

Jamin Eben

SESSION 6 | Self-Control and Judging

I. INTRODUCTION: JUDGMENT IN DAILY LIFE

Class Verse: Titus 2:11-12 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,

Class Definition: Self-control is governing your mind, will, and emotions in obedience to God's word by the power of the Spirit.

A. Judgment is a constant and common condition of humanity.

1. *Definition: A judgment is any value, intention, or meaning we assign to people actions or events in our lives.*

B. Judgment is far more perilous than we realize.

James 2:12-13- So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy.

Matthew 7:1-2 "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you."

II. JUDGMENT AND SELF-CONTROL

A. What is self-control?

1. Self Control is a question of who will rule over you

Proverbs 16:32 Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.

Proverbs 25:28 A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls.

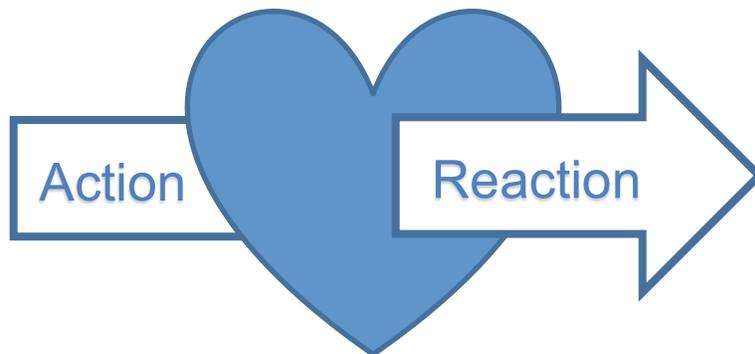
Colossians 1:13, He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins

So Christian self-control isn't a matter of stoic, "stiff upper lip", will power. It's a question of who will rule us. That's why our definition of self-control is so important.

Self-control is governing your mind, will, and emotions in obedience to God's word by the power of the Spirit.

B. Where Judgment and Self Control Intersect

1. We think our judgments are always natural, justified, and outside of our control
 - Figure 1



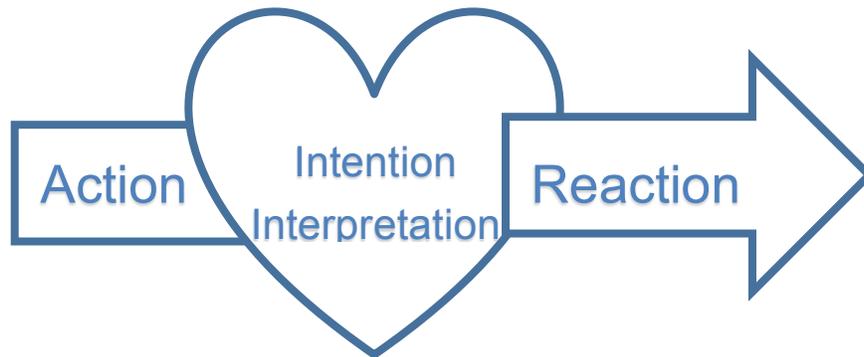
Arrogance and pride cause us to act rashly because they persuade us that whatever they instinctively want or do is the best thing.¹- Ed Welch

2. According to scripture our judgment isn't just action and reaction; it involves intentions and interpretations of the heart.

Genesis 6:5 The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

¹ Edward Welch, "Self-Control: The Battle Against 'One More,'" *The Journal of Biblical Counseling* 19, no. 2 (2001): 27.

- Figure 2



- Our hearts are *actively* involved in every judgment we make.

*All experiences are interpreted experiences. People cannot help but try to make sense out of the things that happen to them... People's core beliefs lead them to interpret their experience in certain ways.²-
Jeremy Pierre*

- Indwelling sin remains in our hearts and along with it the building blocks of ungodly judgments.

C. A Heart Out of Control

1. The story of a heart out of control 1 Sam. 18:5-15
 - The Action: David's Success – Samuel 18:5
 - The Interpretation: Saul's Pride – 18:6-9
 - God's perspective: David has God's favor – 18:12-15

D. The "Heart" of Ungodly Judgments

1. The heart of ungodly judgments is playing God

We judge others—criticize, nit-pick, nag, attack, condemn—because we literally play God. This is heinous. "There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you to judge your neighbor?" Who are you when you judge? None other than a God wannabe. In this we become like the Devil himself (no surprise that the Devil is mentioned in James 3:15 and 4:7). We act exactly like the adversary who seeks to usurp God's throne and who acts as the accuser of the brethren. When you and I fight, our minds become filled with accusations: your wrongs and my rights preoccupy me. We play the self-righteous judge in the mini-kingdoms we establish: "You are so stupid, cruel,

² Jeremy Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life: Connecting Christ to Human Experience* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2016), 38.

