

Correcting Critical Christians

1 Corinthians 4:3-5

SLIDE 1

I. Intro

- Critical
- It was last month - when we received a prayer request from a viewer online who presented the following criticism - and I quote...

Would you all pray about having your pastor cut his beard off. It's way too long. Could be a hindrance in someone getting saved. Good message though.

- Now - while I appreciate the complement about the quality of the message...
- ...I can't help but to wonder why this person felt the need to criticize my beautify beard.
- I mean - let's be honest - this is a beard of biblical proportions.
- And while it's true that the Lord commanded every Israeli man - to refrain from cutting their beards...
- ...this person went as far as suggesting that my beard could be a hindrance to people getting saved.
- Critics
- Now - before we rush to criticize the criticism of that critical Christian - I'd like to assure you that - my feelings aren't hurt.
- Having served as the senior pastor of this church the past 20 years - I can assure you that - this isn't the first time that I've been criticized.
- At the same time - I should also confess that I too have been critical of my critics.

- And listen - if we're going to be perfectly honest - we must all confess that...
- ...many - if not most of us have been guilty of being believers - who are quick to criticize other Christians.
- And if this sound like something you struggle with - then let's look past my beautiful beard...
- ...so that we can consider how Paul corrected critical Christians.

II. Outline

- Here in our text today - - we find Paul - challenging the critical Christians...
- ...who were causing contentions - there at the church in Corinth.
- And as we study these scriptures - we'll begin to see that...

SLIDES 2-4

1. ...Critical Christians are incorrect in their Calculations
 2. ...Critical Christians are incorrect in their Convictions
 3. ...Critical Christians are incorrect in their Condemnations
- With this as our outline - let's open our Bibles to 1st Corinthians chapter 4...
 - ...where we find Paul - addressing those who were critical of his apostolic calling.

SLIDE 5

III. Calculations

- Set up
- Context

- As we make our way to the fourth chapter of 1st Corinthians - I wanna take a moment to put our text back into its context.
- It'll help us to remember that - there were those at the church in Corinth - who were quick to criticize the leadership of Paul.
- Rather than receiving him - as the apostle to the Gentiles - they were judging him with unrighteousness judgment.
- And while it's true that Paul was given the grace that enabled him to become the wise master builder of the church...
- ...the carnal Christians in Corinth spent their time complaining about the Paul's method of ministry.
- And it's for this reason that Paul took the time to correct those critical Christians.
- With this as our focus - let's pick up our study of 1st Corinthians 4 - beginning there at verse 3 - where Paul declared...

SLIDES 6-7

1Co 4:3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.

1Co 4:4 For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.

1Co 4:5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.

- Judge Not
- Here in our text today - we find Paul - challenging the critical Christians of Corinth - who were judging him with unrighteousness judgment.

SLIDE 8

- And as we consider how Paul encouraged them to judge nothing before the proper time...

- ...we would be wrong to think that Paul was opposed to all forms of judgment.
- To the contrary - Paul was a man who had no problem passing the proper judgments - according to the will of God.
- And in order to prove my point - let's consider a few examples - found here in 1st Corinthians.

- Moral Judgment

- With this as our focus - let's flip forward on chapter - to 1st Corinthians 5 - and let's look there - beginning at verse 11 - where Paul declared...

SLIDE 9

1Co 5:11 I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.

1Co 5:12 For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside?

- Here in these verses - we find Paul - encouraging the Christians in Corinth...

SLIDE 10

- ...to make moral judgements - concerning the Christians who were still committing specific sins...
- ...which included sexually immorality - covetousness - idolatry - drinking parties - and extortion.
- In light of these verses - there should be no doubt that Christians have been called to judge other believers...
 - ...who are choosing to live for the lusts of the flesh - the lust of the eyes - and the pride of life.

- Legal Judgment

- And not only did Paul encourage Christians to make moral judgments about sin - - but he also encouraged us to make legal judgments.

- With this as our focus - let's flip forward one more chapter to 1st Corinthians chapter 6 - look with me beginning there at verse 4 - where he declared...

