



CHANGING
THE FACE OF CHRISTIANITY

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Our mission is to reverse negative Christian stereotypes in the world and prepare the field for more effective witnessing to non-believers.

Negative Stereotype: Non-Christians believe we are **judgmental**. (Condemnation)

Treating non-believers as "sinners"/or "more" sinful than us, acting morally superior. Criticizing other's beliefs, choices, or conduct, when they don't reflect our beliefs, choices, or conduct. Making decisions ABOUT someone without really knowing or caring to know about them.

- What's your definition of being judgmental?

A Story to Make It Real: *From "alistarz" on thinkatheist.com*

"My grandmother always tried to make me feel bad that my mom didn't take my brothers and I to church. She would tell me that my mom was a bad person. Fortunately I was only around my grandmother for a few weeks each summer and on Thanksgiving or Christmas. My mom however was raised constantly being told that she was a bad person whenever she did something 'ungodly.' I've seen the emotional scars it left on my mother."

Examples: (Do you have any stories to share here? What's the impact of our judgment?)

1. How we treat or talk about divorced couples.
2. How we treat or talk about a woman who has an abortion.
3. How we look at and talk about people who have lots of tattoos, or piercings in "not-so-typical" places.
4. Disowning friends or family for choosing a different religion, choosing not to be religious at all, or choosing to be atheist.
5. How we treat/talk about an unmarried couple living together or who is having a child.
6. How we treat a referee/umpire that presumably makes a "bad call".
7. How we talk about the "unacceptable" people others spend time with. (Acts 11:1-3)
8. Any other examples you can think of?

What God Say About It (The Bible): God speaks to us about Judgment on two fronts:

- 1) Judgment of people outside the church, 2) Judgment of people within the church

- **John 8:7, 11 (NIV)**

⁷ **If any one of you is without sin**, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.

- **1 Samuel 16:7 (NIV)**

⁷ But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height (the future King David's taller and more handsome brothers), for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

- **John 3:17-18 (NIV)**

¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

- **1 Corinthians 4:4-5 (NIV)**

⁴My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. ⁵Therefore **judge nothing before the appointed time**; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.

- **Psalms 50:4-6 (NIV)**

⁴He summons the heavens above, and the earth, that he may judge his people: ⁵"Gather to me my consecrated ones, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice." ⁶And the heavens proclaim his righteousness, for **God himself is judge**.

- **Matthew 7:1-5 (NIV)**

¹Do not judge, or you too will be judged. ²For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

³Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in **your brother's eye** and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ⁴How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?

⁵You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

- **1 Corinthians 5:9-13 (NIV)**

⁹I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people--

¹⁰**not at all meaning the people of this world** who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. ¹¹But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone **who calls himself a brother** but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat. ¹²**What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside?** ¹³**God will judge those outside.** "Expel the wicked man from among you."

- **Verses for further study:** Psalms 75:7, Isaiah 3:13-14, John 5:22, 1 Corinthians 5:1-3, 1 Corinthians 11:31-32, Acts 11:1-3, Matthew 13:36-43, Matthew 13:47-50, Romans 2:12-16

Closing Thoughts on Judgment: (imagine visiting a judge for a speeding ticket)

To judge rightly, you need the **authority** to pass down judgment, the **power to enforce** your judgment, a comprehensive **understanding** of the rules, laws, or guidelines that determine right from wrong, the **discernment** to identify the truth from all perspectives, and the **wisdom** to exercise mercy and forgiveness or wrath and punishment at the appropriate time, for the greatest good.

- **Who alone can rightly judge?**
- **Can you give up judging others and trust that God will judge rightly?**

Action:

- 1) In the coming weeks, raise your awareness of how you might unintentionally be judgmental through your thoughts and words, and take notice of similar judgment from others.
- 2) Study these Bible verses for greater depth and meaning.
- 3) When tempted to judge someone, pray and trust God to judge for you according to His perfect will. Then for bonus points ☺, go out of your way to show love to them instead.

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