

# If We Judge Ourselves We Will Not Be Judged

by Annie Poonen

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of self-reflection and judging oneself in the light of God's love and mercy. It discusses the need to be prepared for the last days, to purify oneself daily, and to have a heart of flame for God, a heart of love for others, and a heart of steel towards oneself. The sermon highlights the dangers of judging others, the significance of God's judgment, and the gentle way in which God convicts and guides us to change.*

**Duration:** 34:53

**Scripture:** Psalms 139:23, 1 John 3:3, Matthew 7:1, James 2:12, Romans 14:10, Psalms 33:13

**Topics:** "Self-Reflection", "God's Love and Mercy"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Shall we have a word of prayer? Oh Lord, our Heavenly Father, we present thank you for this time when we can come again and spend some time in your presence, Lord. Lord, we come with great need in our heart and we want to open our lives to you, Lord, you who search all our hearts and our innermost beings. We pray that you speak to us.

We humble ourselves, Lord, and we come to you and we pray that you speak to each one of us and make this time a blessing to all of us, Lord. We ask these things in Jesus' precious name, Amen. We've been hearing in these days different things about, which remind us that these are the last days.

Every day we hear something new which is happening in the world, some part of the world, some sickness, war, calamity, terrorism, all kinds of things. And we know that we are definitely coming towards the end of the age that Jesus warned us about these last days. And we've heard many meetings and exhortations which remind us to be prepared, like we are getting ready for a final examination, how we can be prepared for those.

You know, when I was a student, when we used to think of getting ready for the last days, one thing which we all were interested in was, what are the signs of the last days? Is this happening, that happening, or is it still some more? Or we would think that, oh, the last days, time is running out. We should run and bring more souls into God's kingdom. We should witness, we should work hard.

What are we doing, lazily sitting here and thinking that we are saved and we are going to go to heaven? What about the perishing, lost? We should do something about that. And we've been getting into a lot of frenzy trying to do that. But over the years, we've heard that, yeah, that is good.

We must share the good news with our loved ones, especially who are not yet ready to meet the Lord and many others who we come in contact with. We have a burden for that and we must pray and we use every opportunity to bring them and tell them about the Lord's kingdom and the last days and to be ready to get into that kingdom. But we've been hearing the meetings, there's something more which we need to do.

And after hearing that, I find that in every book of the New Testament, that is to be ready, to be alert, to be watchful in prayer, and especially to judge ourselves, to purify ourselves. If we have the hope of the Lord's return, we will purify ourselves. That's in 1 John 3, 3. So many verses are there about getting ourselves ready, like the wise virgins who trimmed their lamps and had oil in the vessels, extra oil to be watchful and prayerful, all those things.

So I find that is the need for us. One thing we have to always remember that we need to be judging ourselves. And that's what I want to talk about today.

Before, we used to look forward to the New Year's Eve meetings. Those of us who've grown up in Christian homes, we used to look forward to the New Year's Eve meeting where we would have a watch night service, and we look back on the past year, and maybe we'd ask God to search our hearts. And then the Lord would show us things that we have to set right and confess.

And it'd be like a time of revival. Or sometimes we would attend some special meetings and the Lord would speak to us, and we would say, yeah, I have to set this right. But as we've been hearing more and more messages about getting ready, we know it's not a yearly habit or a habit that we have to do once in a week.

But a daily cleansing is like the tears in our eyes, which always keep eyes washed and cleansed. We don't have to wait for some dust to get into our eyes for the tears to start working. Throughout the day, the tears are just cleaning our eyes and washing our eyes so that our vision is clear.

And it's the same way in our spiritual lives, not just in the evening when we come to the Lord, but throughout the day, the Lord will convict us if our conscience is alert. And the more we sharpen our conscience and quicken our conscience, the Lord will show us. According to how much we can bear, if the Lord were to show us everything that we need to know, it'd be too much for us.

But he shows us a little bit at a time, as much as we can bear and say, my child, that thought which you had about somebody, it's not been a good thought. Put it away. Don't think like that about the others.