SLIDE 11-12

1Co 6:4 If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge?
 1Co 6:5 I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren?
 1Co 6:6 But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers!

- Rather than suing one another in the secular courts of human government...

SLIDE 13

- ...Paul encouraged us to settle our legal matters - here in the church - as we allow Christian leaders to judge these legal matters.
- And what this means is that - Christians are not only called to make moral judgments about believers who are living in sin...
 - ...but - believers should also look to Christian leaders in their church...
 - ...to help with legal rulings that are based on the righteous judgments of God's written word.
- Definition
 - Simply put - those who try to convince us that it's wrong for Christians to judge - - are failing to consider the full context of God's word.
 - That being the case - we should take a moment to ask - what sort of judgments was Paul referring to...
 - ...when he informed the Christians in Corinth - that is was a very small thing - that he should be judged by them?
 - With this question in mind - it'll help you to know that the word - judged - found there in verse 3 - was translated from a Greek word...

- ...which was used in reference to the judicial examinations - conducted by those who served as judges.
- At the same time - this word was also used of those who examine others with a critical eye...
- ...as they engage in carnal criticisms - based on incorrect calculations.

- Examine

- In order to make my case - we should consider how Paul used this same Greek word in 1st Corinthians 9 - where he declared...

SLIDE 14

1Co 9:1 Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?

1Co 9:2 If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

1Co 9:3 My defense to those who examine me is this...

- Now - that word - examine - was translated from the same Greek word - which is rendered - judged - here in our text today.

SLIDE 15

- And what this means is that - there were those who were judging Paul with a critical eye - as they scrutinized his calling.
- Rather than judging with righteous judgment - they were examining him with carnal calculations...
- ...because - they wanted to demote his pastoral position - and diminish his apostolic authority.
- And it's for this reason that Paul challenged them - by helping them to realize their critical calculations were entirely irrelevant.

- Critical Thinking?

- Now - I should take a moment to point out that there's a huge difference between being a critical Christian - - and being a critical thinker.
- Just to be clear - it'll help you to know that - Critical thinking is a mental process...
 - ...by which we question, analyze, interpret, evaluate and ultimately make judgements about what we read, hear, say, or write.
 - Critical thinkers are those who take the time to weigh pros and cons - as we consider alternatives - and anticipate potential consequences.
 - And in a Christian context - Critical thinkers are those who are also consider the instructions of God's word...
 - ...so that we can make sure that our beliefs are actually in line with the Bible.
- Critical
 - Now - as we consider the characteristics of the Christian who engages in critical thinking...
 - ...it's important for us to realize that - a Christian can be critical - without being a critical thinker.
 - And it's sad to say that it's not uncommon for Christians to criticize others - before engaging in critical thinking.
 - And to the contrary - critical Christians often criticize other Christians - according to opinions that are based on incorrect calculations.
 - Rather than engaging in a careful examination of the facts - according to the rules of critical thinking...
 - ...critical Christians are quick to jump to carnal conclusions - from their incorrect calculations.

- And it's for this reason that Paul challenged the critical Christians in Corinth - to reexamine their unjust judgments.

● Application

- Righteous
 - I like the way that Jesus addressed this issue - it's in John chapter 7 - verse 24 - where He declared....

SLIDE 16

Jhn 7:24 "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

- Christian - listen - those who judge according to appearances - - are not only failing to think critically...

SLIDE 17

- ...but - they are also jumping to conclusions - after engaging in carnal calculations.
- And it's for this reason that the Lord Jesus encouraged His audience to stop judging others - according to the way things appear to be...
- ...and instead - we should judge with righteous judgment - as we carefully examine the facts.
- And in this way - we will avoid the issues that arise - when we judge others - with incorrect Calculations.

• Response

- At the same time - we'll all do well to consider the way that Paul responded to those who judged him - with incorrect calculations.
- Look with me again - there at 1st Corinthians chapter 4 - it's verse 3 - where he declared....

SLIDE 18

1Co 4:3 ...with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.

- Here in this verse - we find Paul - addressing those who were judging him with unrighteous judgement.

