

**To judge or not to judge –
that is the question**

? ?

Matthew 7:1-5

John 8:2-11



NT apparently contradictory

Don't judge

Jesus

Mat 7:1

John 8:15

John 7:24

Paul

Rom 14:10

Judge

Lk 12:57

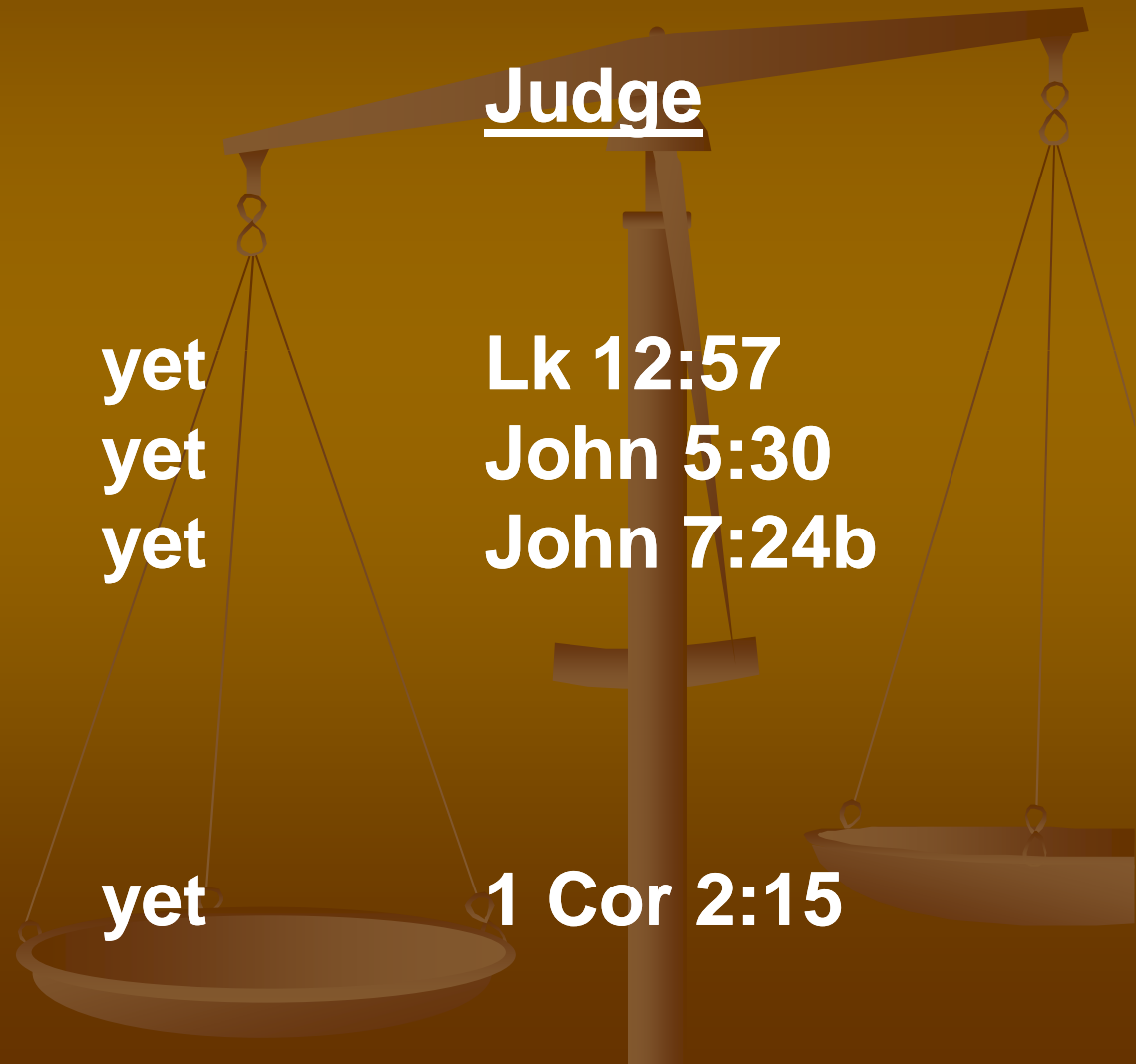
John 5:30

John 7:24b

1 Cor 2:15

yet
yet
yet

yet



Warnings against 'judge condemn'

Mat 7:1,2; Rom 14:13

Why? Because:

- **It's not safe.** Mat 7:1,2
- **We are not qualified** John 8:7, Mat 7:3,4
- **It's not our business.** Rom 14:4
- **It is not relevant.** 1 Cor 4:5



