

Do Not Judge By Appearance

James 2:1-5

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Introduction

1. Read or quote James 2:1-13.
2. Respect of persons must have been a sin in the early church.
3. Our text deals with the general subject of respect of persons.
 - a. Verse 1 - gives the precept
 - b. Verses 2 – 4 give an illustration from life
 - c. Verses 5 – 11 give reasons why such is sinful
 - d. Verses 12 – 13 give the conclusion
4. The method of study is as follows:
 - a. The exegesis of James 2:1 – 4
 - b. What does judging mean?
 - c. Judging the Bible does not forbid
 - d. Judging the Bible does forbid
 - e. Some reasons why judging is forbidden
 - f. Some examples of judging according to appearance
 - g. Conclusion

Discussion

- I. The Exegesis of James 2:1 – 4
 - A. My brethren (in one form or another, used 15 times)
 - B. “Have not the faith” is the whole of the Christian faith (Acts 6:17; Gal. 1:23; Jude 3)
 1. Root idea is favoritism (Psa. 82:2)
 2. It is shown “because of advantage” (Jude 16)
 - C. “For if these come into your assembly.”
 1. Synagogue – technical term for group meeting for worship
 2. The fact it was being shown in the assembly shows there is no place safe from temptation.
 - D. “A man with a gold ring in goodly apparel.”
 1. James is concerned how the Christians act when great persons enter the assembly.
 2. We must give no one more attention than God.
 - E. “A poor man in vile raiment”
 - F. “Are ye not then partial in yourselves...”
- II. What Does it Mean to Judge?
 - A. It denotes to separate, determine, and pronounce judgment. Several uses:
 1. First, to assume the office of a judge (Matt. 7:1)
 2. Second, it means to give sentence (Acts 15:19)
 3. Third, it means to condemn (John 12:48)

- III. What Judging Does the Bible Not Forbid?
- A. First, it does not forbid our recognizing and exposing false teachers (I John 4:1; 2 Pet. 2:1).
 - B. Second, it does not forbid rebuking sin in order to restore a brother (Gal. 6:1).
 - C. Third, it does not forbid disciplinary judgment necessary in withdrawal of fellowship (I Cor. 5:1-3).
 - D. Fourth, it does not forbid judging between brethren over matters in this life (I Cor. 6:4-5).
 - E. Fifth, the judgment of civil authorities is not forbidden (Rom. 13:1-4).
 - F. Sixth, it does not forbid fruit inspecting (Matt. 7:15 – 20).
- IV. What Judging Does the Bible Forbid?
- A. First, it forbids rash, censorious judgment.
 1. We are not to have a critical attitude.
 2. We are not to sit as judges and decide within ourselves the guilt of others.
 3. We are not to decide on the basis of hearsay.
 - B. Second, the Lord warns against a certain type of spirit.
 1. It is a spirit that shows readiness to judge when the matter is no concern to us at all.
 2. We express our opinions about others who are not even connected with us.
 3. It is a hypocritical spirit in that it puts prejudice in place of principle.
 4. It expresses an opinion short of the facts.
 5. It is never ready to excuse.
- V. Reasons Why Some Judging is Forbidden
- A. First, when we judge, we expose ourselves both to judgment from God and man (Matt. 7:1).
 - B. Second, by judging we set our own standard (Matt. 7:2; Rom. 2:1).
 - C. Third, we are incapable of judging (Matt. 7:3 – 5).
 - D. Fourth, we cannot always know the motive behind a deed.
 - E. Fifth, we are controlled too much by custom, tradition.
 - F. Sixth, we cannot always know the facts in each situation.
- VI. Some Examples of Judging According to Appearance.
- A. First, Eli judged Hannah by appearance (I Sam. 1:1 – 13).
 - B. Second, Israel judged Reuben and Gad according to appearance (Num. 32:1-42).
 - C. Third, Samuel made a judgment according to appearance (I Sam. 16:6 – 7)
 - D. Fourth, Jesus healed an impotent man on the Sabbath and it appeared to be a violation of the Sabbath (John 5:8 – 18; cf. John 7:14 – 24).
 - E. Fifth, Paul was accused of taking Greeks into the temple on the basis of what was assumed (Acts 21:27 – 29).
 - F. Sixth, some judge according to appearance to cover their own sins (Rom. 2:1).
 - G. Seventh, some judge preachers by appearance. “He’s trying to make a name for himself.”

Conclusion

1. Judging according to appearances is definitely forbidden.
2. God commands righteous judgment (John 7:24).