Don't judge somebody without knowing the whole truth. And that word that you spoke to that person, that was not the right way to speak. Or maybe you spoke about someone behind her back or his back, that was not right.

And the Lord keeps on showing. You know, sometimes when we, when something bad happens or some accident happens, our tendency is to blame somebody else. We blame our children.

It's because our children did this or because our husband did something. That's why this happened. Or he didn't do this.

He was not thoughtful enough. Our tendency is to judge others, but not ourselves. So we have to, we come to the Lord and we say, Lord, you show me what is in my life, which needs to be put right.

Every day I want to live in judging myself. Every day I want to repent. It's not an occasional thing, but every day I want to keep judging myself.

And when we think of the word judging, we attempted to think of it as something heavy. I have to look inside and I have to see, is this wrong? And is that wrong? And sometimes we can get into a kind of psychological depression or condemnation saying, oh, I'm so bad. I'm so, you know, in the early years of my Christian life, when I was asking the Lord to, and taking this matter of judging myself seriously, I was to get into times of condemning myself.

And I thought, oh, that kind of feeling which I have of condemning myself is a good thing. And sometimes I just go into the meeting with that feeling of, oh, I'm going to condemn myself. I'm going to beat myself, you know, like flagellate myself, beat myself, and that's something good I must do.

But then I realized that God doesn't want me to live like that. Nowhere in the Bible do I feel that I have to beat myself and trash myself and feel unhappy. And God wants me, the Lord wants me to have a life of joy.

Then I realized we don't have to look inside. We look at our Lord Jesus Christ, look at him and he is our mirror. And as we look at him and say, Lord, I'm so unlike you, but you want me to become like you.

That's your way. And you can change me little by little by the power of the Holy Spirit. I submit to you, Lord.

Then it becomes a joyful thing. We heard some time back there are two no entry roads. One is self-condemnation and the other is discouragement.

We should never get discouraged when we see our failures and our backsliding. We should put away all that discouragement and self-condemnation. And we look to the Lord and say, Lord, I don't want to go to these two doors, these two roads.

There's a verse in Psalm 139, the familiar verses, Psalm 139 verses 23 and 24. It says like this. Search me, O God, and know my heart.

Try me and know my thoughts. See if there's any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting. It's the Lord who searches us.

It's not anybody else. It's not we ourselves who need to search. When the Lord searches us and he shows it to us, he shows it to us with kindness.

With a kind and loving heart, the way he shows it to us, not to discourage us. And then we take it from him with that hope. Lord, you can change me and make me more and more like you.

I was thinking of this matter of judging, how easy it is for us to judge other people. First of all, as an introduction, I want to say we have, we all know that God is the judge of all. Just in passing, we all know that, but these are some verses which I wrote down in Psalm 58 verse 11.

It says, he is a God that judges the earth. He's the creator and he's the judge of all the earth. Psalm 7, 8, the Lord judge his people.

Isaiah 51, 5, the Lord will judge his people. I mean, we all know that he's the judge. But sometimes we think we take that part of judgment in our hands.

How would it be if we take the place of God and we start judging others? If we start judging others, it's like we have taken the place of God. That's so important that we should realize all judgment is in God's hands. And we leave it to him.

It's not up to us to judge anybody. And then we read, we know that God gave authority to Jesus to judge, even when he was on earth. Romans 2 verse 16 says, God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus.

2nd Timothy 4, 1, Lord Jesus will judge the living and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom. John 5, 22, the Lord committed all judgment to his, to the son. But when Jesus was on earth, he came as a man.

So he, we read verses like this, for judgment have come so that those who don't see will see and those who see will be blind. John 8, 15 and 16, people judge after the flesh, I judge no man because he came as a man. I judge no man.

But yet, if I judge, my judgment is true for I am not alone. I am the father. So the Lord has given, God has given judgment to the hand of Jesus.

And one day we'll all stand before the judgment seat of God when Jesus will judge. Romans 14, 10 says, we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God. Hebrews 9, 27, it's appointed unto men once you die, but after this, there's judgment.

