

# DON'T JUDGE ME

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Stand Out Series

Sermon Notes

Text: 1 Corinthians 5:1-13



Visualize friend you look up to and appreciate. Do you have that person in mind? So... you go shopping with this person and their child. And this happens. PLAY VIDEO...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vBfYS4FnZNq>

Be real... How would you respond to your friend? **What would your approach to your friend be?**

- a) **Factual** – I'd give them the cold, hard facts; 'your child is a brat'
- b) **Diplomatic** – 'let's have lunch'. 'You have a gifted child. What would even help them be more gifted...?'
- c) **Sympathetic** – I'd encourage them; 'the poor child probably hasn't had her nap. She is just having a bad day!'
- d) **Tolerant** – I'd think, 'who am I to judge? And how is this any of my business?'
- e) **Other** -

Last week we learnt that one of the most important ways to stand out is through our radical love for each other. We learnt that the early followers of Jesus never called themselves Christians, in fact this was a derogatory term assigned to them by non-believers. Instead they considered themselves disciples. The major difference between these two terms – Christian and Disciple – is that whereas Christian may be defined in many different ways, there is only one definition of a disciple – someone who is committed to living their lives fully surrendered to the one they follow; in this case, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus defined one trait that was to be the measuring rod for disciples, which is that we are to love one another sacrificially, in the same way that God has loved us.

Paul was passionate about sharing his faith in Jesus with others and one of the places he did so was the city of Corinth, which was known as the city where everything goes. Paul started a small community of Jesus followers. But in such a crazy, liberal, party culture, it was only a matter of time before Paul began hearing disturbing reports about some of the things going on in the Corinth church. Please turn with me in your bibles to

**1 Corinthians 5:1-13.** READ (MSG).

***V.1-2 I also received a report of scandalous sex within your church family, a kind that wouldn't be tolerated even outside the church: One of your men is sleeping with his stepmother. And you're so above it all that it doesn't even faze you!***

The Corinth church was standing out but for all the wrong things! It seems there was this guy in the church who was doing some crazy stuff. Now, he wasn't sleeping with his mom. I think Paul would have said that. Perhaps his mom had died, or maybe his parents had gotten divorced. His dad seems to have remarried, and somewhere along the way this guy was hooking up with his dad's current or ex-wife. From the language, it seems this was not a one-time event, but something that was going on consistently. And even the guys outside the church were going, "Oh dude, you don't do that. Nobody

does that. That's just wrong." And so Paul is going 'are you kidding, how come no one has done anything about this? Are you guys so blind you can't see how serious this is?'

Now, here's something you need to understand: the church in Corinth wasn't a big church. **There may have been fifty people.** More like a large life group. So everybody knew what everybody was doing. But **nobody was addressing it, nobody was talking to the guy.** So Paul goes on.

*v.2-5 Shouldn't this break your hearts? Shouldn't it bring you to your knees in tears? Shouldn't this person and his conduct be confronted and dealt with? I'll tell you what I would do. Even though I'm not there in person, consider me right there with you, because I can fully see what's going on. I'm telling you that this is wrong. You must not simply look the other way and hope it goes away on its own. Bring it out in the open and deal with it in the authority of Jesus our Master. Assemble the community—I'll be present in spirit with you and our Master Jesus will be present in power. Hold this man's conduct up to public scrutiny. Let him defend it if he can! But if he can't, then out with him! It will be totally devastating to him, of course, and embarrassing to you. But better devastation and embarrassment than damnation. You want him on his feet and forgiven before the Master on the Day of Judgment.*

That sounds harsh, doesn't it! I mean, here's the confusing part. How can someone who is meant to radically love their neighbor also at the same time judge them? Doesn't the bible say you're not supposed to judge others? But here's the deal: **Even though the Bible says we are generally not to judge, it does say that Jesus' followers must hold each other to account.** What do I mean? When it comes to people in our culture who are not fellow followers of Jesus, we have no business holding them up to a standard that they haven't signed up for. We'll come back to that in a minute. But this guy that Paul is talking about is actually a follower of Jesus, or at least he claims to be. He has signed on the dotted line; he's a disciple, but now his behavior is completely inconsistent with his confession. In fact, even those outside the church can see it!

