

## Turning the Crap of Life, Into the Fruit of the Spirit

### Judgmental

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#### Life Questions:

Have you been accused of being judgmental? Someone in your church looks you in the eye, if you are lucky – most of the time they just gossip behind your back – and accuses you of being judgmental, what do you do? How do you handle judgmental attitudes? And do you really know what the bible says about being judgmental for yourself?

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It is the nuclear weapon of Christianity. The kryptonite of the believer, it weakens our resolve and destroys us personally. It truly shuts up anyone you use it upon. It is the judgment accusation!

No one wants to be called judgmental. It is the ultimate curse, the four letter word of the church. People make the accusation, and bam it sticks. There is no cure for it, we don't forgive those who are judgmental, and instead interestingly enough, we judge them. Or do we? Do you really know what judgmental means? What does it mean to judge?

So the first thing to do is find out what the biblical term for judging means. Not what the pastor tells us, not what someone in the choir tells us or even someone of influence tells us, but to find out what Jesus and His Word says it is.

In the NIV Bible, there are 153 references to judge, spanning from the leaders of Israel to the actions Jesus will take at the second coming. So which applies to us today? All of them, but for the sake of everyone's sanity, lets address the more pressing ones.

#### 1. Judge, don't condemn

##### **Matt 7:1-2**

7:1 "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. 2 For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

NIV

Here is where it starts, we shouldn't judge. Plain and simple isn't it? The word for Judge is the word krino which means properly, to distinguish, i.e. decide (mentally or judicially); by implication, to try, condemn, punish.

Judging should not be confused with condemnation. So often we confuse the two words, even when in this case they have similar meanings. But we all know that judging people are often condemning someone, not really judging them. And there we have a simple answer,

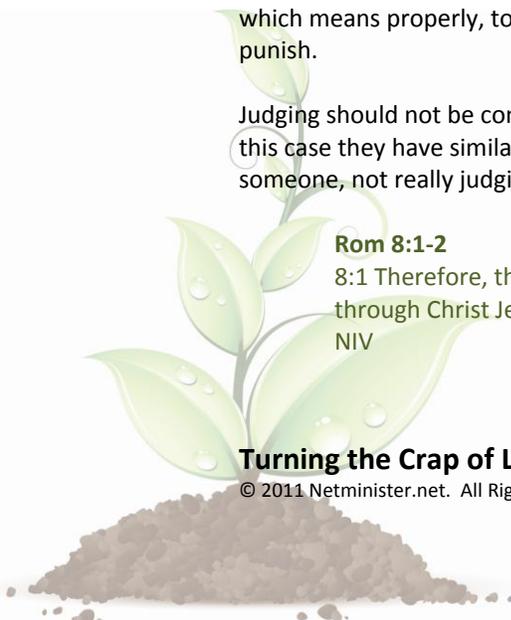
##### **Rom 8:1-2**

8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.

NIV

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The word for condemnation here means the final judgment, after the judge gives you the verdict, then the sentence. That is condemnation and that is the sole privy of Christ Jesus. Because He has set us free from the law of sin and death, the law was full of sin and death; but Jesus set us free once and for all with His death on the Cross. Therefore, when we are in Jesus, there is not condemnation, even if Mrs. Busybody Magilacuttie says so. Stop listening to her! And, kindly if possible, let her know that there is no condemnation in Christ. Regardless of what you have done, Christ forgives us, doesn't matter what you have done.

Now that we have established that there is no condemnation in Christ, even with Mrs. Magilacuttie and her band of merry gossipers, we can establish that judging should not be condemnation. So when you start there, you can examine what judging should be.

Let's take them one at a time, does Jesus mean to imply that we should never properly distinguish? In other words, when we see something that is blatantly wrong (ex. A child being abused in public), we should not distinguish it? We shouldn't decide that the action is wrong? The term, sometimes lost in the translation or because teachers and story-writers can be lazy, means to literally make rash decisions without the facts. NOT to see something that is wrong and refuse to form an opinion, that is just stupid.

If you applied that same approach to life in general why would you ever drive the speed limit? After all, the law is just judging you for your speeding. Speeding, excessively, is reckless and dangerous, it doesn't just put you in danger of being injured or killed but those around you. Your actions have a profound effect on others. Therefore when you are judged to be driving reckless, i.e., speeding, then an officer is likely to pull you over and give you a ticket or haul you off to jail if you are driving fast enough. Either way, the officer's actions are based on the rules (i.e., the truth of God's word) and his enforcement is his requirement. He isn't the judge, that is someone else's job, his is to enforce the truth, in this case the speed limit truth. Break it and there are consequences.

Such is the case with God's word. So often we view people who we think are challenging us as being judgmental, when they may be trying to tell us to slow down, observe the road conditions and follow the truth or we risk injuring ourselves or others. When viewed as a method of warning, even if the person is really condemning us, we can find the truth of God's word which either changes our course or should enforce that we are doing His will.