In Revelation 20 verses, verse 12 says, there'll be a great white throne and everyone will stand before that throne. And all who are dead will rise up and they'll be judged. And those whose names are not written in the book of life, the Lord is going to judge them and cast them in the lake of fire.

So it's a solemn thing to face the judgment seat of God. And God has given us the chance now to get ready before we stand before the judgment seat of God. That's why the Lord says, judge yourself now.

If we judge ourselves, we will not be judged with the rest of the world. And in 1 Corinthians 3, 13 says, there'll be a time of testing on Christ's judgment day. Every man's work will be tested.

What we have done with our bodies, what we have done in our lives, everything will be tested. It'll be tested by fire. If our work has not, if it has been like empty, just for others to see and for the praise of others and not before God, it'll be like wood here and stubble.

It'll be just burnt up. But if it's before God and we do it with a motive only to please God, then it'll be like building with precious stones and gold and silver and it'll stand the testing of time. So as I said, God has given the authority to Jesus to judge and none of us can take that authority.

But God has also given the authority to human beings in certain areas like government or officials, judges, they can judge. God has given them the authority to judge. And elders in the church, he has given them the authority to because to run the church and to parents.

God has given us, moms and dads, the authority to judge our children only, not to other people's children, but we can tell our children. For example, when our children go to school and they come home and they tell about the things that they are taught in school. Nowadays, we know that the schools, they teach a lot of stuff which we as Christians may not agree or will not agree.

So God has given us the privilege as moms and dads to tell our children, look, it's okay for the people in the world to believe such and such a thing and to do what they are doing. But we follow the Bible and the Lord doesn't want us to do this. The Lord doesn't want to behave like that or to have these views, whatever you can add, whatever you feel your children are facing.

And we have to tell them very gently and we have to tell them, you have to have wisdom how to handle it because you can't go up to your teacher and say, no, you're wrong or to your fellow students and say, no, my mom and dad are Christians and I'm a Christian. I don't believe in that. Then sometimes they land themselves in trouble and they may have unnecessary, but I would suggest tell the children, be wise.

If you're asked, you can say, no, my view is different and I want to keep up my view. I follow the Bible, but don't go into any argument and don't go into any controversy because the Lord is going to judge them according to their views and according to their understanding. But to us and our children, he has shown differently and he's going to judge us and our children differently.

So we have to teach our children to discern and to have that proper judgment. Thank God that God has given us parents that authority to teach our children to discern and to judge rightly. And sometimes there may be a time when we are not with our children.

The Lord may take us away and our children have to stand alone. By that time, we should have prepared them to have the wisdom to answer and to be sure in their mind, to have that firm foundation. This is what I believe.

Nothing can shake me and all the testings may come, but they stand and go through and the Lord will honor them for that and bless us and honor us for the way we have brought up our children. I was also going to say about the aspect of not judging others. That's an important thing.

You know, this was where the Lord said in Matthew 7 verse 1, judge not that you be not judged. On one side, I just said that we should teach our children to judge right rightly. On the other side, it's like the other side of the coin.

So don't judge others, other people's motives and why they do this and all that. Only the Lord knows, maybe they have not had that light that we have had or maybe they are not ready yet. God is patient with them.

In Matthew 7, it says, judge not that you be not judged. Romans 14, 4, it says, who are you to judge another servant? As I said, judgment is in God's hand. If we start judging others, we are taking the place of God.

And sometimes when we see other people, especially young people, doing things that are foolish and unwise, we are tempted to judge them. I'm talking about other people, not our own children. Maybe some in our church who don't have the light that we have.

We were brought up in a conservative way, but they've been brought up in a different way and they don't see things as we do. They may dress differently or speak differently or they may have different habits. They may watch some types of movies which we may not be happy to watch.

And if we go passing judgment, of course, sometimes it may be wrong. And if God gives us the opportunity to tell them, that's good. You tell them in love.