So Paul has a rather startling prescription, he says, 'out with him!' In the NIV it's even more startling; he says, I want you *'hand this man over to Satan'*. What does that mean? This is a legal phrase he uses. It's like parole officer—I want you to make Satan his parole officer. I want you to make Satan his custodian. He's using figurative language, but he's saying something really strong. He's saying, 'Look, I want you to tell this guy that if he wants to persist in this destructive behavior, that's fine; he just can't do it in here. Send him out there and let him do it there.' He isn't saying, 'send him to hell'. What he's saying is, 'do what it takes to save his life'. Sometimes the most loving thing you can do to someone who persists in their addiction is to allow them to face the consequences of their actions and hit rock bottom. Then hopefully they'll be ready to get some help.

What are we saying? Very much like the people of Corinth, we live in a time and space whose mantra is, 'it's my life'. No one has the right to judge me. No one has the right to tell me what to do. I do what I feel like doing, when I feel like doing it! But Paul is saying, 'that's alright for everybody else, but it doesn't work if you are a disciple'. Remember, a disciple is someone who is 100% committed to living a life of radical obedience to Jesus. But you can't truly live that life unless you are willing to allow others to speak into your life, to hold you accountable and to help you stay true to who you say you are. I believe that this year, God wants you to **stand out by embracing accountability!**

Why is accountability so important in the life of a follower of Jesus? Firstly, we need to understand that:

**1. NONE OF US IS PERFECT.** We all fall short of God's standards in some way or the others. At Mavuno we say we are a church of real people with real issues following a real God. You may be struggling with something obvious like a smoking addiction or porn, and you're sitting here feeling like

a second class citizen, especially when you compare yourself with your neighbor who looks so spiritual and put together. But you have no idea that they are struggling with something just as deadly but more hidden! It could be greed, or bitterness, or envy or gossip or one of those sins that seem more socially acceptable but in reality are just as devastating as the one you carry. When we allow others to hold us accountable, we are saying, 'I admit I'm far from perfect, I can't succeed by myself. I need others in my life to keep me from lying to myself and becoming a hypocrite!' **Stand out by embracing accountability!**

**2. SIN IS INFECTIOUS.** Paul says in v.6, *'Your flip and callous arrogance in these things bothers me. You pass it off as a small thing, but it's anything but that. Yeast, too, is a "small thing," but it works its way through a whole batch of bread dough pretty fast. So get rid of this "yeast." Our true identity is flat and plain, not puffed up with the wrong kind of ingredient. The Messiah, our Passover Lamb, has already been sacrificed for the Passover meal, and we are the Unraised Bread part of the Feast. So let's live out our part in the Feast, not as raised bread swollen with the yeast of evil, but as flat bread—simple, genuine, unpretentious.'*

Some of you know just how infectious sin is because you have struggled with its consequences for a long time. You started looking at porn in high school – it was a fun habit then. But today you are trapped in this vicious habit and its destroying your marriage. You played around as a child with alcohol and now it's wasted the best years of your life. But it goes even further. Many of us today are struggling with the consequences of the sins of our parents and grandparents. There are some families here that have a trail of broken marriages. Marriages just don't last in your family or all the girls have children out of wedlock. There are families here that people have been in conflict for generations – your parents didn't talk, your uncles didn't talk and now you and your siblings can't stand each other. And Paul is saying, this thing that looks like a small thing is not a small thing! You need to deal with it because it will destroy your lives and relationships. **Stand out by embracing accountability!**

*The loving thing is not always to give someone space!* If I see a truck coming to hit you as you cross the highway, the loving thing is not to say, 'you know, it's her decision, let me just give her space. Who am I to judge after all?' At that point, the loving thing is to tackle you and get you out of the way of danger. And Paul is saying every follower of Jesus needs people in their lives who will go out of their way to speak the truth in love to them. But in order for this to happen, we need to open ourselves to being held to account. We need to give others meddling rights into our lives. **Stand out by embracing accountability!**

As Paul is writing all this, it suddenly occurs to him, 'wow, I think I know why they're so confused about this. Because in my previous letter I said something I bet they took the wrong way. So now Paul decides to clear it up. It's here that he answers the question for us: How are we (Jesus followers) supposed to respond to people who aren't followers of Jesus?