**Luke 6:37-38**

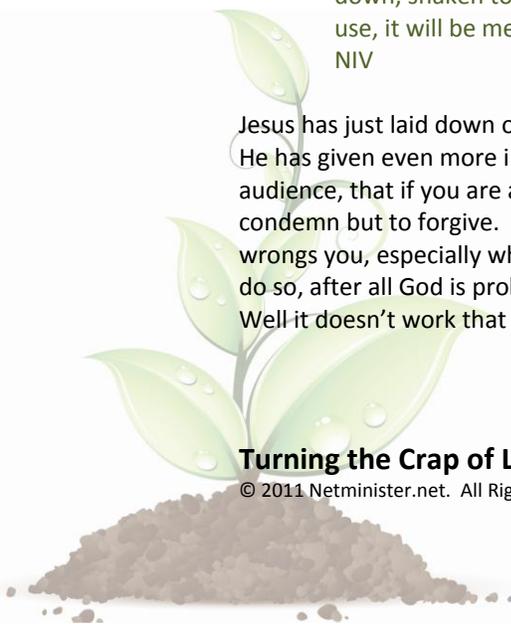
37 "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. 38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

NIV

Jesus has just laid down on His listeners some heavy material. Starting with what we call the Beatitudes, He has given even more information, love your enemies, even to the point of telling His mostly Jewish audience, that if you are asked to walk a mile, go another. And now He comes to this, don't judge, don't condemn but to forgive. Forgive, ugh the antithesis of everything you want to do in the flesh. Someone wrongs you, especially when you know the truth, you want to get them back. You feel almost obligated to do so, after all God is probably busy and didn't notice it so we decide to take care of the revenge for Him. Well it doesn't work that way. Jesus is telling us that we are to forgive.

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And after all that He tells us that we should give, meaning to that one that we were going to judge and condemn just moments before, GIVE? Are you serious? Was Jesus out of His mind? Did He tell them right afterwards, Just kidding? Nope, He said it and He meant it. Because when we do that, there is a blessing. Not just a single simple blessing but something so much that we cannot hope to contain it.

If you have ever harvested anything leafy, you know about the need to fill your basket as full as possible before going to dump it out into the bigger bin. You press that stuff down, press it as hard as you can to get as much as possible into the basket. Travelers do this with suitcases. If you have ever had to sit on a suitcase to close it, you have the idea. But Jesus is saying that when we don't condemn or judge, AND we forgive, thought I had forgotten that part didn't you, we receive something in return that makes that suitcase look like it was empty by comparison. His blessings flow to us.

Jesus is telling His audience, the way you do things is the way things will be done to you. How you apply judging, among other things, condemnation, it will be delivered to you. Imagine if there was some kind of rule about how we treated others. It might even be a golden rule, something that if everyone would live by things would improve dramatically. If only. Oh well.

## 2. Judge Rightly – Figure it out!

### Luke 12:57-59

57 "Why don't you judge for yourselves what is right? 58 As you are going with your adversary to the magistrate, try hard to be reconciled to him on the way, or he may drag you off to the judge, and the judge turn you over to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison. 59 I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny."

NIV

"You should have known better!" I know you have heard that before. From a teacher or a parent, chances are you have heard that maybe even at work. Someone, somewhere has probably told you their frustration with you doing something wrong. It spills over as that statement.

Much in the same way, Jesus is getting onto those around Him. Telling them they should have known better, they should have been able to judge (i.e., discern, understand, figure it out for themselves) what is right for themselves. This doesn't mean that they have relative Christianity (meaning what is right for me is right for me not for you). Just before this He tells them how if they see a cloud they know it is going to rain, but they don't seem to know what is right, what is correct in action. We can be that way if we are not careful.

Puzzle makers figured that people want to figure things out for themselves by coming up with the most difficult puzzles ever, one that has no straight lines, no picture and extra pieces. All meant to give you one of the more extreme versions of figuring things out for yourself. With no guidance and no means of where to start, it would take someone with a lot of time or an extremely good sense of how to figure something out to finish those puzzles. On the opposite side there is the world's simplest puzzle, it has just two pieces.

Whichever puzzle you find most appealing or if you are one of those in the middle, God's word has all the information you need to find the answers to your needs. Some are more difficult, some are easy but all have relevance and can provide guidance for you today. Jesus is telling His audience, you and me too, that we should have been able to learn some things just by giving a little effort, now imagine if you really tried!

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Nothing in this world bothers me like untapped potential. Someone who is good at something but doesn't do what he or she is good at is a waste. Talent is something that we all have, some a lot, others a little. When you have a little talent at something you love, you are discouraged by someone who has a lot of talent in that arena but doesn't use it. Why? Because they haven't figured it out for themselves.

