well of others because every person has the right to a good reputation.

As a resolution today, every time you catch yourself judging some person, stop yourself, then practice some form of good will:

- Ask God to bless them
- Give them the benefit of the doubt – you don't know why they are doing this or that
- Speak well of them