



David Brin
(scientist author)

“When it comes to privacy and accountability, people always demand the former for themselves and the latter for everyone else.”

We somehow feel that civil liberty gives us two rights:

1. The freedom to judge anyone else
2. The freedom from being judged by anyone else



Discrimination **Tolerance**
Prejudice **Openness**
Profiling **Acceptance**



Discernment
(sound judgment)

Christian discernment will involve:

Discrimination, prejudice, & profiling based on Biblical values

Galatians 6:10

“let us do good to all people, and especially to these who are of the household of the faith.”

Christian discernment will involve:

Discrimination, prejudice, & profiling based on Biblical values

along with tolerance, openness, & acceptance based on Biblical boundaries

The Bible seems inconsistent with respect to passing judgment on others?

1. **Imprecatory Psalms vs. Jesus’**
“Vengeance” *Ps.137:9* vs. “Judge not” *Matt.7:1-3*
2. **Paul’s conflicted teaching “judge”**
1 Cor.5:12 vs. “judge not” *Rom.12:14-21*
3. **Paul’s conflicted behavior “judge”**
1 Cor.5:5 vs. “endure” *1 Cor.4:12*

How are we to interpret the Biblical teaching on this subject?

distinguish between:

1. Recognition and Response.

Ephesians 4:1-3

2. Old Covenant and New.

John 1:16-17

3. Church and State.

1 Corinthians 5:9-13

distinguish between:

1. Recognition and Response.

A distinction must be made between “judging” as **recognition** - discernment of “evil as evil” and “judging” as **response** - retaliation or blessing.

- Believers are never taught to call what is evil “good.”
- When Paul calls for “blessing those who persecute us” he is not calling us to endorse persecution but coaching our response to it.
- Believers are called to endure evil in many cases and suffer the injustice that comes with it.
- Behind this posture is the realization that God can and often does use evil for good.

NOTE *Matthew 26:47-56*

Jesus prevents his disciples from stopping the evil of his arrest, trial, and crucifixion.

Hebrews 12

“² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ For consider him who has endured such hostility by sinners against himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”

When we are called to “judge not” we are not asked to withhold discernment but rather to withhold retaliation.

This point is confused in our worldly culture which confuses legal and social tolerance with ideological tolerance.

This is why a person can be against the preaching of a false gospel but not for a legal ban of free speech.

This is why a person can be personally pro-life but not for a legal ban on all abortion.

This is why a person can be opposed to gay marriage but not a homophobic bigot.

Richard John Neuhaus



“In the gay community, it would seem, the maxim is: love the sin and love the sinner, but hate anyone who calls it a sin or him a sinner”

Judgment (recognition) is distinct from judgment (response).

- **Parenting:** Because a parent refrains from disciplining a child while the parent is angry does not mean that they endorse a child's behavior.
- **Economics:** Because a person is opposed to socialism does not mean that they are insensitive to the poor.
- **Social science:** Because a person sees a positive correlation between ethnicity and poverty does not mean that they are racist. Correlation may not mean causation.
- **Ethics:** Because a person blesses the enemy does not mean that they do not recognize the enemy as an enemy.

distinguish between:

1. Recognition and Response
2. Old Covenant and New.

John 1:16-17

"For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. **For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.**"

After the Cross God's people live in a fuller perspective of the Kingdom.

This affects their perception and behavior.

The O.T. scripture pictures a different posture concerning vengeance than the N.T. Epistles.

Psalm 55:15 - "Let death take my enemies by surprise; let them go down alive to the grave."

Psalm 58:6 - "O God, break the teeth in their mouths."

Psalm 69:28 - "May they be blotted out of the book of life and not be listed with the righteous."

Psalm 109:9 - "May his children be fatherless and his wife a widow."

Psalm 137:9 - "How blessed will be the one who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks."