SLIDE 19

- Paul could've responded - by allowing his offense - to become the basis for relational division - - but he didn't.
- And while he could've responded with reviling accusations of his own - he didn't.
- No - instead - he informed them that their assessment of him was not only incorrect - - but that it was largely irrelevant.
- In this way - Paul addressed their unrighteous judgments - with a righteous response.
- Blessing
- I like the way that the apostle Peter put it - in 1st Peter chapter 3 - it's verses 8 and 9 - where he declared...

SLIDE 20

- 1Pe 3:8 Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous;
- 1Pe 3:9 not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.
- Rather than returning false accusations - with false accusations - we should correct with compassion...

SLIDE 21

- ...so that we can help those who have jumped to the wrong conclusions - to repent of their unrighteous judgments.
- And while we might be tempted to respond - by returning reviling for reviling...
- ...we will do well to remember that - it's a very small thing to be judged by those - who are incorrect in their Calculations of us.

- And the best way to correct critical Christians - is with courteous compassion - according to the love of Christ Jesus.

● Transition

• Points

- Now - this brings us to our second point - because listen...

1. ...Critical Christians are not only incorrect in their Calculations...

SLIDE 22

2. ...but - Critical Christians are also incorrect in their Convictions

- With this as our focus - let's continue to consider the point that Paul was making - here in our text today.
- Let's back up and begin reading again - there at 1st Corinthians chapter 4 - verse 3 - where Paul declared...

IV. Convictions

SLIDE 23

1Co 4:3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.

1Co 4:4 For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.

• Myself

- As we take another look at these verses - we should take a moment to consider what Paul meant...

SLIDE 24

- ...when he informed his audience that he didn't even judge himself.
- Now - remember - Paul was referring to those who were judging him with unrighteous judgment.
- And with this context in mind - it seems to me that Paul was assuring his audience...

- ...that he was just as quick to question his own assessment of himself.
 - One reason why is because - it's easy for us to become our own worst critics...
 - ...and as a result - we judge ourselves with unrighteous judgment.
- Incorrect
 - Conversely - there are also Christians who begin to believe that they never do anything wrong.
 - And according to the convictions that they've developed along the way...
 - ...they incorrectly come to the conclusion that - they are effectively walking in sinless perfection.
 - As a result - they can't receive a rebuke - and the reason why is because - they'r ready to justify everything they do.
 - And it's sad to say that these are the same Christians who tend to be super critical of everyone one else.
 - If this sounds like something you struggle with - then - I encourage you to consider Paul's perspective.
- Know
 - Let's take another look there at verse 4 - where he declared...

SLIDE 25

1Co 4:4 For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.

- According to Paul perspective - he wasn't going to waste his time - judging himself with unrighteous judgment...

SLIDE 26

- ...and the reason why was due to the fact that - he was aware of any reason for why he should judge himself in this way.

- And just to be clear - I should take a moment to point out that the Greek word translated - know...
- ...was used of those who are conscience of the conviction - of some wrong doing.
- And in order to grasp Paul's point - let's take a moment to consider the difference between conviction sin - and the knowledge of sin.

• Sins

- I should first point out that - Paul was fully aware of the sins that he was guilty of - before his conversion to Christ.
- Let's consider the confession that he presented - in 1st Timothy chapter 1 - it's verses 12 thru 15 - where Paul declared...

SLIDES 27-28

1Ti 1:12 ...I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry,

1Ti 1:13 although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

1Ti 1:14 And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

1Ti 1:15 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

- Here in these verses - we find Paul - describing himself as the chief of sinners...

SLIDE 29

- ...and the reason why was due to the fact that - - he was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man - prior to his conversion to Christ.
- In other words - he was not only guilty of slandering our Savior - but - he was also guilty of persecuting the followers of Christ.
- And by his own admission - Paul persecuted believers to the death - binding and delivering them into prison.

- He punished them in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme - as he set out to destroy the church of God.

- Confession

- Here how Paul summed it up - in 1st Corinthians chapter 15 - where he declared...

SLIDE 30

1Co 15:9 I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

- In light of these verses - there should be no doubt that Paul was well aware of his guilt before God.

