

The Problem of Fault-Finding

Introduction

1. One of the problems of the Christian life is "The Problem Of Fault-Finding."
 - a. This is a real problem for the unconverted masses of humanity.
 - b. Becoming a Christian does not cause this problem to vanish.
2. It is a problem for a number of reasons.
 - a. It is impossible to live without fault-finding (criticism).
 - b. Jesus condemned it. (Matt. 7:1, 2). See Jas. 4:11,12

Matt. 7:1 "Do not judge so that you will not be judged.

Matt. 7:2 "For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.

Jas. 4:11 Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge *of it*.

Jas. 4:12 There is *only* one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor?

- c. Fault-finding hurts our relationship with others.
 - 1) What we call constructive criticism is not always constructive, and rarely received as constructive.
 - 2) We must constantly be looking for good, and be very cautious in criticizing others.
- d. It hurts others.
 - 1) Feelings
 - 2) Self-image
 - 3) Financially
 - 4) Productively
 - 5) Desire to do good
- e. God is light and the Christian walks in the light. (1 Jn. 1:5, 7).
 - 1) Walking in the light means Christians must discern between light and darkness, good and evil and abhor evil. (Heb. 5:14; Rom. 12:9).

Heb. 5:14 But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

Rom. 12:9 *Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.*

2) This discernment involves judgments.

3) It also involves criticisms.

4) How can we make judgments without violating the word “Judge not”?

f. Criticism can become a nasty, habitual habit.

1) Some cannot get through a day without numerous criticisms and some are very harsh.

2) This nasty habit most often leads to a negative personality that has a great impact on the person and others.

The Christian And Fault-Finding

1. The New Testament commands some judging.

a. Judgments of the civil courts. (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-17).

b. Judgments of the church. (1 Cor. 5:1-13; Matt. 18:15-17).

c. Refusing false teachers. (1 Jn. 4:1; Matt. 7:15; 1 Thess. 5:21.)

d. Personal judgments. (Matt. 7:6, 20; 3 Jn. 9; Tit. 3:10, 11).

1) See Matt. 5:42; 2 Thess. 3:10 - who to help

2) See Matt. 7:13,14; 18:15-17 - judging between two roads, judging two brothers at odds

e. Recognizing and disapproving the faults of others. (Gal. 6:1; Jas. 5:19, 20).

f. Preachers are commanded to reprove and rebuke and exhort. (2 Tim. 4:2).

g. Elders must stop the mouths of false teachers and guard the flock. (Tit. 1:10, 11; Acts 20:28-30).

2. The New Testament condemns harsh judgment and fault-finding. (Matt. 7:1-5; Jas. 4:11,12).

a. Condemning others when doing the same thing. (Rom. 2:1-2, 22).

b. Condemning others with lesser faults. (Matt. 7:1, 2).

1) The Jewish leaders condemned Jesus for healing on the sabbath, but would cheat widows. (Matt. 23:14).

2) The Jewish leaders condemned the disciples for not washing hands, but refused to honor parents. (Matt. 15:1-6).

3) They condemned others who had been forgiven.

4) They condemned others for doing what is lawful and some in Paul’s day were doing the same.

• Eating meat offered to idols. (Rom. 14:3).

Rom. 14:3 The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him.

- Observing days (Rom. 14:5).

Rom. 14:5 One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind.

- c. Condemning others without knowing all the facts (hasty judgments) based on guessing, hear-say, prejudice, etc.
- d. Condemning the motives and sincerity of others.
 - "He's not sincere."
 - "He never tried."
 - "I don't trust his motives"
 - "I don't like the way he looks."
- e. Condemning others in uncharitable, malicious, slanderous manner. (Jas. 2:13).

Causes of Criticism

1. An effort to divert attention from one's own sins.
2. An unmerciful spirit delights in hurting others.
3. An effort to justify one's own sinful life and console a biting conscience.
4. An intent to build up oneself while tearing down another. (Lk.18:9-14).
5. Envy and hatred.
 - a. Envy of another's success leads to fault-finding.
 - b. Hatred or dislike of another distorts and blinds a person to the good in others.
6. Prejudice leads to criticism.
 - a. Race
 - b. Education
 - c. Custom and cultural differences
 - d. Wealth
 - e. Appearance

f. A conscious or unconscious feeling of perfection.

Why Is It So Unjust To Judge Others?

1. We never fully know the circumstances of others; yea, all the facts in the case.
 - a. We usually know only some of the facts.
 - b. We usually do not know the motives of others and our judgments may be clouded with fallacious conclusions based on our opinions or the opinions of others.
 - c. We may even get people confused and apply our fallible judgments to the wrong person.
2. It is next to impossible to be impartial in our judgments.
 - a. Personal bias or prejudice
 - b. Custom
 - c. Close relationships often affect objectively.
 - d. Pride in one's hunches or guessing ability.
3. Not everything we condemn in others is actually sin.
 - a. Hannah was accused of being drunken, but she was not. (1 Sam. 1:12-13).