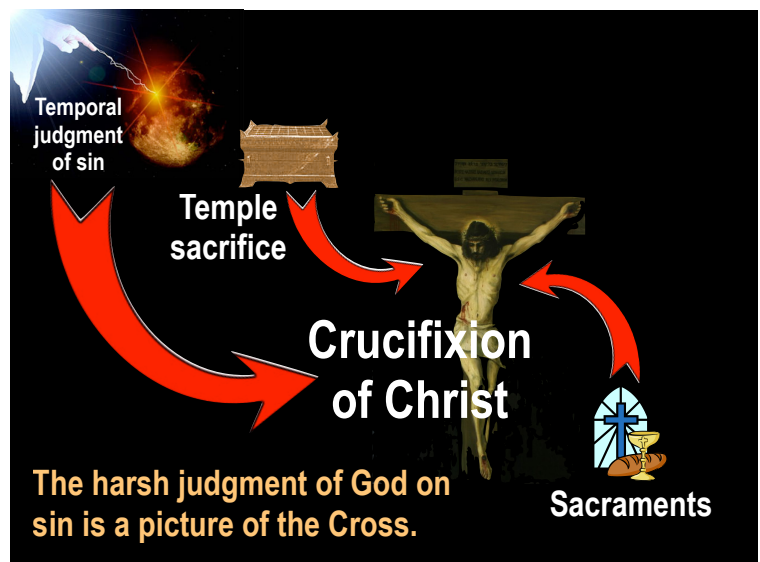
Deuteronomy 7

"¹ When the Lord your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations . . . ¹⁶ then **you must destroy them totally . . . and show them no mercy. Do not leave alive anything that breathes. Completely destroy them . . . as the Lord our God has commanded you.**"

O.T. judgment points to the cross not to the posture of the Christian toward evil.

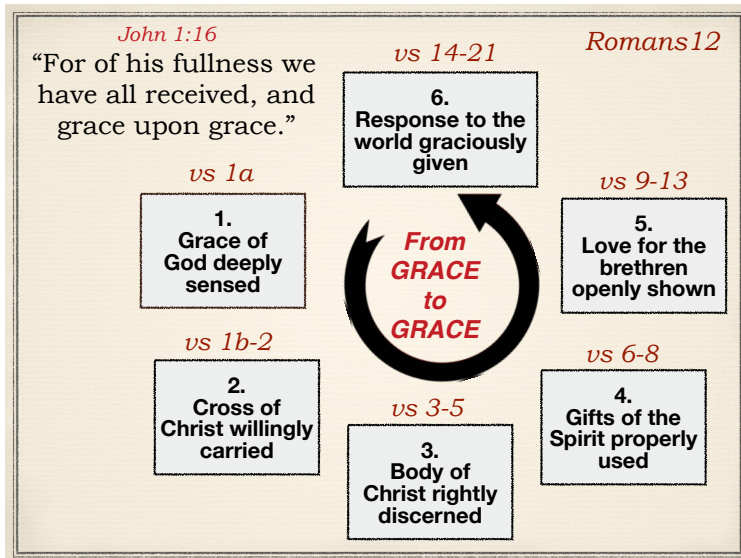
Luke 24

"⁴⁴ These are my words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that **all things which are written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.** ⁴⁵ Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ⁴⁶ and He said to them, 'Thus it is written, that **the Christ would suffer** and rise again from the dead the third day. ⁴⁷ and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all nations.'"



The wrath of God in the Old Testament reveals the seriousness of human sin and the nature of the Cross of Christ.

It is not a pastoral model for the Body of Christ (the church).



distinguish between:

1. Recognition and Response
2. Old Covenant and New
3. Church and State

Matthew 22:21

“Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s; and to God the things that are God’s.”

1 Corinthians 5

“9 I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; 10 I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters; for then you would have to go out of the world. 11 But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he should be an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler - not even to eat with such a one. 12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? 13 But those who are outside, God judges.”

- ✓ The believer is not to judge **those outside the church but forbear with much of the evil in the world.**
- ✓ The church is to judge and discipline its **members** for a variety of transgressions.
- ✓ Believers must not let the call for tolerance keep them from loving **discipline** when needed.
- ✓ Believers must **discern** what, when, where and how to judge.

How should a believer judge?

Celebrate Forebear Confront

Should I forebear or confront?



Love may call for confrontation.

1 Thessalonians 3:6

“Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you **keep aloof from every brother who leads an unruly life** and not according to the tradition which you received from us.”

Love may demand forbearance

Ephesians 4

“¹ I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, **showing forbearance to one another in love**, ³ being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

1. Tolerance is important.



Issues that are not sinful
- taste, culture, temperament, etc.

Issues that are offenses but not critical to spiritual community life
- immaturity, insensitivity, etc.

A healthy congregation cultivates

Christian community

without compromising its

1.

distinct

moral and doctrinal standards

2.

diverse

abilities, responsibilities, passions, perspectives, tastes, callings, cultures, etc.