But we are not to go around passing judgment because God is above them. Unless God has given us the authority and they are under us, as I said, a church elder can tell them or a parent can tell them. And sometimes when we see people doing foolish things and we are tempted to be hard on them, an element of hatred comes and we begin to question their motives.

At that time, my favorite verse I want to remind myself. Judgment, if we are not shown mercy to others, judgment will be without mercy for us. When we see the faults of others and we don't have love and we are not merciful to them, when the time comes for us to be judged, God will show no mercy to us.

That's in James 2 verses 12 and 13. Judgment without mercy. If we have shown no mercy to others, we will receive no mercy from God.

So when we see failures and weaknesses in others, we have to remind ourselves, Lord, let me not judge somebody, that person, even in my thoughts, let alone speak to anybody about it. But first of all, let me cleanse myself because if I were to stand before you and don't receive mercy from you, I'll have nowhere to hide. So judging others is something we all have that verse, we need that verse every day of our lives.

Not only that, in our home situation, how easy it is for us to judge our husbands. Why didn't he do this? Why wasn't he thoughtful enough to do this? Why didn't he, why did he speak like that to me? Or why, why, why? So many questions and we are tempted to judge. And that our husbands have, it hasn't even been an inkling in their minds.

So God is not going to judge them for any omission or anything that they did or didn't do. But God is going to judge us. You were expecting too much from your husband and you are judging him.

So the judgment will be for us while we are going around judging our children or our husbands. They are free, but we are the ones who are going to get judgment without mercy from God. So I want to always keep that in mind when we see the shortcomings of others and the lack of others.

Maybe we think they're thoughtless, but the Lord is going to judge us. They've been inconsiderate, but they didn't know that they were inconsiderate. But we who judge them will be judged without mercy.

That's why we have to always say, Lord, let me not be guilty of that. Let me never fall in that sin of getting and getting judgment from you without mercy. I want to judge myself.

And every day we are faced with that situation. We see weaknesses in our children. We see weaknesses in people around us.

We see weaknesses in our loved ones, in our parents, maybe, or the way they behave. But the Lord wants to keep this golden verse always before you. Be merciful.

Judgment will be without mercy for you. Now coming to judging ourselves. That's what my theme was about how we need to judge ourselves.

And as I said, we can become like maniacs thinking of judging myself, judging myself, and we can take that to an extreme. We have to say, Lord, I want to look at you. I don't want to look at anybody else.

I want to look at you. I don't want to have a pharisaical or legalistic attitude to others, but I want to look at you. You know, sometimes when the Lord shows us something in our life, we think, oh, I had this bad thought about others.

I should go and confess. Now, if there's a sin between us and God, if we have just a thought in our mind, there's no need to go and confess it to that person about whom we had a thought. Like some lot of girls have asked me, I had a bad thought against my mom because she wasn't a good mom to me and I had bitterness.

Should I go and tell her? Now, if we make matters worse, if we go and confess things that were just in our mind, those things we just have to tell the Lord and say, Lord, I had this bad attitude towards my parents or my whoever it is. Please cleanse me and help me to get over. Help me to forgive them.

Help me not to make it worse, but do what I can. So we have to remember that in mind. And we have to ask the Lord to search us.

Every day in every situation, please search me and show me. So that's the only way in which I can grow spiritually. I was just thinking of this verse.

Oh, yeah. You know, on Sunday, we were singing this hymn. Lord, if I have not forsaken all in answer to thy loving call, that spoke to me a lot.

And if you get the chance, you can look up that song. It begins like this. If I have not forsaken all in answer to thy loving call, if I have kept something back from thee, Lord, give me light that I might see.

And the chorus goes, Lord, help me judge myself each day to walk this new and living way. I seek thy grace with all my heart to be made pure, just as thou art. Then the different verses.

If anything on this world attracts me, if money has a hold on me, if I am selfish and my life revolves around me, if there's some good I should have done, if there's some person I've hurt thoughtlessly, if there's some soul I should have won, Lord, show me. I often like to read the words of the song, not only when we sing it, but meditate on it like a cleansing, like a cleanse, Lord, show me. If there's someone's failure hasn't brought concern within my heart, if I have judged others inwardly, Lord, give me light.