**Acts 4:18-20**

18 Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. 20 For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."  
NIV

Peter and John are in trouble now. Boy they have done it. They were told not to teach about Jesus and here they are teaching about Him. What is wrong with these guys? Are they really doing this after they were told not to? Yes, they are. And their challenge is the same that Jesus issued, Judge for yourself. They already had and decided that they were going to continue speaking about what all they had seen and heard.

It wasn't someone else that told them something, they were there! They were part of it, "saw it with my own eyes" as it were. To that end when they are challenged to stop speaking about Jesus, they issue back a challenge, judge for yourself. Figure it out on your own. Take what you know, take what is available and figure it out.

In life, we respect those who are self-taught. It is an admirable trait to say the least. When someone who has nothing, no money, no schooling nothing to speak of we are always impressed by that person's ability to take something and figure it out on their own. Why wouldn't we expound that same virtue to God's word? Why is it that only those with massive seminary degrees are allowed to implant knowledge into our brains? How is it that we have given up on learning it ourselves, figuring out what it is that God has for our life? Because to find that out, we have to invest time, energy and effort into a relationship firstly with God, secondly with His word, and thirdly with His people – the church. And most of us don't see that investment as having a return worthy of what is required.

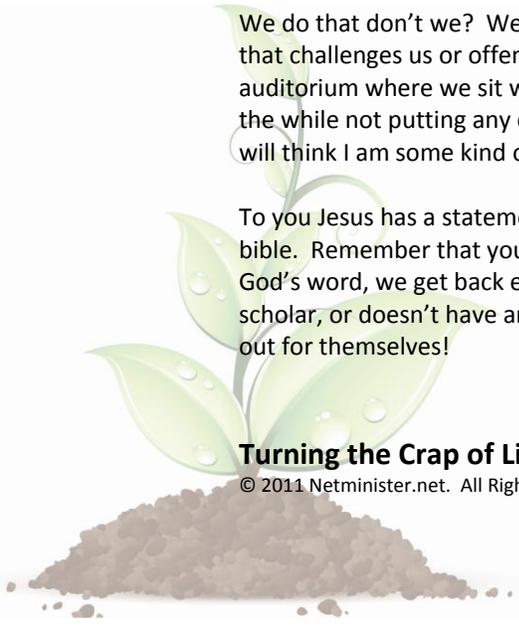
Take the girl that works for herself. She loses a client, goes to church and announces that she is waiting on God to provide her with a new client. Okay, fair enough, we are all to wait on the Lord. But when you press and ask what she is doing in the meanwhile, she proceeds to tell you that she isn't doing anything, she is literally sitting at home waiting for God to deliver a new client to her without any effort.

We do that don't we? We sit in small groups and wait for someone to spoon feed us a lesson, but not one that challenges us or offends our sense of effort that we are giving. After that we proceed to the auditorium where we sit waiting for a pastor to present yet another spoonful of goodness to our ears, all the while not putting any effort into the cause. We come, isn't that enough? After all, if I talk a lot people will think I am some kind of know it all.

To you Jesus has a statement, figure it out! Stop just listening to others and put some time into your bible. Remember that you get judged by the way you judge things? Well that holds true for our time in God's word, we get back exactly what we put into it. So when someone claims that he or she isn't a bible scholar, or doesn't have any answer but one that someone else put into their head, tell them to figure it out for themselves!

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### 3. Judge, Throw People A Lifeline In the Church

#### 1 Cor 5:12-13

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.

NIV

Here we are commanded to judge those inside the church, not those outside of it. The world outside will receive in its time the wrath that God has against them. Instead of judging, we should be seeking to rescue them. But because of our blatant disregard for this command, we are seen more as people of the judgment, rather than people of a soft, merciful heart. We are commanded to judge, but not condemn.

What is the world but a group of people in the water after a shipwreck. Some are swimming, some are floating but all of them are getting nowhere near land. They need to be rescued. Eventually even the most brave among them is going to run out of energy and start to sink. They will succumb to the ocean. Either because of sharks, lack of energy from not being properly fed or they will just give out, their bodies no longer able to maintain the level of effort needed to survive.

These people are the ones we, that is the church, are suppose to be lending a rope or life preserver or place in the boat. Whether they take it or not isn't up to you and I, but up to the will of the Lord and His effort.

If we do what we are commanded to do, judging and removing the parts of our body that is not suppose to be there, because it is causing trouble, hello Mrs. Troublemaker, then we can see God working in our midst. He will bring people in so fast we will not have room for them, we will have to build bigger boats! But only when we are willing to straighten up our own house first leading to the question of how do we do that?

#### Col 2:16-23

16 Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. 17 These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. 18 Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. 19 He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.

