

1 Corinthians 11:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

Analysis

For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged—Prevention of divine judgment through self-judgment. Εἰ δὲ ἑαυτοὺς διεκρίνομεν (if we would judge/discern ourselves)—conditional sentence (contrary to fact): if we had judged ourselves (but we didn't). Diakrinomai (same root as 'discerning' in v. 29) means critically evaluate, sift, distinguish. Self-judgment involves recognizing sin, repenting, reconciling, and correcting behavior.

We should not be judged (οὐκ ἂν ἐκρινόμεθα)—by God. Divine judgment is avoidable through self-examination and repentance. This isn't works-righteousness but covenant faithfulness—those in Christ are called to walk worthy of their calling (Ephesians 4:1). God's fatherly discipline (v. 32) is corrective, not punitive, but it's still real. Proactive self-judgment (v. 28) prevents reactive divine judgment (v. 30). This principle applies beyond the Table: Christians must examine themselves in all areas (2 Corinthians 13:5, Galatians 6:4), confess sin (1 John 1:9), and pursue holiness (Hebrews 12:14).

Historical Context

Jewish Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) emphasized self-examination and confession to avoid divine judgment. Jesus taught self-judgment to avoid hypocrisy (Matthew 7:1-5, remove plank from your own eye). Paul extends this: self-judgment prevents divine discipline. Early church practices included regular confession (James 5:16), mutual accountability (Galatians 6:1-2), and church discipline for

unrepentant sin (Matthew 18:15-20). Self-judgment was communal, not merely individual—the body helps members see blind spots.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What does biblical self-judgment look like practically—how do you examine yourself without becoming morbidly introspective?
2. How does self-judgment relate to God's judgment—can we really avoid divine discipline through self-examination?
3. What role does the church community play in helping individuals practice self-judgment and accountability?

Interlinear Text

εἰ	γὰρ	ἑαυτοὺς	διεκρίνομεν	οὐκ	ἂν	ἐκρινόμεθα·
if	For	ourselves	we would judge	not	we should	be judged
G1487	G1063	G1438	G1252	G3756	G302	G2919

Additional Cross-References

1 John 1:9 (Parallel theme): If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 Corinthians 11:28 (Parallel theme): But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

Revelation 2:5 (Parallel theme): Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

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