3 Fingers pointing back at us!



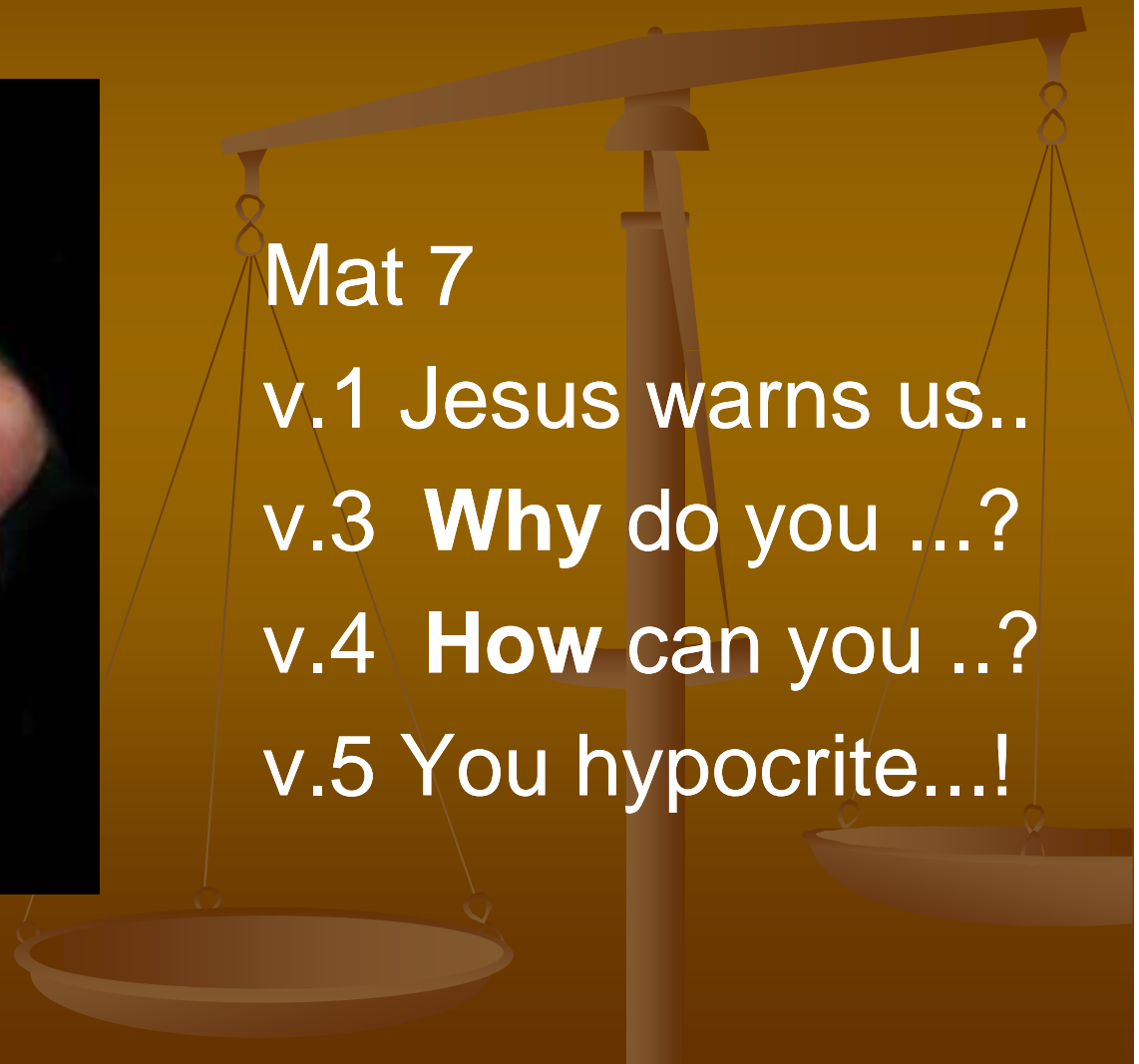
Mat 7

v.1 Jesus warns us..

v.3 **Why** do you ...?

v.4 **How** can you ..?

v.5 You hypocrite...!



'Judge discern'

Exhortations to 'judge discern'

Jesus

Luke 7:43; 12:57

Paul

1 Cor 2:15

Hebrews

Heb 5:14

Even a gift of the Spirit - 1 Cor 10:12

Tolerance and relativism
are not Christian virtues!



What is the key?