SLIDE 31

- And so - when he informed the Christians in Corinth - that he didn't know of anything against himself...
- ...he clearly wasn't suggesting that he was free from the stain of sin.
- No - instead - Paul was fully aware of the ways that he had sinned against our Savior - Jesus.
- And as we consider the context of this claim - it seems to me that Paul was referring to his convictions.

- Clarity

- I like the way that the scholars who created the New International Version rendered verse 4 - they put it like this...

SLIDE 32

1Co 4:4 My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.

- When Paul informed the Christians in Corinth - that he knew of nothing against himself...

SLIDE 33

- ...what he meant was that his conscience was clear from the things that he was being accused of.

- And what this means is that - he felt no conviction - concerning the accusations - that his critics were making against him.
- In order to explain my point - we should take a moment consider the criticisms - that stem from personal convictions.
- Conviction
 - When it comes to our convictions - every Christian should do their best to make sure that our opinions are inline with the Bible.
 - At the same time - it's important for us to realize that - there's a long list of issues - that aren't clearly spelled out in scripture.
 - For example - which movies can we watch - and which movies should we avoid.
 - Can Christians gamble - - are we allowed to listen to secular music that glorifies sexual immorality?
 - Can we enjoy the humor of crass comedians - - what about clothing that accentuates our physical attributes?
 - Or how about the holidays - should Christians abstain from traditions that aren't found in the Bible...
 - ...or are we allowed to take part in holiday traditions that have questionable origins?
- Personal
 - With these questions in mind - we should consider the way that Paul addressed this issue in the letter he sent to the church in Rome.
 - Hold your place - here in 1st Corinthians - and let's turn in our Bibles to Romans chapter 14.
 - And as we make our way to the 14th chapter of Romans - I wanna take a moment to point out that...

- ...when it comes to the issues that aren't clearly spelled out in the Scriptures...
- ...it's up to each believer to prayerfully seek the leading of the Lord - in order to develop a conviction that comes from the Holy Spirit.
- And at the same time - it's also important for us to realize that these personal convictions are just that...
- ...they are personal convictions - and as such - we should learn how to receive one another - even when we disagree.

● Application

- Justified
- Let's consider how Paul explained it - here in Romans chapter 14 - look with me - beginning there at verse 1 - where he declared...

SLIDES 34-38

Rom 14:1 Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things.

Rom 14:2 For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables.

Rom 14:3 Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him.

Rom 14:4 Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

Rom 14:5 One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.

Rom 14:6 He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks.

Rom 14:7 For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself.

Rom 14:8 For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

Rom 14:9 For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

Rom 14:10 But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

- Christian - listen - when it comes to personal convictions - it's important for us to remember that...

SLIDE 39

- ...it's not our job - to force our personal convictions on every other believer.
- And so - if you're a Christian who is quick to criticize others - because they don't share your conviction concerning debatable things...
- ...then I encourage you to remember that - your personal convictions are personal - and not universal.
- Therefore - we shouldn't use our personal convictions - to convict others - with critical judgments.

● Transition

• Points

- Now - this brings us to our third point - because listen...

1. ...Critical Christians are not only incorrect in their Calculations...

2. ...and - Critical Christians are not only incorrect in their Convictions...

SLIDE 40

3. ...but - Critical Christians are also incorrect in their Condemnations

- With this as our focus - let's make our way back to 1st Corinthians chapter 4...
- ...where we find Paul - challenging the critical Christians who were judging him with unrighteous judgments.

- Let's back up and begin reading again - there at verse 3 - where Paul declared...

V. Condemnations

SLIDES 41-42

1Co 4:3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.

1Co 4:4 For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.

1Co 4:5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.

• Judge

- Now - In order to grasp the point that Paul was making - it'll help us to understand that...