*insensitive, selfish. You've gotten in my way. You don't get it. You are a hindrance to my agenda." Nowhere in the heat of conflict does anyone confess his own sins, except as a way to buy time for a counterattack: "Yeah, I was wrong to do that, but..." The log remains firmly planted in the eye (Matthew 7:1-5) as each party plays lawgiver and judge. "But there is one Lawgiver and Judge"³-
David Powlison*

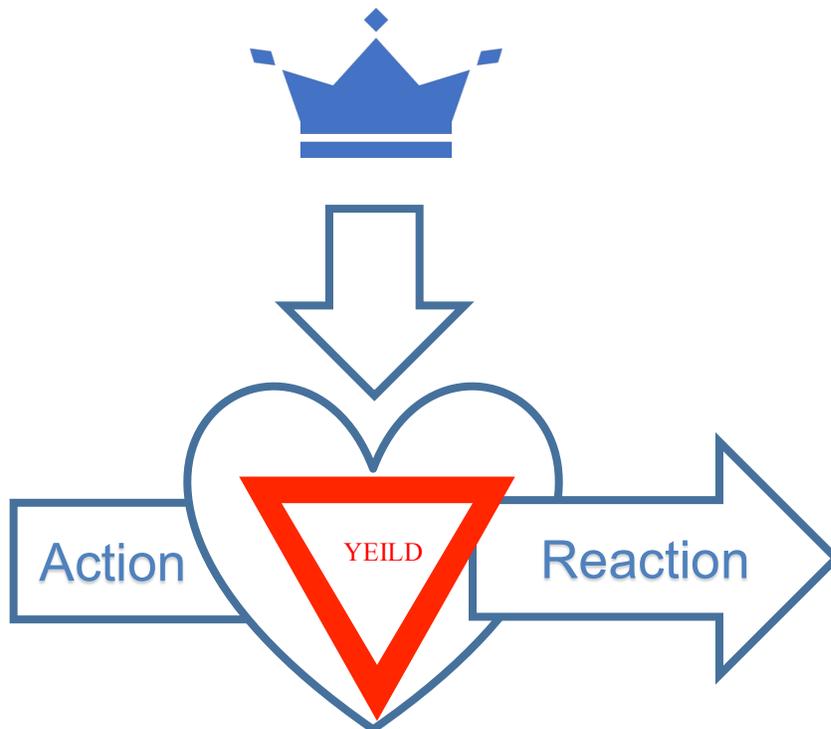
2. Common heart motivations for ungodly judgments

- Jealously & Selfishness- James 3:13-14
- Pride & Self-righteousness – James 3:14, 4:6, 12
- Prejudice - James 2:1-4
- Insecurity & Self-Pity – James 4:2-3
- Unforgiveness – James 4:11-12

E. Getting the Heart Under Control

1. Self-Control as it relates to judgment is the task of slowing down and submitting our hearts desires, and interpretations to God.

- Figure 3



³ David Powlison, "Getting to the Heart of Conflict: Anger Part 3," *The Journal of Biblical Counseling* 16, no. 1 (1997): 34.

James 1:20-21 Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

2. The Spirit gives us personal power to submit to God's judgment because of who he is.
 - We have a passionate personal Father, Savior, Comforter, who has given us life, saved us by his own sacrifice, and now dwells with us to personally encourage and guide.
 - The gospel reminds us how he loves us, understands our weaknesses, and his judgments are for our good. We can trust our interpretations to him.

Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

III. RIGHTLY JUDGING WITH GODLY WISDOM

A. Godly judgment aligns with God's wisdom: James 1:5; 3:13-18

1. It comes packaged with a godly life
2. It is meek-
3. It is not self-centered
4. It is pure
5. It is peaceable
6. It is gentle
7. It is Open to reason, Impartial and sincere
8. It is full of mercy and good fruit
9. It comes with a promise of righteousness

B. Complex situations require judging in community.

IV. CONCLUSION: THE JUDGMENT OF LOVE

A. Our judgments should be shaped by love

1 Cor 13:4-6 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

V. SUGGESTED EXERCISES

- A. Using the framework of 1 Samuel 18-19 assess a situation in your own life where you are tempted toward ungodly judgment. Prayerfully identify the following aspects of the situation**
1. The Action: What factually happened?
 2. The Interpretation: What was my interpretation of the situation?
 3. God's Judgment: How do I believe God assessed this situation? (Use James 3:13-18 as a guide)
- B. Consider Ken Sande's list of temptations to ungodly judgment. Which of these do you think you most struggle with?**
- C. Consider a common situation where you're tempted to ungodly judgment: Using the rubric of 1 Cor 13:4-6 write out how love would judge the situation.**