Answer: the help of the Holy Spirit. John 5:30

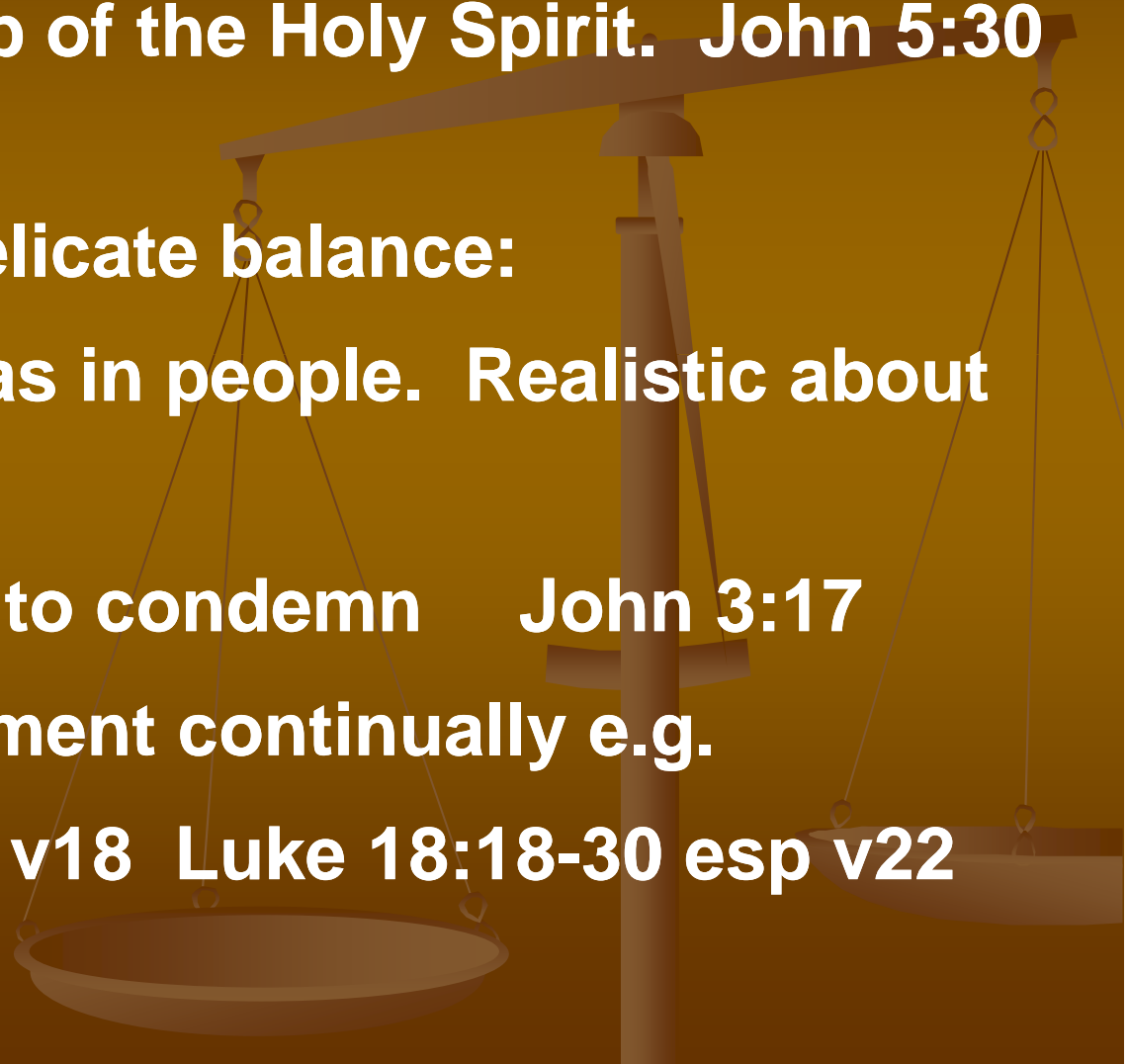
Jesus had the delicate balance:

He knew what was in people. Realistic about sin. John 2:25

He did not come to condemn John 3:17

He used discernment continually e.g.

