

“Please Judge Me”

by Bryan Gibson

That’s right, it’s time we flipped the script on the overused and misused slogan of so many—“don’t judge me.” Me personally, I **want** to know when I’m wrong—in any area of my spiritual life. I do “examine (my) own work” (Galatians 6:2); I do “judge” myself (1 Corinthians 11:31), but I may be blind to what others can clearly see.

Just to be clear, I’m not talking about the “command fire to come down from heaven” spirit of judgment displayed by James and John (Luke 9:51-56). Final judgment belongs to the Lord, but you can help me get ready for that judgment by judging me now—by pointing out my sins.

I would urge you to not judge me too hastily, to “not judge according to appearance, but...with righteous judgment” (John 7:24). But if you know the facts, and the facts point to my guilt, please love me enough to rebuke me (Revelation 3:19), because “open rebuke is better than love carefully concealed” (Proverbs 27:5). “Faithful are the wounds of a friend” (Proverbs 27:6), so don’t be afraid to wound me.

I would also prefer that you not judge me hypocritically, that you not be guilty of the same things of which you accuse me (Matthew 7:1-5; Romans 2:1-3). Not for my sake, because your hypocrisy doesn’t change my innocence or guilt, but for your sake. Make sure you humbly apply the same standard (the gospel) to yourself that you apply to me, and let’s both be willing to repent.

And yes, it would be easier on me (and you) if you come to me, at least initially, “in a spirit of gentleness” (Galatians 6:1). Circumstances may call for a sharper rebuke (Titus 1:13), and if that’s the case, it’s on me to respond with a “broken and a contrite heart” (Psalms 51:17). Bottom line—be careful in your approach, but from **my** standpoint, **how** you speak to me doesn’t change the facts. If I’m guilty of sin, that’s **my** biggest concern, not the manner in which you spoke.

It could be that my actions call for a public rebuke, much like Peter received at the hands of Paul (Galatians 2:13-14). And though I have no intention to do so, if I publicly teach false doctrine, I shouldn’t be surprised when you feel the need to warn others about me. Public teaching invites public scrutiny, and if necessary, public rebuke—I understand that, and I also understand that if I listen to correction along the way, it should never come to that.

“Don’t judge me”—here’s what God says about that approach: “He who refuses correction goes astray” (Proverbs 10:17). “He who hates corrections is stupid” (Proverbs 12:1). “He who hates correction will die” (Proverbs 15:10). “He who disdains instruction despises his own soul...” (Proverbs 15:32).

“Please judge me”—here’s what God says about that approach: “He who regards a rebuke will be honored” (Proverbs 13:18). “He who receives correction is prudent” (Proverbs 15:5). “The ear that hears the rebukes of life will abide among the wise...he who heeds rebuke gets understanding” (Proverbs 15:31-32).

So, which is the better approach? You be the judge.