

## Judgement Vs Discernment

We always get into the debate of saying “we’re not suppose to judge others.” But we have to ask ourselves what does it mean to judge?

First we need to differentiate between two concepts:

1. Judgement
2. Discernment

### Judgement

**Judgement implies authority.** People who judge are people who are given authority. And they can only judge according to their area of responsibility.

Examples:

1. Referee has the authority to judge within the game that’s he’s refereeing only. He can not make judgement calls in another game he is not refereeing
2. A judge has an authority to judge within the case he’s overseeing and not other cases.
3. A priest has an authority to judge:
  - For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed (2 Corinthians 10:8)

To summarize there are few important points:

0. Judgement implies authority.

- all authority is limited, except for God’s authority. Thus God is the only one who can make a final and authoritative judgement, that’s not subject for alteration. However, all other people who are given authority by God, their judgement is limited, and can be flawed, and is subject to appeal.

1. Judgement is to be carried out for the general edification of the society we live in.

- The purpose of the referee is to make sure that the game is fair.
- The purpose of the judge is to make sure people are treated fairly, and that danger to society is reduced
- The purpose of the priest is to edify God’s people. IE Help them grow in their relationship with God. Help them in their walk with Christ.

2. Judgement implies Justice.

- For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do **justice and judgment**; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. (Genesis 18:19)
- And David reigned over all Israel; and David executed **judgment and justice** unto all his people. (2 Samuel 8:15)
- Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the LORD loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice. (1 King 10:9)
- So David reigned over all Israel, and executed judgment and justice among all his people (1 Chronicles 18:14)
- Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice? (Job 8:3)
- Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict. (Job 37:23)
- Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. (Psalm 82:3)
- Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face. (Psalm 89:14)

- To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice. (21:3)
- Refer to Appendix A for further verses regarding the tight coupling between Judgement and Justice. In fact in God's eyes judgement and justice can not be separated, for justice without judgement is meaningless and judgement without justice is cruel and perverted.

### 3. Judgement must be impartial

- Refer to Appendix B for verses regarding impartiality in judgement.

Before we judge then we must ask ourselves:

- Do we have authority in this matter?
- Is our judgement for edification?
- Is our judgement just?
- Is our judgement without respect of person?

Moreover let's remember this:

- That judgement will start with us  
For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? (1 Peter 4: 17-18)
- That judgement is without mercy to those who showed no mercy  
For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment. (James 2:13)

So as we can see judgement is a very, VERY, big deal; thus:

- **Judge** not, and ye shall not be **judged**: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven (John 7:24)
- For with what judgment ye **judge**, ye shall be **judged**: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. (Matthew 7:2)
- We have to stay away from judging others unless it is critical and unless the above conditions are true. In fact in our day to day life judging others is a rarity. And when needed it must be done with the utmost care and after great due diligence.
- We must also realize that judgement and justice are good things when they go together, but when they are separated Judgement become evil, and that's what God means when he says do not judge.
- We must understand that judgement is the application of the law. You can not judge if you do not have a basis (IE Law). Continuing our examples, a referee has to apply the law of the game. A judge has to apply the law of the state. A priest has to apply the law of the church. It follows then that in order to apply the law, we must be well versed in the law, and we must have the authority to apply the law. None of these cases apply in normal life.
  - However, as servants we are given limited authority for the edification of the people we serve, so sometimes we might find ourselves in the position to apply the law of the church. This must be done with the utmost care and due diligence. And we must not do it alone. We must refer back to people who are farther along in their spirituality than us. Who are wiser than us. Who are well versed in the law of liberty than us. We ought to remember: In the multitude of

councilors there is safety. AND, whatever decision we reach it has to be for the EDIFICATION of the service.

### **Bad Judgement**

- Lacks the above stated conditions.
- Judgement goes with Pride.
  - I think I'm better than everyone else, and thus I look down upon them.
- Judgement goes with lack of humility (or with false humility)
  - Read Pope Shenouda's article on "False Humility".
- Judgement weakens us spiritually and makes us prone to spiritual attacks.
  - Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.
- Judgement involves back stabbing.
- Judgement involves publicizing people's faults.

This brings us to **discernment**

- Discernment is not judging.
- Discernment is a gift from God. We can attain to it only when we are close to God.

So what really is discernment?

