

# LOVE THE LORD



## Lesson Nineteen - How is judging others bad for me?

August 2023

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### Summary of key points

- The Bible shows us that we will be judged for judging others. Judgements lead to many evil thoughts and actions, including racism and genocide.
- Jesus will return to judge all people one day, including believers and non-believers. All our secret judgemental thoughts will be exposed.
- The only One qualified to judge anyone is Jesus because He is sinless and has paid for our sins.
- When we judge anyone, we imply we are better than Jesus.
- We can judge other people with hidden motives, such as a low self-view, envy, and perfectionism.
- Jesus will be merciful to believers who have shown mercy to other people.
- We are called to judge sin within the church so that it can be redeemed for God's glory.
- We need to learn the distinction between godly and sinful judgements (with examples).

### Watch the lesson online

<https://youtu.be/rnC6BFDDFJA>

### Transcript

Welcome to lesson 19 of Love the Lord where we look at the difference between sinful and godly judgements.

Let us begin by inviting God to speak to us personally through this study. Please follow along as we pray together. Click pause at any point if you need more time.

First, let's thank God for His perfect character and will for us.

Next, please tell Him about the things that have been stressful and ask for His help and guidance.

Let us put down our burdens of sin and confess the ways we have sinned against God and against others, and ask for His forgiveness.

Please confess the ways others have sinned against us, and forgive them in Jesus' name.

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Next, let us ask God to purify and open our hearts to receive His teaching.

Finally, please repeat these words, “In Jesus’ name, I silence all distractions and voices that are not from God. Amen.”

Let us begin the lesson for today. How is judging others bad for me?

Jesus has warned us not to judge others so that we will not be judged by God Himself. The very same standards and attitudes that we use to judge others will be applied back to us. The more we judge and condemn others, the more God will condemn us too.

*Matthew 7:1-2 “Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged. (NLT)”*

God will show no mercy for those who have not shown mercy to others but He will bless those who are merciful.

*James 2:12-13 So whatever you say or whatever you do, remember that you will be judged by the law that sets you free. There will be no mercy for those who have not shown mercy to others. But if you have been merciful, God will be merciful when he judges you. (NLT)”*

When we refrain from judging others and show them the mercy that we desire to receive from God we will not have any reason to be afraid on Judgment Day when Jesus Himself returns because we have lived like He would have on earth.

*Matthew 5:7 God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy. (NLT)”*

*1 John 4:17 And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world. (NLT)”*

One day, Jesus will come back to judge all people — both non-believers as well as believers.

*Matthew 16:27 For the Son of Man will come with his angels in the glory of his Father and will judge all people according to their deeds. (NLT)”*

Father God has given that absolute authority to Jesus alone. Even the Father judges no one. When we judge and condemn others, we make ourselves greater than Jesus.

*John 5:22 In addition, the Father judges no one. Instead, he has given the Son absolute authority to judge, (NLT)”*

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Jesus has this supreme authority to judge all people because He is the only One who has suffered like we have and yet remained sinless. He also died for all our sins to bring us into our salvation. Are any of us greater than Jesus?

*Hebrews 2:10 God, for whom and through whom everything was made, chose to bring many children into glory. And it was only right that he should make Jesus, through his suffering, a perfect leader, fit to bring them into their salvation. (NLT)*

So we see that God's qualification for the right to judge anyone is to have gone through what they have, and suffered what they have, and remained sinless throughout.

*Hebrews 2:17 Therefore, it was necessary for him to be made in every respect like us, his brothers and sisters, so that he could be our merciful and faithful High Priest before God ... (NLT)*

*Hebrews 2:18 Since he himself has gone through suffering and testing, he is able to help us when we are being tested. (NLT)*

*1 Peter 2:22 He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. (NLT)*

And also, we need to have paid the price for their sins and continue to be faithful and to love them even if they scorn and reject us, and don't even change their ways.

*Isaiah 53:5 But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. (NLT)*

*Romans 5:7-8 Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. (NLT)*

Do any of us share such qualifications?

Let us pause to reflect for a moment. When we judge another human being, whom God has created, what are we indirectly saying to God Himself?

These are some ways our judgments can come across.

1. "I am perfect and sinless, just like Jesus."
2. "I have the right to judge what God has created."
3. "God, You make mistakes. This person is a mistake."
4. "God, You don't have the power to redeem this person's life."

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5. “Jesus’ work on the cross was pointless and meaningless.”
  6. “God’s mercy towards me means nothing to me.”

Is this what we want to communicate to God about the condition of our hearts through the ways we judge other people?