John 4:1-26 esp. v18 Luke 18:18-30 esp v22



A comparison



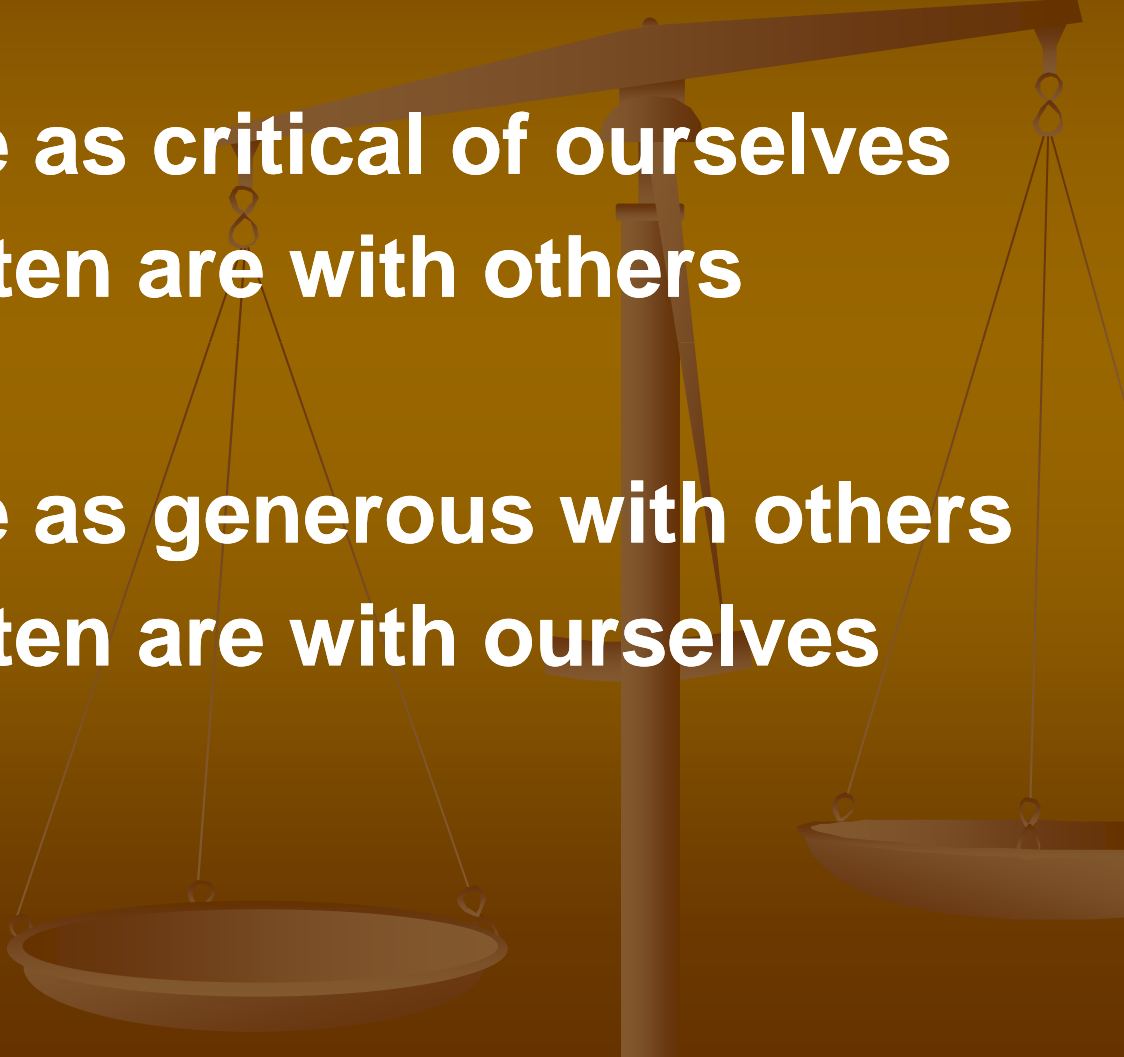
'Judge condemn'

- Quick verdict
- Often public
- Comes from the flesh
- Negative - leads to despair
- Harsh
- Proud - "I know ..."
- Easy to do
- Unnecessary – leave it to God

'Judge discern'

- Often gradual
- Usually private
- Comes from Holy Spirit often with others
- Positive - leads to corrective action
- Gentle
- Humble "I think ..."
- Takes courage, to speak the truth in love
- Very necessary – listen to the Holy Spirit

How are we doing?

- 
- ☺ **We need to be as critical of ourselves as we often are with others**
 - ☺ **We need to be as generous with others as we often are with ourselves**

Summary

Two opposite errors:

- Harshness – a critical spirit (the greater error)
- Opting out – an undiscerning spirit (the lesser error)

Some Christians indulge in condemning others
and therefore fail in discernment.

Other Christians avoid confronting others
and therefore fail in discernment too.

Jesus Himself has it perfectly:

“By myself I can do nothing;
I judge [discern] only as I hear [from the Holy Spirit].....
for I seek not to please myself but Him who sent me”.

By the Spirit of Jesus

let us not 'judge condemn'

but

let us 'judge discern' rightly