- Discernment is telling what's good from what's evil; from what's profitable and what's not profitable
  - Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? (1 King 3:9)
  - Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not. (Malachi 3:18)
- Spiritual Discernment
  - But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Corinthians 2:14)
- St. Paul speaking about spiritual gifts he says:
  - To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: (1 Corinthians 12:10)
- About the word of God
  - For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)
- Discernment requires maturity and practice:
  - But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. (Hebrews 5:14)

Thus what we should practice in our day lives is the ability to discern between Good and Bad:

- We can do that properly only if we're closer to God, because this is a spiritual gift
- And it requires us to grow in our life with Christ.
- And it requires us to practice discernment in all our daily tasks.

Discernment becomes evil judging when we start pointing out the faults in other people and forget about ourselves.

- 2But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. 3And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? 4Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? (Romans 2:2-4)
- Who art thou that **judgest** another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. (Romans 14:4)
- But why dost thou **judge** thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. (Romans 14:10)
- Therefore **judge** nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God. (Corinthians 4:5)

### **A good Practice of Discernment**

#### **Will Neutralization**

In order to be able to discern the word of God (because the Word of God is what points us in the right way) we must neutralize our will. This is hard. When we're faced with a situation that appears to be 100% positive, don't rush into it, think of all the aspects of it. Be objective. Bring out the negatives. Weigh the negatives with the positives. Do so until you don't have any inclination to one or another. When your emotions and ambitions are silent, that's when you'll hear the word of God guiding you in the right direction.

Don't be alone in your thoughts. Expose your thoughts to people who are spiritually better than you. Take this practice. Before you take any action, consult. Because in the multitude of councilors there is safety.

#### **Conclusion**

- Judgement is good if done appropriately.
- Judgement is not to be practiced in our daily lives
- Judgement is only to those who are given authority from God
- We should practice discernment
- Discernment is a spiritual gift. Thus we can obtain true discernment when we are closer to God, because it's God's words that reveals the good from the bad.
- We should practice discernment in our daily lives.

### **Appendix A: Judgement and Justice**

#### **Genesis 18:19**

For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do **justice** and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

**Genesis 18:18-20** (in Context) **Genesis 18** (Whole Chapter)

#### **Deuteronomy 33:21**

And he provided the first part for himself, because there, in a portion of the lawgiver, was he seated; and he came with the heads of the people, he executed the **justice** of the LORD, and his judgments with Israel.

Deuteronomy 33:20-22 (in Context) Deuteronomy 33 (Whole Chapter)

### **2 Samuel 8:15**

And David reigned over all Israel; and David executed judgment and **justice** unto all his people.

2 Samuel 8:14-16 (in Context) 2 Samuel 8 (Whole Chapter)

### **2 Samuel 15:4**

Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him **justice!**

2 Samuel 15:3-5 (in Context) 2 Samuel 15 (Whole Chapter)

### **1 Kings 10:9**

Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the LORD loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and **justice.**

1 Kings 10:8-10 (in Context) 1 Kings 10 (Whole Chapter)

### **1 Chronicles 18:14**

So David reigned over all Israel, and executed judgment and **justice** among all his people.

1 Chronicles 18:13-15 (in Context) 1 Chronicles 18 (Whole Chapter)

### **2 Chronicles 9:8**

Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee to set thee on his throne, to be king for the LORD thy God: because thy God loved Israel, to establish them for ever, therefore made he thee king over them, to do judgment and **justice.**

2 Chronicles 9:7-9 (in Context) 2 Chronicles 9 (Whole Chapter)

### **Job 8:3**

Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert **justice?**

Job 8:2-4 (in Context) Job 8 (Whole Chapter)

### **Job 36:17**

But thou hast fulfilled the judgment of the wicked: judgment and **justice** take hold on thee.

Job 36:16-18 (in Context) Job 36 (Whole Chapter)

### **Job 37:23**

Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of **justice:** he will not afflict.

Job 37:22-24 (in Context) Job 37 (Whole Chapter)

### **Psalms 82:3**

Defend the poor and fatherless: do **justice** to the afflicted and needy.

