

Matthew 7:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Judge not, that ye be not judged.

Analysis

Jesus commands 'Judge not, that ye be not judged' (Greek: μὴ κρίνετε, ἵνα μὴ κριθῆτε, 'do not judge, so that you may not be judged'). The verb κρίνω means 'judge, condemn, evaluate.' Context clarifies this isn't prohibiting all moral discernment (7:15-20 requires judging false prophets) but condemning hypocritical, harsh, self-righteous condemnation. The passive construction 'be judged' (divine passive) indicates God as judge who will judge us by the standard we apply to others. This establishes reciprocity principle - the measure we use determines the measure applied to us. The command targets censorious judgment that ignores one's own failures.

Historical Context

Jewish legal tradition involved careful judgment regarding Torah observance. However, rabbis also warned against harsh judgment. Rabbi Hillel taught 'Judge not your fellow until you have come into his place.' Jesus echoes yet radicalizes this wisdom. His teaching targets Pharisaical tendency toward judgmental legalism that burdened others while justifying self. The principle of measure-for-measure judgment appears throughout Scripture (Obadiah 15, James 2:13). Early Christians struggled with judgmental divisions (Romans 14:1-13, 1 Corinthians 4:5).

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What is the difference between righteous discernment and prohibited judgmental condemnation?
2. How does recognizing we'll be judged by the standard we apply affect our judgment of others?
3. In what areas are you most tempted to harshly judge others while excusing yourself?

Interlinear Text

μὴ κριθῆτε· ἵνα μὴ κριθῆτε·
not Judge G2443 not Judge G2919
G3361 G2919 G3361 G2919

Additional Cross-References

Luke 6:37 (Judgment): Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:

Luke 6:41 (Parallel theme): And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

Matthew 7:5 (Parallel theme): Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

Matthew 7:2 (Judgment): For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

James 3:1 (Parallel theme): My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

Isaiah 66:5 (Parallel theme): Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.