*v.9-10 I wrote you in my earlier letter that you shouldn't make yourselves at home among the sexually promiscuous. I didn't mean that you should have nothing at all to do with outsiders of that sort. Or with crooks, whether blue- or white-collar. Or with spiritual phonies, for that matter. You'd have to leave the world entirely to do that!*

Where am I going with this? Paul is saying it's not our business to become the moral police for people who are outside the church. In fact in verse 12 he asks, *'what business is it of mine to judge those outside the church?'* The answer is, it's none of my business. So let me ask you this question. What

business, if you're a Jesus follower or you would call yourself a Christian the question is what business is it of yours to hold a non-Jesus follower accountable for his or her behavior? And the answer is, it's not your business. Now, let me be clear. I'm not talking about the civil or criminal law; that's a whole different kind of law and set of rules. I'm talking about this is how you're supposed to dress and this is how you're supposed to speak and this is how you're supposed to conduct yourself. What business do I have of trying to hold someone accountable to a standard they never signed up for, to begin with? Paul says that it's absolutely none of your business. See, the reason some of you have not wanted to have anything to do with the church for a long time, is that you felt judging by a group of Christians for you for your behavior. You felt judged, and I've just got to tell you that isn't your fault. That's our fault.

*V.11-13 But I am saying that you shouldn't act as if everything is just fine when a friend who claims to be a Christian is promiscuous or crooked, is flip with God or rude to friends, gets drunk or becomes greedy and predatory. You can't just go along with this, treating it as acceptable behavior. I'm not responsible for what the outsiders do, but don't we have some responsibility for those within our community of believers? God decides on the outsiders, but we need to decide when our brothers and sisters are out of line and, if necessary, clean house..*

He is saying, "You don't have any business judging the people on the outside, but as a follower of Jesus, you must be open to correcting and being corrected by others. If there's somebody in your Life Group, in your ministry team, and basically, they're heading in the wrong direction, you're supposed to speak the truth in love to that person. That's the most loving thing that you can do!

**Challenge:** Do you have someone in your life who can ask you the hard questions without you being defensive? Is there someone in your life who can tell you your fashion sense isn't quite working? Or you are a dangerous driver? Or even more personal – you're bringing your child up to be a brat? Or the way you treat your sister or your wife is not appropriate? See if it's hard now, it's only going to get harder as you become older and more successful. You owe it to yourself to surround yourself with people who can speak truth in love to you. **Stand out by embracing accountability!**

Remember, it's far easier to be a Christian. You just follow certain rules or do certain things and then you can do whatever you want to do with the rest of your life. But to be a disciple is a totally different thing. And God wants this to be the year you stand out as a disciple of Jesus. God wants you to stand out in your workplace, in your family and in everything you do. Every week, we have small groups called Life Groups that meet in different homes. And one of the things they do, is to hold each other accountable to applying God's word to their lives. None of us is perfect! **Stand out by embracing accountability!**

This coming February, we want to take it to a whole new level. As a church are going to walk together through a 10 week experience called Simama. We'll be doing it in all our Life Groups and the whole intention is to help us win freedom for our families. Your family may not have issues like alcoholism or conflict but all our families have issues. As we walk through it, we'll have a chance to pray for your family along with others in your life group. And the plan is after we're done, every LG will visit each other's families to bring prayer and freedom and blessing to the family members of every single person who walks through this process.

#### **PRAY: Altar Call**

1. I've no one who can speak real truth in love to me – but with God's help, I want to surround myself with such
2. Salvation