SLIDE 43

- ...the Greek word translated - judge - there in verse 5 - is slightly different from the Greek word found in verses 3 and 4.
- In verses 3 and 4 - Paul was using the Greek word - Anakrino - which in this context...
 - ...was being used in reference to those who examine others with a critical eye...
 - ...as they engage in the carnal criticisms of unrighteous judgments.
 - Paul then shifted his focus there in verse 5 - by using the root word - Krino...
 - ...as he challenged his critics - to judge nothing before the time
- Condemn
 - For the sake of clarity - it'll help you to know that the root word - Krino - was used of those who pronounce a judgment.

- This word was not only used of judges - who have the official power of enforcing judicial decisions...
- ...but - the same word was also used of those who act the part of judges or arbiters in matters of common life.
- And while this word was used in reference to those who make a distinction - as they discriminate between good and evil...
- ...the same word was also used of those who judge according to the flesh - and by implication - they condemn those being judged.
- And in the context of this passage - Paul was challenging the critical Christians there in Corinth...
 - ...about their unrighteous criticisms - by which they were trying to condemn him.
- Justified
- It's for this reason that Paul challenged them - by helping them to realize that they were incorrect in their condemnations.
- I like the way that the scholars who created the New Life Version of the Bible rendered verses 4 and 5 - they put it like this...

SLIDES 44-45

1Co 4:4 As for me, my heart tells me I am not guilty of anything. But that does not prove I am free from guilt. It is the Lord Who looks into my life and says what is wrong.

1Co 4:5 Do not be quick to say who is right or wrong. Wait until the Lord comes. He will bring into the light the things that are hidden in men's hearts. He will show why men have done these things. Every man will receive from God the thanks he should have.

- Christian - listen - it's not our place others under eternal condemnation - - and especially if our judgments are based on personal convictions.

SLIDE 46

- With that being the case - we will all do well to realize that those who are quick to condemn others - with carnal criticisms...

- ...are simultaneously failing to realize that - Christ Jesus is the Only One with the power to condemn.
- Not only that - but He is also the Only One Who is able to justify those who trust in Him.
- And with that being the case - it's crucial for Christians to remember that there is no condemnation for those who trust in Jesus.
- No Condemnation
- Let's consider how Paul put it - in Romans chapter 8 - it's verse 1 - where he declared...

SLIDE 47

Rom 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

SLIDE 48

- Now - when Paul assured his audience that there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus...
- ...you might be interested to know that - the Greek word rendered - condemnation - is Katakrima...
- ...which is the noun form of the Greek word - Katakrimo - which is based on the root word that Paul used here in our text today.
- And as we connect all the dots - we can see that it's wrong for critical Christians to condemn other believers...
- ...and the reason why is because - there is no condemnation for those who have been justified - by faith in Jesus Christ.
- Judge?
- Now - does this mean that it's always wrong to judge?

- With this question in mind - we should consider the counsel that Christ Jesus presented - during the sermon on the mount.
- With this as our focus - hold you place here in 1st Corinthians - and let's turn in our Bibles - to Matthew chapter 7.
- You see - it's here in the seventh chapter of Matthew's gospel account...
 - ...where we find the Lord Jesus - helping His audience to understand the proper way to judge.
 - And it's here in this sermon - where we learn that righteous judgements must begin with self-examination.
- First
 - Let's consider how the Lord Jesus explained it - here in Matthew chapter 7 - look with me beginning there at verse 1 - where He declared...

SLIDES 49-50

Mat 7:1 "Judge not, that you be not judged.

Mat 7:2 "For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

Mat 7:3 "And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?

Mat 7:4 "Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye?

Mat 7:5 "Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

- Now - as we consider the context of the most quoted verse in the entire Bible...

SLIDE 51

- ...we can see that - Jesus was NOT opposed to all forms of judgment.
- No - instead - He was opposed to the judgments made by those - who criticize others - hypocritically.

- Think about it - - those who criticize and condemn others - who have a plank protruding from their eye...
- ...while simultaneously struggling to remove the speck from their own eye - - are judging with unrighteous judgment.

- Context

- As we consider the context of what Jesus was saying - I can assure you that the Lord Jesus was NOT saying - - it's always wrong to judge.
- It's for this reason that the scholars who created the Amplified bible rendered Matthew 7 - verse 1 - in this way...

