



Just Grow Up!

James - A Manual for Maturity

Stop Playing God

1. Read James 4:11-12. When the Bible says that God is the judge, what do you think that means? What does it mean for us to judge a person? How are we “playing God” when we judge another person?
2. Pastor Rick said that one of the reasons we judge others is that it makes our sin insignificant. What do you think he meant? Have you ever experienced the truth of this statement? Have you ever done this or had someone do it with you?
3. How can you tell if you are being judgmental? Read 1 Corinthians 5:1-5, 12,13. Paul told the Corinthians that he had already “passed judgment” on this matter and that they needed to expel this Christian from their fellowship. Then he says we should judge those within the church. Is he telling us to do what we have been saying not to do? What is the difference? If another believer points out to you an area of sinfulness in your life, are they being judgmental?
4. In his message, Pastor Rick quoted Proverbs 26:22 (TEV) “Gossip is so tasty! How we love to swallow it!” Why do you think we enjoy hearing about others mistakes and failures? When people want to gossip to us, what should we do?
5. What are the seven things that should be true of me before I exercise the type of judgment that Paul told the Corinthians to practice? Which of the seven do you think is most often violated by Christians?
6. Pastor Rick said we should practice the TLC method with people when we judge people the way Paul said that we should, the Biblical way. What do you think would happen if we as Christians practiced these three things?

Thought: Is there someone you owe an apology to because you judged them unjustly? What would Jesus want you to do?

ANSWERS

1. God being the judge means that He is the only person who has the authority to determine the guilt of a person and what their punishment should be, that is the function of a judge. When we “judge” a person we are assigning guilt to them for whatever our reason might be. Then we punish them for that perceived guilt. That punishment can be verbal condemnation, denying them our help or as simple as refusing to be around them. We are removing from God His authority to judge someone when we judge them and therefore we are taking upon ourselves God’s role.
2. We like to emphasize the guilt of someone else because it allows us to minimize our own guilt. We are very skilled at justifying our own sin and at the same time magnifying the sin of other people. It is one of the ways we try to escape our guilt, for no one can live with guilt for very long and be mentally healthy.
3. One of the easiest ways to determine if you are being judgmental is if you are in anyway punishing a person for their behavior, even if you are the only one who realizes you are punishing them. At the heart of racism is being judgmental of a person over their skin color or ethnicity. You do not treat them as you treat other people, thus punishing them. In 1 Corinthians, Paul is a special case because he is speaking as God’s representative, so his judgment of sin is actually God’s judgment of sin. It is God who is telling them to not have fellowship with the sinning brother. But God makes it clear that this is not to punish the other person, but to make them realize their sinfulness so that they would change their behavior. 2 Corinthians actually tells us that this strategy worked and the person was restored to fellowship in the church. The judgment he is referring to that we are to have is not to pronounce guilt on a person and punish them, it is to be discerning and recognize when a Christian’s behavior needs to be confronted and that person needs restoration. It is different from what Jesus said when He told us not to judge others.
4. Our sinful nature is what causes us to enjoy seeing others fail. When others mess up, we compare ourselves to them and we can feel better about ourselves. “I am not as bad as him” we can tell ourselves. That is why we like to gossip, we elevate ourselves by putting others down.
5. The seven things Pastor Rick mentioned are: a. I’m not practicing the same sin; b. My judgment has not blinded me to my own faults; c. I never draw conclusions based on a person’s appearance of doing wrong; d. I know all the facts and have heard all the reasons; e. I am not influenced by a person’s religion or lack of religion; f. I never speak evil about anyone; g. I know the motives of a person’s heart that has driven their action.
6. TLC stands for: Treat people the way I want to be treated when I stumble. Look up to God as the only true judge. Communicate the same grace and mercy God has given to me.