



### Judgment and Mercy

*James 2: 13 "For judgment will be without mercy to anyone who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment."*

Judgment and mercy are the perfect combinations that keep us from doing wrong in the sight of God. There is a story about a king who made a decree that the person who violated his laws would have their eyes removed and remain blind. Well, the first one who violated the law was his son and he entered into conflict with his own laws. In order to fulfill his law, he thought he needed to show mercy to his son. So, he decided the merciful thing would be to pluck out only one of his son's eyes and ordered this done. In doing so, he fulfilled his law and showed mercy to his son, who would not be blind for the rest of his life.

God is a righteous judge and he is faithful to his own decrees and laws, but at the same time, God is a merciful God. He is moved to have compassion toward his own creation. James, the brother of Jesus, who became the first Bishop of the Early Christian Church, tells us *"For judgment will be without mercy to anyone who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment."* What I understand from this biblical lesson is that God will justly judge anyone who shows no mercy in his or her judgment of others. All men and women are in the same circumstances as everyone else. This means that we are all sinners in the eyes of God. Look at what the apostle Paul says in Romans 3: 23 *"Since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are now justified by his grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus..."*

What James wants us to know is that judging others can be a very dangerous activity for us. Just judgment needs to include the mercy of God because judgment without mercy is not godly. God, who is pure, holy, and divine in his judgment, is always merciful. When we judge the actions of other humans, are we setting ourselves above God Almighty? I hope not, because we are not above God! James alerts us that a judgment without mercy will come to the one, who has shown no mercy. James reminds us that mercy triumphs over judgment. The key word here is **mercy** when judging someone else. Before you pass judgment on someone else for their behavior, disagreements, manners, or wrong actions, take into consideration to include the necessary ingredient of mercy.

In the end, James' prophetic message is that we all risk being judged without mercy. If mercy triumphs over judgment, then any time I judge someone else, I must allow room for mercy to be part of my judgment. The reason for this is...I want God to be merciful to me, as well as my worst enemies when I am before His judgment seat.

According to Paul J. Achtemeier in the Bible Dictionary, mercy is an attribute of both God and the good human being. The author of this dictionary says, “Hebrew uses several words for “mercy”, of which the most frequent is *hesed*, which means loving-kindness, mercy, love, loyalty, and faithfulness. Another Hebrew word and the Greek word for mercy in the New Testament is *eleos*, which refers to the emotion aroused by contact with underserved suffering, that is, compassion and a deeply felt love for a fellow human being. In the Old Testament mercy/loving-kindness is associated with the covenant obligation between God and humans.

Among other things, Paul J. Achtemeier says that in the New Testament God’s merciful faithfulness is attributed to his sending of Jesus and saving his people. If we belong to God as His children, then we need to incorporate mercy in our daily activities. Not only in the judgment of others, but in all our dealings with other human beings like us. Mercy is a part of Christianity that needs to be practiced even in our stressful and painful moments, because God shows his mercy to all of us when we do wrong. If Jesus came into the world to save sinners, but not to condemn the world, then we need to follow his example in all that we do and in all that we say.

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