

**FOR YOUR OWN STUDY**

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# THE STAGES OF RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT

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- The Apostle Paul in his first letter to the church at Corinth, summarizes the three stages of righteous judgment that the Lord uses to correct and discipline His children.
- I Corinthians 11:31, 32 “For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.”

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- The first stage is self-judgment, where we submit to the correction that the indwelling Holy Spirit brings. Personal conviction of sin and judgment from the Holy Spirit may manifest through an inward witness, His still small voice, or the Holy Scripture that He inspired men to write.
- John 16:8 “And when He (the Helper) has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”

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- II Timothy 3:16, 17 “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”
- If we fail to judge ourselves about a matter over a period of time, the Lord will judge us by His chastening hand, which is the second stage of righteous judgment. Whether it is a parent, a teacher, or minister, the Lord will usually use His delegated authority to bring this type of correction to us.

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- If we do not submit to His delegated authority's discipline and correction, there are other more severe forms of judgment that the Lord may allow in our lives so that we might repent.
- These judgments may include sickness or some other type of loss or life-shaking event. For example, the Apostle Paul decreed a severe yet righteous judgment upon a person in the Corinthian church who was having sexual intercourse with his father's wife.

# THE FOUNDATION FOR RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT

- The foundation for all righteous judgment is God given authority. Without being granted authority from God over a person, all judgments become unrighteous. For example, a parent is given authority to righteously judge his child, an employer his employee, a pastor his congregant, a king his subjects.
- Romans 13:1 “Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore, whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.”.

# THE FOUNDATION FOR RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT

- If there is any question whatsoever regarding one's authority in a relationship, ask the following questions. Am I in some way responsible for this person? Do they answer to me and will I have to answer to God for their life? If the answer to these questions is "Yes", then we have a responsibility to not only protect this person, but also to correct or judge them when necessary.
- Today, in the church there is a famine for the righteous judgment of God similar to what the Apostle Paul experienced and related in his first letter to the Corinthian church. The Corinthian leaders refused to confront and rebuke a fornicator, who was a member of their church (I Corinthians 5:1)

# CHARACTERISTICS OF RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT

- Having laid the foundation for righteous judgment, we can now discover the characteristics of righteous and unrighteous judgment. The New Testament has many scriptures exhorting us not to engage in unrighteous judgment (Romans 14:10-13, James 4:11, 12).
- Matthew 7:1 “Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged, and with the same measure you use, it will be measured back to you.”
- Romans 2:1 “Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself.”

# CHARACTERISTICS OF RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT

- The spirit of righteous judgment is the fear of the Lord. Jesus delighted himself in the fear of the Lord and because of this did “not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears”, but judged righteously (Isaiah 11:3, 4).
- On the contrary, unrighteous judgment is characterized by a haughty spirit. Similarly, the fruit of those who fear the Lord and execute righteous judgment is humility, whereas the fruit of the haughty, who judge unjustly, is pride.
- Proverbs 8:13 “The fear of the Lord is to hate evil. Pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate.”

# CHARACTERISTICS OF RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT

- Righteous judgment is motivated by selfless submission. The Bible says, “The Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son” (John 5:22). Jesus’ judgment is just and righteous because He is not self-seeking, but completely submitted to the will of the Father.
- John 5:30 “I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father Who sent Me.”

# CHARACTERISTICS OF RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT

- In contrast, selfish ambition is the motivation behind unrighteous judgment. Immature revilers attempt to exalt themselves by criticizing others. This behavior often backfires, not only exposing the darkened heart of the accuser, but also bringing them humiliation.
- The ministry of righteous judgment is intercession, whereas the ministry of unrighteous judgment is accusation (Hebrews 7:25).

# CHARACTERISTICS OF RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT

- Revelation 12:10 “The accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.”
- Romans 8:26 “Likewise the Spirit also helps us in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”

# CHARACTERISTICS OF RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT

- The trademark of a true prophet is intercession. Prophets must have God's heart towards His people, before they can accurately communicate God's message for His people. Obtaining the heart of God for His people comes through intercession.
- Jeremiah 27:18 “But if they are prophets, and if the word of the Lord is with them, let them now make intercession to the Lord of Hosts.”

# CHARACTERISTICS OF RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT

- Righteous and unrighteous judgments have both personal and corporate missions. The personal mission for righteous judgment is repentance and restoration, whereas unrighteous judgment seeks to bring condemnation.
- Galatians 6:1 “If a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.”
- The corporate mission for righteous judgment is to promote unity. On the contrary, the corporate mission for unrighteous judgment is division. It follows that the motto for righteous judgment is “Unite and Prosper”, and the motto for unrighteous judgment is “Divide and Conquer”

# CHARACTERISTICS OF RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT

- Proverbs 16:19 “These six things the Lord hates, seven are an abomination to Him . . . one who sows discord among brethren.”
- Unrighteous judgment is a plague that deters the unity of the Spirit from becoming a reality in the Church, and keeps the world from believing in Christ.