1 Sam. 1:12 Now it came about, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli was watching her mouth.
1 Sam. 1:13 As for Hannah, she was speaking in her heart, only her lips were moving, but her voice was not heard. So Eli thought she was drunk.

b. Jesus was accused of blasphemy, but he was not guilty. (Mk. 2:7).

Mark 2:7 "Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?"

c. Jesus was condemned for healing on the Sabbath day, but it was not wrong to do good on the Sabbath. (Jn. 5:17; Matt. 12:12).

Jn. 5:17 But He answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working."

Matt. 12:12 "How much more valuable then is a man than a sheep! So then, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."

4. The right to judge is not ours, but the Lord's. (1 Cor. 4:3-5; Rom. 14:4, 10-13; Jas. 4:11, 12).

1 Cor 4:3 But to me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you, or by {any} human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself.

1 Cor 4:4 For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord.

1 Cor 4:5 Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, {but wait} until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of {men's} hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.

Rom 14:4 Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

Rom 14:10 But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.

Rom 14:11 For it is written, "AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD."

Rom 14:12 So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.

Rom 14:13 Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this--not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way. **See Rom. 14:1-6**

Jas 4:11 Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge {of it.}

Jas 4:12 There is {only} one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor?

- a. It is the Lord's place to judge.
 - b.. It is our place to obey the Lord and do His will.
 - c. It is our place to proclaim His word.
5. We see only the outward man, not the inward man. (2 Cor. 4:16-18).
- a. We do not see their motives, intents, inner battles, and desires.
 - b. They may be penitent., and seeking God's forgiveness and strength.

The Remedy For Judging

1. Love (1 Cor. 13:7).

1 Cor 13:7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

- a. "Love covers a multitude of sins." (1 Pet. 4:8).
- b. The faults of others will appear thick if our love for them is thin.
- c. True love makes us more cautious in our criticism of others.

2. Consider how despicable judging is. (Matt. 7:3).

Matt. 7:3 "Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?"

- a. Habitual criticisms make one loathsome to others.
- b. It causes us to look ridiculous to others especially if we do the same or worse things ourselves.

3. Practice the golden rule. (Matt. 7:12).

Matt. 7:12 "In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the

Prophets.”

- a. None of us want much or any criticism.
- b. We may be willing to accept some constructive criticism done in a loving and kind manner.

4. Self-examination (1 Cor. 11:28; 2 Cor. 13:5).

1 Cor. 11:28 But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup

2 Cor. 13:5 Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you-unless indeed you fail the test?

- a. We need to test and examine ourselves.
- b. If we carefully examines ourselves, we will be more charitable to others.
- c. We will not look for motes (specks) when we have a beam (log) in our own eyes.

1) NASB and NIV have “speck.”

2) The Greek word “karphos” [**kahr** fahs] means “speck, chip, a dry stalk or trig,” that is, something small.

5. Look for the good in others.

- a. Emphasize the positive rather than the black dot on a white sheet of paper.
- b. Be like a bee and concentrate on the sweet and beautiful rather than like the buzzard who concentrates on the dead and foul.

6. Ask God for help in overcoming this sin. (Matt. 7:7).

- a. We need God’s help in overcoming this sin and every sin.
- b. Fault-finding can become an addiction and all addictions are hard, not impossible, to overcome.

7. Consider how much hurt one inflicts upon the heart of the one harshly judged.

- a. Criticism can crush others.
- b. It destroys self-image and confidence.
- c. It keeps others in depression and despair.

8. Put yourself in the other person's shoes.

9. Remember that our judgments are often wrong. (Jn. 1:46; Acts 15:36-41).

Jn. 1:46 Nathanael said to him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

Acts 15:36 After some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us return and visit the brethren in every city in which we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are."

Acts 15:37 Barnabas wanted to take John, called Mark, along with them also.

Acts 15:38 But Paul kept insisting that they should not take him along who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work.

Acts 15:39 And there occurred such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus.

Acts 15:40 But Paul chose Silas and left, being committed by the brethren to the grace of the Lord.

Acts 15:41 And he was traveling through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

10. Consider what judging does to a person.

a. Blinds to own faults. (Matt. 7:1-6; Lk.18:9-14).

b. Destroys friendships.

c. Blinds one to the virtues of others

d. Robs one of happiness.

1) No one can live a happy and meaningful life on a diet of negatives.

2) No one can live a happy and meaningful life without seeing the good in others.

e. Arrogance and a judgmental attitude makes it difficult to repent and confess as we are required to do. (1 Jn. 1:8-10).

11. Remember we will be judged with the same judgment we render. (Matt. 7:2). See Rom. 2:21,22.

a. We reap what we have sown. (Gal. 6:7,8; Matt. 5:7; Jas. 2:13; Matt. 18:31-35).

b. Remember the mud thrower will get plastered.

12. Remember we will give account for our words and if we are unmerciful will receive no mercy from God. (Matt.12:36,37; Jas. 2:13).

Matt. 12:36 "But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment.

Matt. 12:37 "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

Jas. 2:13 For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

Conclusion

1. The Christian should be very cautious with his criticisms.

2. It is much better to encourage and praise and look for the good in others.

"Scripture taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE®,
© Copyright 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation

Used by permission." (www.Lockman.org)