2. Tolerance assumes an ultimate standard.



Raheel Farooq
(author)

“A good judge is not one who is impartial, but one who has prejudice for good.”

2. Tolerance assumes an ultimate standard.

Tolerance is a moral virtue
between two vices.

Soft headedness

Narrow mindedness

Tolerates
too much

Tolerates
too little

Stands for
nothing, falls
for anything

Equates personal
preferences with
God's mandates

Congregations tend to be of two types
depending on how they picture God.

Grace

Law



"God is Love"
Be sure that everyone
is shown grace and feels
included

"God is Holy"
Be sure that everyone
believes and behaves
properly

3. What we tolerate reveals a lot about our view of God.

Demand

Tolerate

Condemn

A healthy church

Truth of
the Gospel

Differences on
secondary issues

Violation of
core beliefs

Christian
virtues

Differing style
preferences

Violation of
core behaviors

Unhealthy church models

Permissive

Tolerates (celebrates) too much
in the name of Grace

Condemn

Rigid

Celebrate

Tolerates too little
in the name of Holiness

Condemn

Tolerate

4. Legal and social tolerance need not coincide with ideological tolerance.

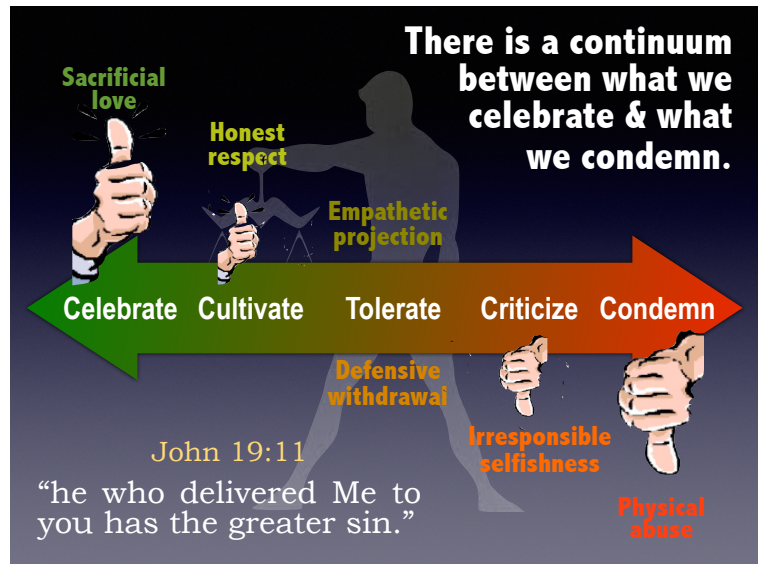
- Disciples are called to be intolerant of a lot of things in the Christian community that they would have no problem with legally or socially in their neighborhood - abortion, homosexuality, no fault divorce, etc.
- Christians may tolerate things in a church that they would not in their own lives - social drinking, a particular political philosophy, etc.

Four reasons for Christian tolerance on a number of issues.

1. God does not want unwilling worship. We need to give room for people to disagree with us.
2. We see as in a glass dimly (1 Cor.13:12). No one has the whole picture clearly in view.
3. We are in process. Our views may change as we mature and become better informed.
4. God is forbearing with us (Rom.2:4, 3:25) and we are exhorted to bear His image in this life (Eph.4:2, Col.3:13).

Rom.14:5 "One man regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Let each man be fully convinced in his own mind."

Some areas where tolerance is needed



Forebear things you may not understand.

1. **Circumstances** - that you may not like but cannot or should not change
2. **Differences of taste** - style, temperament, etc.
3. **Minor transgressions** - lesser sins

Confront things that are clearly damaging.

1. **Satanic obstacles** - false hope & faith
2. **Differences of taste** - when they become exclusive of others.
3. **Major transgressions** - sins that are destructive to individuals and the church

Rules of engagement with evil (review of last week)

1. **Purify your heart** - make peace with the Way and the Word of the Cross.
2. **Hold your fire** - don't let evil seduce you into retaliation.
3. **Lead with Love** - your good motives give you authority to correct others.

4. **Be eager to forebear and also willing to judge** - But only when you must for the salvation of the individual and the church.

(next week)

5. **Diagnose from the outside in** - and minister from the inside out.
6. **Matthew 18 is a guide** - work from personal and private to corporate and public. (next week)