

Does taking firm positions on right-and-wrong conduct or lifestyles make Christians or Christianity judgmental? - If so, does being judgmental necessarily make such Christians in some way evil, hypocritical, or bigoted? We will now explore these questions.

First, since most people have some firm positions of what they view as right-or-wrong, whatever the answer is, it must apply to all, and not just to Christians. Second, to answer this properly, we need to be more precise of what we mean by *judgmental*. Scriptures against being judgmental are often mistreated and misunderstood both in the pulpit and in the pews. It is not contrary to Scripture to judge (or discern) between right and wrong conduct, actually, such is required. It is not wrong to introspect our own thoughts and motives to detect (judge) if such are god-like or ungodly, virtuous or evil, actually, such is required (2 Co. 13:5; 1 Co. 11:31). It is not wrong to discern if others are righteous or in the “gall of iniquity”, rather, Scripture explains that such discernment is a gifting and is validated (Ac. 8:22-23; 1 Co. 12:10). One must make sound judgments in life in many areas that involve evaluating (judging) the character of others.

For example, it would be an act of wicked foolishness to expose our children, whom we are responsible to protect, unnecessary to threats of some convicted child molester. This shows how absurd it would be to affirm that we should make no distinctions (evaluations) between people of different characters when making decisions on matters that are properly under our responsibility or authority (1 Ti. 5:8; 3:5; 1 Co. 6:3f). It is entirely scriptural, spiritual and righteous to make such discerning judgments about others (Jn. 7:24). We are required to do so. It would be criminal to knowingly and recklessly expose our children to such dangers. – We must use at least some elementary level of rational sense when reading scriptures about “judgmentalism” within their full context. John the Baptist was imprisoned and later beheaded by Tetrarch Herod Antipas for John’s righteous criticism of Herod’s sexual sins (Lk. 3:18-20). If we were consistent with modern standards, many today would *judge* John as being in the wrong for being *unbiblically judgmental* (bigoted) and would rather align themselves with Herod, *judging* Herod as having been mistreated by John. – That’s quite a twist.

It is however, primarily ‘a hateful spirit of condemning people’ (rather than condemning their misconduct) that is confronted within Scripture (Lk. 6:37). We are required to call people to awareness and repentance of their sins even as we are called to continually acknowledge our own sins and constantly change (Ac. 2:38-40; 5:30; 8:20-22).

Next, does judging between moral issues make one judgmental? – It certainly does and in that proper sense, we MUST be judgmental. Otherwise, we would be promoters of evil. However, in the sense that Scripture forbids judgmentalism, such judgments are NOT contrary to God’s will, and are NOT by any proper use of language, bigotry, hypocrisy or wrongly judgmental. A person who does not distinguish such exhibits mindless, foolish, or sub-rational behavior and promotes amoralism. What may *appear* like judgmentalism to the unenlightened [spiritually blind], often *is* actually wisdom (1 Co. 2:14; Lk. 7:35). Again, it often requires spiritual discernment to distinguish clearly between proper and improper value judgments. This is because ‘proper’ value judgments are primarily *spiritually* and ‘improper’ are *fleshly* discerned (1 Co. 2:13-16), yet let us do all things in humility and love (2 Ti. 2:25). Continued . . .

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