

# The One Verse Unbelievers Love to Quote (Luke 6:37)

## Summary:

- Jesus spends all night in prayer (presumably) to select His disciples, as His human will aligns with His divine will. When Jesus descends from the mountain after choosing the Twelve (v.13-16), He preaches the “Sermon on the Plain” to three audiences: the Twelve, the crowd of disciples, and the great multitudes (v.12-17). He explains the ethic of those who belong to the kingdom of heaven and those who will in the future.
- Jesus informs His audience that poverty, mourning, and hunger can lead them to faith and dependence on God or could result from persecution for their faith and reliance upon Him (v.22-23, 26).
- This kingdom ethic is spiritual in nature, having tangible expressions that include love toward enemies: doing good, blessing, prayer (v.27-28), and generosity (v.29-30), which are opposite the cultural merit-based system known as *lex talionis* (law of reciprocity) that is typical of mankind in general (v.32-34).
- The disciple is to be generous in meeting a need while exercising wisdom and discretion as stewards without encouraging idleness and beggary.
- In this economy, the disciple of Jesus Christ will be taken advantage of to a certain degree. The absence of earthly rewards will result in greater heavenly rewards. However, the disciple is not driven by reward, as to operate in this fashion would be reverting to the business-like ethic of the world.
- The disciple of Jesus Christ uses his resources to win people to Christ and is intentional about doing good to sinners.
- The disciple of Christ, in his generosity, is never a victim but a victor as he gives freely from a position of strength, not weakness. He perseveres on behalf of Christ with God’s strength through the maligning, hatred, spurning, and even false accusations on behalf of the Son of Man (v.22).

## 1. The Disciple of Jesus Christ Judges and is Right in Doing So (v.37a)

To judge: rendering a verdict as good, bad, moral, immoral, correct, incorrect, true, or false; involves elements that include moral imperative and necessities (should), subjective options (could), and potential situational ethics (could).

Jesus is not issuing a universal prohibition to judge (render a verdict). Why?

- Refraining from rendering any verdicts, whether subjective or objective, is impossible. Even in neutrality, judgment is rendered.
- If judging is morally wrong, the statement is circular and self-defeating.
- Jesus is not forbidding His disciples (and us) from making ethical or moral conclusions (Matt. 5:27-28). We are to render a proper, informed verdict (judgment) on truth, error, sin, and righteousness (Jn. 7:24; 1 Cor. 2:15; 5:5,9, 11-13; 2 Cor. 11:4; Gal. 2:11-14; 6:1; Phil. 3:2; 1 Tim. 5:20-21; 2 Tim. 4:2; Jas. 5:20; 1 Jn. 4:1; 2 John 10).
- Christians are to be wise as serpents and innocent as doves (Matt. 10:16; Col. 4:50).
- The disciple of Jesus Christ is to judge, coming to correct and settled ethical conclusions.
- We must speak out and act against immoral and ungodly words and behaviors.
- Only those with a settled worldview and position of right and wrong, truth and error, can judge.
- From Jesus’ perspective, the issue is not a strict view of rendering the verdict (judging), but instead, whether the judgment is fully informed with the right motive and attitude (which is difficult to assess from one person to the other). Jesus is not concerned with the facts of the judgment but about the underlying motive and comprehension of the one judging.

## 2. The Disciple of Jesus Christ Judges and Is Wrong in Doing So (v.37a, b)

From Jesus’ perspective, if we are to judge (Jn. 7:24), how are we to then “not judge” (Lk 6:37)?

- Jesus is distinguishing between what we would call judgment vs. judgmentalism.

Judgmentalism: a prideful heart that manifests itself in a hypercritical nature that wrongfully assumes motives behind every act with the purpose of condemnation and not redemption.

*What is the fruit of judgmentalism? The person operating under judgmentalism:*

- assumes someone’s motives (especially concerning sin) when it is not evident. Those supposed motives are painted with the “darkest brush.”
- busies himself with the affairs of others. He is other-oriented, not for the other person’s good, but because he loves being critical.
- possesses strong opinions about everything without sufficient information.
- possesses a hypercritical spirit that frequently finds faults unobserved by others.
- allows no room for the growth of an individual.
- rarely forgives.
- has no proportional sense of sin and wrongdoing: minor offenses receive the same “backlash” as egregious ones.
- refuses to overlook minor offenses.
- is often misinformed, quick to speak, quick to become angry, and slow to listen (Jas. 1:19).
- has an attitude of superiority that silently rejoices in the sins of others. As a legalist at heart, he uses the sins of others as the launchpad for self-worship.
- is more forgiving of his own sins against others than sins committed against him.
- invests more time defending himself than seeking to “unpack” misunderstandings.
- will accumulate for himself others who are like him, with shallow friendships.
- have not and will not win anyone to Christ because mercy, grace, forgiveness, and kindness are never rendered to anyone other than himself.

\*Condemnation is the only verdict rendered to the offending party (v.37b) with no hope of reconciliation or redemption. While this describes the lifestyle of unbelievers, disciples of Jesus Christ can adopt this fleshly and worldly attitude if they are not consistently being washed and cleansed by the Word of God, meditating upon it, and convicted by the Holy Spirit.

## 3. The Disciple of Jesus Christ Forgives Because God Has Forgiveness Him (v.37c)

To forgive: releasing from the payment of a debt or pardoning for a crime committed.

One of the main contributors to judgmentalism is unforgiveness.

Can I forgive someone who has never apologized, confessed, repented, or remunerated me?

- Yes. Horizontally (image bearer to image bearer), the offended party can grant forgiveness. While forgiveness can be rendered without confession and repentance of the other party, reconciliation cannot.

*The venom of unforgiveness*: Unforgiveness victimizes the victim again, though the sin may never be committed again. It yokes the offender to the offended and turns a one-time offense into a lifetime of offenses. It has ruined the joy of many by producing bitterness, anger, and resentment.

The disciple of Jesus Christ will forgive because God has forgiven him. Just as God paid the debt of sin by giving Himself, a child of God will extend mercy and “pay that debt,” for they have received much mercy. In extending forgiveness to the unworthy, the child is like their Father, Who is kind and merciful to the ungrateful (v.32-36).