

"JUDGEMENT CALL" : A SERIES OF DVD MESSAGES BY ANDY STANLEY

Message One : Eye to Eye, viewed at FBC on Sunday 15 March 2009

INTRODUCTION

Why do we find it so easy to judge others? And is it ever appropriate to confront someone about sin?

In this message by Andy Stanley, we learn what Jesus said about the subject of judging others : when we're tempted to pass judgement on someone else, we need to stop and look at our own lives first and examine whether there's a trace of the same sin in us.

One of the most commonly held beliefs about the bible is that it teaches us not to judge one another. But is this true? Are there times when it is wrong *not* to judge? If so what guidelines does the bible provide for judging others?

Andy Stanley serves as senior pastor of North Point Ministries (www.northpoint.org). He and his wife Sandra, have two sons and the most delightful third child, a daughter.

This is the first of a four-part series about the confusing and often misunderstood topic of judging others.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

The dynamic of forming an opinion and judging those in our lives can become so destructive : in relationships; at work; between parent and child; in marriages; in society generally....and not least of all, in assemblies of the saints. 'Church-people' tend to become judgemental. We may all at some time have judged others....and been judged.

Judging others generally does not result in the judged person feeling he or she has benefited in any way and should change but rather like running in the opposite direction! So, because the church is not getting it right, there's no willingness to become like those who attend church but rather a strong aversion to joining them.

Jesus speaks into this situation.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

In **Matthew Chapter 7 verses 1 – 5** we find the following passage as it appears in the NIV translation:

"1. Do not judge, or you too will be judged. 2. For in the same way as you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. 3. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? 4. How can you say to your brother 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? 5. You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."

Jesus' point in the first two verses is *not* that there are no people in the world who are in need of correction. Rather, this is His way of saying: "I want you to apply the golden rule

to your judgement. I want you to judge others as you would have them judge you but, more importantly, want you to judge others in the way you want your heavenly Father to judge you."

Should you want others to 'cut you some slack' when they are forming an opinion about your behaviour (and don't we all?) then that's fine; but just be sure you are prepared to do the same when you form an opinion about the behaviour of those you judge.

Then Jesus makes the point in verses 3 and 4: why are we so intent on looking for the sin in another before examining ourselves first for the same sin in us?

The reason, Andy says, is because we mistakenly believe we are so insightful and pure and in sync with God's righteousness that we have more clarity about them than they have about themselves!

Jesus says that when I see something in you that bothers me, I need to look in the mirror and examine what God wants me to deal with in my life. What is it in you that reflects back on me? In those moments that you are so sure that the other person may be so much at fault, when self-righteousness wells up and 'you can quote nine of the ten commandments', what you see in that other person is probably a reflection of something that you have to deal with in your own life.

Jesus is not saying that there is no cause to form an opinion about others. What he is saying is that our first response when we feel moved to condemn another should be to look at ourselves. If that is our response, we will be better off and they will be better off.

Jesus calls those who do not follow this approach 'hypocrites' (v.5). If you're too insecure, too self-righteous, too confident in your position to do what Jesus says, you're a hypocrite.

ANDY'S 'OUTLINER'

The fact that I have come to terms with my own sin, through personal reflection, makes me a perfect candidate to talk to somebody else about theirs.

Only once we have looked at ourselves, do we become qualified to take up the sin we see in others, with them.

Until I look at myself, I'm just going to drive the person in whom I see fault deeper into the behaviour that is going on in his or her life.

When I'm tempted to pass judgement on you I need to stop and look and see if there's not a trace of the same thing in me. That way, Jesus says, I will not behave like a hypocrite.

THE CUE TO LOOK FOR

The trick to getting it right is that you need to pay attention to the specific emotion that their sin elicits in you. Does their sin make you angry? Anger is your issue, not theirs. Does their sin make you jealous? Until you strip away your jealousy, you're not a candidate to help her. Sometimes we look at someone else's sin and it's threatening to

us. That's your issue, that's your log, something you've got to deal with. Until we deal with our fear, our issue, we're just going to judge and drive them away. Sometimes what you see in them is the very issue you need to deal with in your own life.

ANOTHER CATEGORY

As one who may have sat in the seat of him or her who has felt judged and has resisted this, perhaps you need to consider whether the person who is trying to reach you has not been exactly where you are and that they love you too much to leave you alone.

APPLICATION

Do you as a father feel your son treats you with disrespect? Have you considered the need he has to have his decision-making ability respected by you?

Do you as a wife feel you're not being treated as the most important person in your husband's life? Have you considered whether you treat him that way?

Do you as a mother have preconceived notions about your daughter's behaviour : her late-nights and 'the state' she comes home in? Have you considered how important it is for her to receive recognition from you that she is trusted, for her to live up to your expectations?

Do you as a boss feel that a subordinate is not pulling his or her weight? Have you considered whether you're setting the best and most inspiring example you could?

Do you as a friend or brother or sister find fault with members of your circle of friends or siblings? Have you considered how you are falling short in those relationships?

EXERCISE

Identify a relationship in which you have adopted a critical stance. Define the criticism you have of the other person or persons in the relationship. Examine closely and prayerfully whether there is not in your makeup something of the very element that you are finding so detestable in the person or persons who are the object of your criticism.

When you've done this exercise, Jesus says, you'll be so much more effective in talking into the life or lives of those you find are with fault. Nothing good will otherwise come of any criticism you may feel is warranted. All you'll do is drive them further into the behaviour that is going on in their lives.