The Bible clearly warns us not to make judgments of anyone. Let’s read 1 Corinthians chapter 4 verse 5 together, *“So don’t make judgments about anyone ahead of time—before the Lord returns. For he will bring our darkest secrets to light and will reveal our private motives. Then God will give to each one whatever praise is due.”* (1 Corinthians 4:5 NLT)

Let’s pause here and consider how we would feel when God brings all our secret thoughts and judgments out into the open and exposes them. Is there anything we feel led to repent of and ask God to wash us clean from?

By contrast, the Bible also tells us to judge those inside the church who behave in ways that God calls evil. How can we judge fellow believers and yet not sin against God or against them? Let’s look at some key differences between godly and sinful behaviours.

*1 Corinthians 5:12-13 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.” (ESV)*

Godly judgement discerns the sins that grieves the Holy Spirit, and seeks to gently point believers who are still living in sin to repentance and reconciliation with God. Such judgement is not self-centred but has another person’s best interests at heart. It is kind, respectful, and loving, and does not condemn them. Godly judgement is filled with the hope we have in Jesus Christ and leaves all conclusions to God on what He thinks about His people. God has the final say.

On the other hand, sinful judgement recognises the sins that displease us and expects others to meet our standards. Ultimately, we only have our own interests at heart. We will be prone to condemn others if they fail to meet our expectations. We are the ones who have the final say on someone, not God. Basically, sinful judgements centre around ourselves. It is about us, our standards and our interests.

Godly judgement will follow the Holy Spirit’s leading. Let us read these passages together, *“... let us follow the Spirit’s leading in every part of our lives... if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself.”* (Galatians 5:25,6:1 NLT)

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If someone continues to persist in sin, we are even advised to rebuke that person in an assembly of fellow believers so that they will hopefully take their sin seriously enough to stop grieving the Holy Spirit and repent. Is this something you have witnessed without your own community of believers?

*1 Timothy 5:20 As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear. (ESV)*

So, to summarise, godly judgement will be led by the Holy Spirit, rather than our flesh. It will place us on the same side as fellow believers, rather than on opposing sides. It confronts sin directly for the sake of the church, rather than stay silent.

Its aim is to lovingly help someone step out of sin, rather than to condemn, slander, or gossip about them. This is an act of humility and compassion, not pride or self-righteousness because we know we are all sinners. Any act of godly judgement glorifies God and protects the church from the spread of sin.

### **Judging sin within the church**

<b>Godly judgement</b>	<b>Sinful judgement</b>
Led by the Holy Spirit	Led by our flesh
On the same side	On opposing sides
Confronts sin directly	Tends to judge silently
Lovingly helps	Condemns, slanders, gossips
Humility and compassion	Pride and self-righteousness
Glorifies God	Glorifies ourselves
Prevents spread of sin	Adds to the sins in the church

Godly judgement will sound like this, *“What you are doing is sinful and grieves the Holy Spirit. As the family of Christ, let us support one another and turn away from our sins. What steps can we take together to walk faithfully with God, rather than follow our enemy, Satan?”*

On the other hand, when we silently judge someone’s sinful behaviour and do nothing more than condemn them in our hearts or talk about them behind their backs, we fall into several traps.

Firstly, we indirectly glorify Satan. The Bible shows us that people can be held captive by Satan to do whatever he wants. This includes both believers and non-believers. When we judge and condemn others, we indirectly glorify Satan by agreeing that he must have more power to trap people in bondage to sin

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than our Saviour has the power to break them free. Rather, we should earnestly pray that they humbly seek Jesus for salvation instead.

*2 Timothy 2:25-26 Gently instruct those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people's hearts, and they will learn the truth. Then they will come to their senses and escape from the devil's trap. For they have been held captive by him to do whatever he wants. (NLT)*

Secondly, our own perspectives will become distorted. As we elevate ourselves to judge someone, we fail to see that we are just like the people we judge. For example, we may judge others for being spiritually blind and arrogant but in doing so, we prove ourselves to be spiritually blind and arrogant as well, except that we can't see it in ourselves. Here are some other examples.

*Romans 2:1 You may think you can condemn such people, but you are just as bad, and you have no excuse! When you say they are wicked and should be punished, you are condemning yourself, for you who judge others do these very same things. (NLT)*

Have we ever judged anyone for lying to and betraying us? The Bible says that if we don't obey God's commandments, we are also liars and betray God's trust in us to follow Him.

*1 John 2:4 If someone claims, "I know God," but doesn't obey God's commandments, that person is a liar and is not living in the truth. (NLT)*

Have we judged anyone for loving and idolising themselves too much? If we have ever felt dissatisfied and wished to have something that other people have, we have also committed the sin of covetousness, which is idolatry.