If I have cared for man's applause and if I have avoided the cross, if I have feared man's mockery, Lord, show me. If I haven't sought your power in prayer, if I've been so busy because of my earthly toys and care, and I'm not longing after thee, Lord, give me light that I might see. And we sing that in our churches and it's good to keep those words in our mind like a self-examination and say, Lord, show me.

But not only when we sing that song, every day if we are walking in the light and our lives are open and everything that the Lord shows us, we confess to him, he will show us more and more in a gentle way, not

in a scolding way and not to condemn us, but in a gentle way, he'll show us you need to change in this area. You need to talk less. You need to listen more.

You know, sometimes when somebody wants to talk to us, I find that we want to talk more and listen less. And the Lord shows us, be a good listener. Listen to people's problems before you talk to them.

So like that, the Lord would show us more and more areas where we can judge ourselves. I said about our, oh yes, there's a beautiful verse which I wanted to share, which I was just reading in Psalm 33 verses 13 to 15 in the Living Bible. Let me read that to you.

Psalm 33 verses 13 to 15. The Lord gazes down upon mankind from heaven where he lives. He has made their hearts and he closely watches everything they do.

Even in the Old Testament, not only in the epistles, but even in the Old Testament, we can find verses like this. How the Lord is gazing down upon all of us from heaven. He's living in heaven, but he's gazing down.

He made our hearts and he's closely watching everything we do. And that thought is very precious to think that he's watching over us. And when he watches over us and he sees the reason why we do things, the motives behind why we do things, then he'll reveal it to us in such a gentle and precious way, not to condemn us, but to encourage us.

And finally, I want to leave this beautiful words of Augustine of Hippo. There's a saintly man called Augustine. I think it was in the first century, if I'm not mistaken.

But anyway, in the early centuries, he said these words. To my God, I want a heart of flame. To my fellow men, I want a heart of love.

To myself, I want a heart of steel. That means, I'll read it again. To my God, a heart of flame.

To my fellow men, a heart of love. To myself, a heart of steel. So when we go to God, we say, Lord, I want to be on fire for you.

In my heart, there must be such a fiery longing for you. A flame in my heart, always lit up for you, burning for you. That's what I want to be before you.

But to others, Lord, give me a heart of love. Whatever others may do, Lord, help me to be loving and merciful. But to myself, Lord, give me a heart of steel.

Let me not pamper myself or be in self-pity or want others to make much of me or come in to help me or anything. I want to be like a person made of steel. I want to be like a soldier who's tough, who won't yield to all the self-pity and wanting attention for myself.

Others should take time for me. Others should be considerate about me. Others should do this, this, this for me.

No expectations from others. Lord, give me a heart of steel so that then only I can grow in my spiritual life. May the Lord make it so in our lives.

I want that. I want that heart of steel for myself as long as I live. And I want a heart of flame towards the Lord.

So He's first in my life. He's everything in my life. I want to please Him and others, forgiving them, not to see their weaknesses.

But see them as God sees them. God sees them as children who are struggling, children who had a bad background. Children who are sick in some way, struggling, spiritual sickness or emotional sickness.

And they need help. They need my love. Lord, make me like that.

Amen. Shall we close in prayer? Our Heavenly Father, we thank you, Lord, that you're such a loving Father. And you love us and you care for us.

And you want us to become better and better in our spiritual life. Lord, help us to be ready for your coming. We don't know when you're coming, but we know it's going to be soon.

Please help us to take every opportunity to cleanse ourselves and to be ready to meet you. Purify ourselves and use the opportunity to help others also, Lord. Our loved ones, especially those who don't know you and those around us in a loving way.

Because you have a heart of love for them, Lord. And help us, Lord, not to make much of ourselves or be full of self-pity for ourselves. Give us that heart of steel towards ourselves so that we'll be strong and do valiantly for you, Lord.

Please give us grace to ask these things in Jesus' precious name. Amen.

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