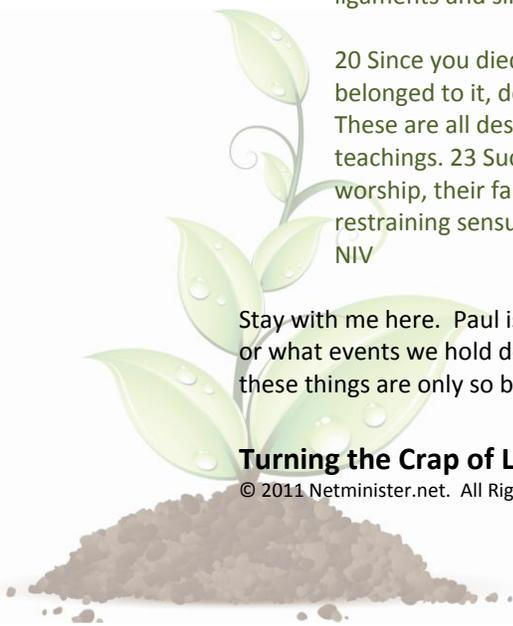
20 Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: 21 "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? 22 These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. 23 Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

NIV

Stay with me here. Paul is telling us that we shouldn't let anyone judge us based on what we eat or drink or what events we hold dear to our heart. The reason being that most of the people that are pious about these things are only so because it puffs them up.

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Ever eaten something that is puffy? Not very filling is it, because it is full of air – not substance. Eat all the cream puffs you want, and as sick as you get from it, you will have eaten mostly air. Not something that will sustain you like eating meat. But you have the right to eat whatever you want, but there are consequences for it. Not from me, but from your body.

That puffy person doesn't just cause you a problem by judging you, but can cause you to sin because you allow their actions to negatively influence yours. And here we are told that their actions are so because they have lost touch with the Head – that is Christ in case you were wondering. They have lost their place in where they belong, what their actions are suppose to be. Don't let that influence you!

Those rules, don't do this don't do that, do nothing for reaching into the root cause of sin, our own sensual desires. HELLO! Why doesn't it work to tell hormonally challenged young men not to have sex when their body is aching for it? Because rules do nothing to change that core.

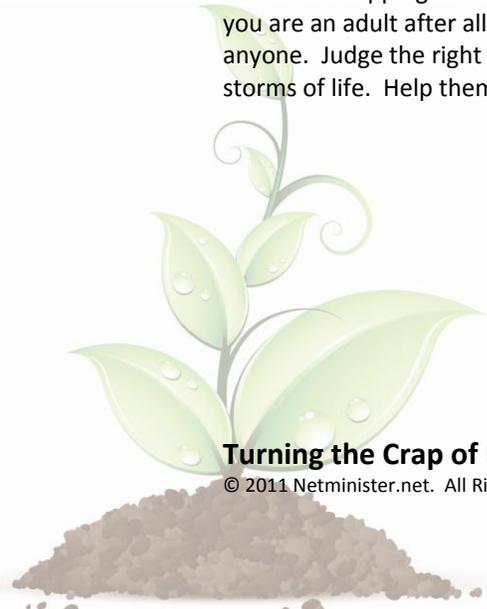
Imagine going to a doctor for the flu. He comes in after a battery of tests and informs you that you do indeed have the flu and he is going to give you tissues. Take a tissue and wipe your nose as needed. But doctor, you think, this isn't going to help with what is really wrong with me is it? Of course not he informs you but that he is only a doctor of symptoms, not of illness. Didn't you see that on his sign?

So is the cause of setting up a bunch of rules that make no sense, have no biblical basis, and end up being a root of discord between people within the church. You can take your pick, from gambling to dancing, the bible has different things to say about each, but few are actually what you are most likely being taught. And because you refuse to learn it yourself, you fall victim to the same problem over and again of not knowing what is biblical and just living a surrogate life – really living the life of someone else because you listen more to them then checking out your bible and exploring for the truth.

The denomination, the association, the church says don't do this, so I guess I won't do it is an absolutely ignorant way to live your life. And it is the exact reason people outside the church are repulsed by our actions. We don't know many times what we believe, and so when they challenge us for a truth they know better than we do, we come off as dogmatic – do it because I told you to do it. Not really knowing why. Who does that in life?

#### **Final Analysis:**

Know what you know because you have spent the time to find the answer yourself. Don't be content to sit and listen, living someone else's relationship. Figure it out for yourself, be able to take this lesson and use it as a stepping stone to learning more about your savior. Don't believe me, find it out for yourself, you are an adult after all, start acting like one. Okay that was mean, but I meant it as much for myself as anyone. Judge the right way, figure it out and judge those around you to provide a place of safety in the storms of life. Help them turn their crap into fruit, grab a shovel and let's figure it out!



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