*Colossians 3:5 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. (ESV)*

Have we ever judged anyone for having an affair or for two-timing someone they were dating? If we have ever looked at anyone with lust or watched pornography, we are no different. The Bible says that we have committed adultery as well.

*Matthew 5:28 But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (NLT)*

The third trap we fall into is that we will always harvest what we plant. It may not happen immediately, this can take years to bear fruit. We will find that we are prone to do the very things we have judged and despised other people for — particularly they are our parents. We cannot judge and condemn our roots without condemning ourselves in the future. For example, if we judged our parents for committing

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adultery, we may eventually find that we can't seem to break free from unwelcome sexual urges. Or if we judged our parents for always reacting in anger, we may eventually find it hard to control our own tempers when we ourselves are married. The power of such strongholds will be broken when we repent of judging our parents and forgive them in Jesus' name.

*Galatians 6:7-8 Don't be misled—you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant. Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit. (NLT)*

The fourth trap is that we will end up judging ourselves. Once we set a standard by which we judge other people, we will be condemned to the very same laws and rules that we set for others. Let us illustrate this with an example.

*Matthew 12:37 The words you say will either acquit you or condemn you.” (NLT)*

Let's say we judged a friend for having a messy place. We may begin to notice our places are messy too. We can't relax when our own friends come by to visit because we are afraid they will judge us for being messy. We find ourselves constantly cleaning up and tidying our homes.

The fifth trap we fall into is that God will judge us according to the level we judge others. If we are merciful, Jesus will also be merciful to us when He returns to judge all people. The more bitter, unforgiving, judgemental, and condemning we are towards fellow human beings, the more Jesus will judge and condemn us.

*Matthew 7:1-2 “Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged. (NLT)*

### **Traps of sinful judgments**

1. Indirectly glorifies Satan
2. Distorts perspectives
3. Will reap what we plant
4. Will lead us to judge ourselves
5. Will lead to Jesus judging us in equal measure

The sin of judging others should not be taken lightly. It leads to many different evil thoughts and actions, such as bitterness, slander, anger, envy, discrimination, mockery, hatred, racism, murder, genocide, and the list goes on.

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This is not to say that we should let the guilty or criminals off the hook. We are to help the oppressed and seek justice, but first, God tells us to be sure our own hearts are clean before Him.

*Isaiah 1:17 Wash yourselves and be clean! Get your sins out of my sight. Give up your evil ways. Learn to do good. Seek justice. Help the oppressed. Defend the cause of orphans. Fight for the rights of widows. (NLT)*

The Bible shows us that our hearts are the “most deceitful of all things.” We often think that we can make accurate assessments and judgments about people, but there’s often numerous hidden motives in our own hearts that we may not consciously be aware of.

*Jeremiah 17:9-10 “The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is? But I, the LORD, search all hearts and examine secret motives. I give all people their due rewards, according to what their actions deserve.” (NLT)*

For example, the real reason we judge and point out others’ faults may be because we wish to deflect attention away from us, in the hope that it will protect us from some sort of trouble.

Or we judge others in an effort to feel better about ourselves. If we don’t feel good about ourselves, neither should other people have the right to feel good about themselves. Our low self-view makes it hard for us to love others like ourselves, because we don’t love ourselves in the first place.

Sometimes, we judge certain types of people because we have been let down by one of them in the past. When we don’t forgive those who have hurt us, our bitter feelings will lead us to subconsciously judge anyone who reminds us of them.

We may also judge others simply because they have something that we want but can’t get. Our envy leads us to find fault with them, so that we feel better about our own perceived insufficiencies. We try to level out the playing field for ourselves.

If we have a habit of self-hatred, self-rejection, or self-accusation, those patterns will spill over to other people too. We judge others the same way we judge ourselves.

Or we may be perfectionists who want things to be done in the proper way, which often translates into “done *my* way.” So we judge anyone who fails our standards because they don’t do it the right way, which is *our* way.

Finally, we may judge and condemn others because of social pressure. We give in to peer pressure to say mean and unkind things about someone, just to avoid falling out of favour with the people around us and risk being rejected or ridiculed.



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1. Deflection | “Look at their faults, not mine.”
  2. Low view of self | “It makes me feel better about myself.”
  3. Unforgiveness | “Such people always do the same bad things.”
  4. Envy | “I’ll find fault so they don’t seem so good.”
  5. Self-condemnation | “I judge them the same way I judge myself.”
  6. Perfectionism | “Why can’t they do it in the proper (my) way?”
  7. Fear of rejection | “I want to fit in with others.”

Do you recognise any of these possible hidden motives as your own? We may be tempted to think we have never sinned against anyone because we have not acted out on our private thoughts. However, we need to remember that God judges what comes out of our hearts, not just what comes out of our mouths. He will expose all our secret thoughts one day.