SLIDE 52

Mat 7:1 Do not judge and criticize and condemn [others unfairly with an attitude of self-righteous superiority as though assuming the office of a judge], so that you will not be judged [unfairly].

- Before we criticize and condemn others - for the sins that they still struggle with...

SLIDE 53

- ...we should take a moment to consider our own struggles - so that we might become those believers...
- ...who are quick to show compassion - to those who may need a word of correction.
- And at the same time - I encourage every Christian to learn how to receive a rebuke...
- ...rather than rushing to the rash defense - offered by those who are quick to declare: "Judge not, that you be not judged."

- Correction

- Without debate - there are times when the criticisms of other Christians are valid - - and we will do well to receive the rebuke.

- I like the way that King Solomon put it in Proverbs chapter 27 - - it's verses 5 and 6 - where he declared...

SLIDE 54

Pro 27:5 Open rebuke is better

Than love carefully concealed.

Pro 27:6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend,
But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

- Do you believe this? I mean - do you really believe that the open rebuke of another believer - is better than love carefully concealed?

SLIDE 55

- If so - then we should welcome the constructive criticisms of those who love us enough - to challenge us.
- And one reason for why we should be ready to receive an open rebuke is due to the fact that...
 - ...there's coming a day when we will give an account - to Him who is able to see all the thoughts - and intents of our heart.
- With this as our focus - let's make our way back to 1st Corinthians chapter 4 - where Paul assures us of this very thing.

- Praise

- Look with me again - there at verse 5 - where Paul declared...

SLIDE 56

1Co 4:5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.

- Christian - listen - there's coming a day when every believer will stand before the bema seat of Jesus Christ.

SLIDE 57

- And it's there at the Bema seat - where He will not only examine our actions...
- ...but - He will also expose the thoughts and the intents of our hearts.

- And it's for this reason that we will all do well to receive the rebuke of those - who love us enough...
- ...to offer a word of correction - so that we might correct the course of our life.

- Goal

- I also encourage those who offer corrective criticisms - to follow the instructions Paul presented in Galatians 6 - where he declared...

SLIDE 58

Gal 6:1 Brethren, 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.

- Before you decide that it's your job - to rebuke another believer - please consider the instructions that Paul presented...

SLIDE 59

- ...when he challenged us to make sure that we consider our own sinful struggles - before we correct another Christian.
- Then - after we've considered our own struggles - we should also examine our motives...
- ...in order to make sure that our primary purpose is to restore the backsliding believer.
- Paul also encouraged us to present the corrective criticism - in a spirit of gentleness - as we attempt to restore them.

- Incorrect

- Now - as we consider these instructions - it's my prayer that we will all become believers...
- ...who are ready to restore a carnal Christian - in a spirit of gentleness.
- At the same time - I also pray for those of us who are quick to criticize other Christians - behind their backs...

- ...might realize that - we've been called to do all things - without complaining.
- And what this means is that - those who spend their time complaining about Christians behind their backs...
- ...are failing to realize that their critical condemnations of those they're complaining about - is also sin.

● Application

- Grumble
- Let's consider how James put it - in the 5th chapter of his epistle - it's verses 7 thru 9 - where he declared...

SLIDES 60-61

Jas 5:7 ...be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain.

Jas 5:8 You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

Jas 5:9 Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!

- Christian - listen - we've been called to be patient with one another - as we graciously wait for the second coming of Christ.

SLIDE 62

- And knowing that we are all a work in progress - let's be careful with the critical condemnations - that are so easily offered...
- ...whenever we find ourselves struggling to be patient with other people.
- I like the way that Spurgeon put it - when he declared...

SLIDE 63

"The church is imperfect, but woe to the man who takes pleasure in pointing out her imperfections!"

SLIDE 64

VI. Conclusion

- Wrap up

- Points

SLIDE 65

1. ...Critical Christians are incorrect in their Calculations...
2. ...and - Critical Christians are incorrect in their Convictions...
3. ...but - Critical Christians are incorrect in their Condemnations

SLIDE 66 RIGHT BEFORE HE ENDS THE SERMON