**One of Man’s Greatest Problems:**

* Man lives on the assumption that this is the only life and the only world.
* Even Christians, with our beliefs, often know the previous premise to not be true; however, **there is a great difference between knowing a thing and really being governed and guided by that knowledge** in our ordinary life and outlook.

**What Differentiates God’s People from Others**:

* Is it not that we **go through life and walk day by day with the consciousness of our eternal destiny**? Life for the Christian is transient (brief) and passing away, a type of preparatory school for the age to come.
* Mankind does not care about his eternal future for the most part, and views this life as though this is the only life.

**Chapter 7 of the Sermon on the Mount’s Main Theme**:

* During our life, we are all undergoing a process of judgement the whole time, because we are being prepared for the final judgement; and as Christian people **we should do all things with that idea uppermost in our minds**, remembering that we shall all have to render an account.

**The Command**: ‘Judge Not’ – Don’t Judge.

* **Doesn’t this contradict verse 6**? Without making a judgement how would one know who is a “dog” not worthy of the “pearls before pigs.” – *Discussion further next week*.

**Don’t Judge Other Christians** - 1 Corin. 4:5

**Judge Other Christians** - 1 Corin. 5:12

* Well which is it? Is Paul contradicting himself?

**What is Being Meant:**

* There are somethings we must not Judge! & - There are somethings we can Judge!

**Do not Judge:**

* **1 Corin. 4:5** “the hidden…purposes of the heart”
* We must not assume sin even if we suspect sin (suspicions are often bias). Just because we may have concern for people’s decisions, actions, perspectives, words, or personalities, **we cannot let our mere assumptions turn into truth** (unless there is **explicit sin**).
* **1 Corin. 4:5** “do not pronounce judgement before the time”
* Paul says this about a debate among Corinthian Christians over whether Paul, Apollos, or Peter was the most authoritative apostle. - Let’s read **1 Corin**. 1:11-12; 3:3-4.

**Question:** What was this Debate About?

* We are never told exactly what they were debating about. We know that 1st the Corinthians **did have personal knowledge of and experience** with these apostles. 2nd we can infer that they, like we all do**, likely judged leaders based on their observations and experiences**.
* Let’s read **1 Corin. 3:6-9**. Paul was a “planter” Apollos was a “waterer.”
* Perhaps some simply much preferred Apollos or Peter to Paul (the were likely more pastoral versus Paul’s missionary approach). They might have preferred certain personalities more than others as well as possibly there: rhetorical (speech style) and pedagogical (teaching style) styles, theological emphasis, and may have exercised or emphasized different spiritual gifts.
* Perhaps some misunderstood something Paul said or did and took offense.
* Perhaps the “super-apostles” (**2 Corin. 11:5**) had slandered Paul, but not Apollos or Peter.
	+ Either way clearly some Corinthians Christians judged Paul unfairly, and had called into question his ministry and character (**1 Corin. 4:3**).

**Let’s be Honest:**

* We all have done this, and we all do this. Often times we move fast from *misunderstanding* or *disagreement* to concern, then to *suspicion*, and then to judgment. Our assumptions often lead us from perceiving smoke, to assuming fire (making a judgement).

**Jesus’ Words - John 7:24**: **24**Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.”

**We Should Judge:**

* We can judge explicitly sinful behavior of a professing Christian.
* The hidden sinful purposes of the heart reveal themselves when a person explicitly sins.
* Later in **1 Corin. 5:3** Paul, even though not present, passes judgement on a man who engaged in sexual immorality (a son sleeping with his stepmother). And he also instructs others to pass judgement on him too (**1 Corin. 5:12-13**).

**Be Careful:**

1. Judgement does not mean *condemning* people, *slandering* people, *gossiping* to others about people, but rather **calling a brother or sister to repentance**. Such judgement is a grace, and an expression of God’s kindness (**Rom. 2:4**). Judgement of a brother or sister in sin, even in church discipline (**Matt. 18:15-17**) is always with the purpose of redemption and reconciliation not damnation (**1 Corin. 5:4-5**).
2. Be slow to Judge, keep reminded of **Matt. 7:1** “Judge not, that you be not judged.”

**Then Jesus Gives Us Reasons not to Judge**:

**1st –** Jesus’ warns against a quick willingness to judge others. For you will be judged by the same measure in which you judge them. It is an appeal for a merciful spirit (**Gal. 6:1**) even when one sins.

**2nd –** Jesus’ warns against the person who consistently looks for the faults of others while ignoring their own faults, which might even be the more obvious fault. Prioritize your own spiritual welfare and correction!

**How to Identify that you might have a Tendency of Being Judgmental**:

1. Do you look or notice the negative often? Even in positive things, do you tend to always see the negative. The hypercritical spirit isn’t happy until it finds faults.
2. Do you have a readiness to pass judgement? Even when the situation or matter is of no real importance to you.
3. Do you express knowledge about subjects with haste, without truly investigating facts?
4. Do you often times judge without caring to understand one’s circumstances, and rarely ready to excuse people or offer mercy.
5. Do you often put your preferences/prejudice/bias/opinion in the place of principle?