Psalms 82:2-4 (in Context) Psalms 82 (Whole Chapter)

### **Psalms 89:14**

**Justice** and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.

Psalms 89:13-15 (in Context) Psalms 89 (Whole Chapter)

### **Psalms 119:121**

I have done judgment and **justice**: leave me not to mine oppressors.  
Psalm 119:120-122 (in Context) Psalm 119 (Whole Chapter)

### Proverbs 1:3

To receive the instruction of wisdom, **justice**, and judgment, and equity;  
Proverbs 1:2-4 (in Context) Proverbs 1 (Whole Chapter)

### Proverbs 8:15

By me kings reign, and princes decree **justice**.  
Proverbs 8:14-16 (in Context) Proverbs 8 (Whole Chapter)

### Proverbs 21:3

To do **justice** and judgment is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.  
Proverbs 21:2-4 (in Context) Proverbs 21 (Whole Chapter)

### Ecclesiastes 5:8

If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and **justice** in a province, marvel not at the matter: for he that is higher than the highest regardeth; and there be higher than they.  
Ecclesiastes 5:7-9 (in Context) Ecclesiastes 5 (Whole Chapter)

### Isaiah 9:7

Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with **justice** from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Isaiah 9:6-8 (in Context) Isaiah 9 (Whole Chapter)

### Isaiah 56:1

Thus saith the LORD, Keep ye judgment, and do **justice**: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed.

Isaiah 56:1-3 (in Context) Isaiah 56 (Whole Chapter)

### Isaiah 58:2

Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of **justice**; they take delight in approaching to God.

Isaiah 58:1-3 (in Context) Isaiah 58 (Whole Chapter)

### Isaiah 59:4

None calleth for **justice**, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.

Isaiah 59:3-5 (in Context) Isaiah 59 (Whole Chapter)

### Isaiah 59:9

Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth **justice** overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness.

Isaiah 59:8-10 (in Context) Isaiah 59 (Whole Chapter)

### Isaiah 59:14

And judgment is turned away backward, and **justice** standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.

Isaiah 59:13-15 (in Context) Isaiah 59 (Whole Chapter)

### Jeremiah 22:15

Shalt thou reign, because thou closest thyself in cedar? did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and **justice**, and then it was well with him?  
[Jeremiah 22:14-16](#) (in Context) [Jeremiah 22](#) (Whole Chapter)

### **Jeremiah 23:5**

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and **justice** in the earth.

[Jeremiah 23:4-6](#) (in Context) [Jeremiah 23](#) (Whole Chapter)

### **Jeremiah 31:23**

Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; As yet they shall use this speech in the land of Judah and in the cities thereof, when I shall bring again their captivity; The LORD bless thee, O habitation of **justice**, and mountain of holiness.

[Jeremiah 31:22-24](#) (in Context) [Jeremiah 31](#) (Whole Chapter)

### **Jeremiah 50:7**

All that found them have devoured them: and their adversaries said, We offend not, because they have sinned against the LORD, the habitation of **justice**, even the LORD, the hope of their fathers.

[Jeremiah 50:6-8](#) (in Context) [Jeremiah 50](#) (Whole Chapter)

### **Ezekiel 45:9**

Thus saith the Lord GOD; Let it suffice you, O princes of Israel: remove violence and spoil, and execute judgment and **justice**, take away your exactions from my people, saith the Lord GOD.

[Ezekiel 45:8-10](#) (in Context) [Ezekiel 45](#) (Whole Chapter)

## **Appendix B: Impartiality**

### **2 Chronicles 19:7**

Wherefore now let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor **respect of persons**, nor taking of gifts.

[2 Chronicles 19:6-8](#) (in Context) [2 Chronicles 19](#) (Whole Chapter)

### **Proverbs 24:23**

These things also belong to the wise. It is not good to have **respect of persons** in judgment.

[Proverbs 24:22-24](#) (in Context) [Proverbs 24](#) (Whole Chapter)

### **Proverbs 28:21**

To have **respect of persons** is not good: for for a piece of bread that man will transgress.

[Proverbs 28:20-22](#) (in Context) [Proverbs 28](#) (Whole Chapter)

### **Romans 2:11**

For there is no **respect of persons** with God.

[Romans 2:10-12](#) (in Context) [Romans 2](#) (Whole Chapter)

### **Ephesians 6:9**

And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there **respect of persons** with him.

**Ephesians 6:8-10** (in Context) **Ephesians 6** (Whole Chapter)

**Colossians 3:25**

But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no **respect of persons**.

**Colossians 3:24-25** (in Context) **Colossians 3** (Whole Chapter)

**James 2:1**

My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with **respect of persons**.

**James 2:1-3** (in Context) **James 2** (Whole Chapter)

**1 Peter 1:17**

And if ye call on the Father, who without **respect of persons** judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:

**1 Peter 1:16-18** (in Context) **1 Peter 1** (Whole Chapter)

**Appendix C: Misc**

My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.

For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;

And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:

Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? (James 2: 1-4)