God has identified us as His own by placing the Holy Spirit in our hearts. The Holy Spirit comes to purify our hearts and make us more like Jesus. He will convict us when we have judgemental attitudes so that He can purify the intentions and motives of our hearts.

*2 Corinthians 1:22 It is God who enables us, along with you, to stand firm for Christ. He has commissioned us, and he has identified us as his own by placing the Holy Spirit in our hearts as the first installment that guarantees everything he has promised us. (NLT)*

But we grieve the Holy Spirit when our own hearts come up with evil thoughts about other people. Such thoughts defile us spiritually, and we certainly need to watch the attitudes of our hearts.

*Mark 7:20-21 And then he added, “It is what comes from inside that defiles you. For from within, out of a person’s heart, come evil thoughts ... greed, wickedness, deceit, lustful desires, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness.” (NLT)*

A judgmental attitude is not very loving. We find we will be easily annoyed or impatient with those whom we judge and inwardly “roll our eyes” at them. We are quick to jump to conclusions about them, even imagining them behaving in the worst possible way.

We can list all the things in them that we think need fixing. As a result, we find it hard to notice the good things that they do or the changes that God is making in them because we keep focusing on the negative, and we won’t have a habit of asking the Holy Spirit to show us what God thinks about them. If we did, we may be surprised to hear the Holy Spirit tell us that God loves them, that He grieves over their sin and brokenness, and that He wants to save them.

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## A judgmental attitude

1. Easily annoyed and impatient with those we judge
2. Inwardly “rolls our eyes”
3. Quick to jump to conclusions, imagines the worst
4. Lists all the things that need “fixing”
5. Easily misses the good that God created in them
6. Never stops to ask the Holy Spirit, “What do You think about this person, Lord?”

Having said that, not every relationship is healthy for us. We certainly need to build healthy boundaries with people who are particularly toxic but not fall into the sin of condemning them at the same time.

For instance,

1. Emotionally, we need to keep guard over our hearts and not allow ourselves to become blinded by bitterness. Let us forgive people for their offences quickly.
2. Physically, it is always a good idea to keep some distance and have a reliable witness by our side when we meet them in person. Try not to meet anyone toxic on our own.
3. Spiritually, we can ask God to reveal the schemes of the enemy at work in toxic people so that we don't fall into the enemy's traps.

As we come to the close of today's lesson, have you recognised any judgmental tendencies in your heart? We do not honour God when we fall into sinful judgments of other people — or even judgments about ourselves. All judgments belong to Jesus. We should not take over the role that God the Father appointed for Jesus alone.

*Acts 10:42 ... Jesus is the one appointed by God to be the judge of all—the living and the dead. (NLT)*

If you realise that you have been operating out of a place of sinful judgement, rather than of godly discernment and loving grace, here is an opportunity to turn our hearts back to God again. Let's pray this together.

*“Heavenly Father, please forgive me for thinking evil thoughts and speaking unkind, condemning, and even cruel things about anyone, including myself. Even though I felt my judgments were justified at the time, I now acknowledge that only Jesus has the right to judge anyone. I am a sinner who needs Your salvation! I renounce any spirit of judgement, self-righteousness, pride, and spiritual blindness, and command these to leave me. Thank you for Your mercy and grace! In Jesus' name I pray, amen.”*

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We will now run through an exercise that will help us renew our minds and the way we use our words. Please prepare something to write with.

First, please write down a list of those people you have judged in the past, and the things you have judged them for. List the statements that you have made about them. Next, pray for them, asking God to bless them. Refrain from “blessing” them from a place of judgement.

### **Renewing our minds and words**

- Who have you judged and condemned?
- What did you condemn them for?
- Bless them with God’s love and grace.
- Refrain from “blessing” from a place of judgement.

For example, if we have ever judged a friend for being foolish in our eyes, the blessing will not sound like this, *“Father God, please make him less foolish.”*

Rather, it will sound like this, *“Father God, please protect my friend and bring him wise and godly counsel. Please give him good health and good prospects. I bless his family and pray that things will go well with them. Give them a heart to seek You first for all things, including Your wisdom. In Jesus’ name I pray, amen.”*

Take the time to sit with the Holy Spirit and allow Him to bring back memories of people and the unkind condemning words we have spoken over them. Turn your condemnations into blessings, because this pleases God.

Praise God for renewing our minds and teaching us His truths. Here are two reflection questions for you to prepare answers for for your small group discussion. There is also a testimony to watch. We pray that you'll be blessed. See you next time.

### **Time for reflection**

1. What are some typical judgements your family tends to make of other people?
2. How has this affected the way you see people?

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**Watch the testimony for this lesson**



**Personal notes**