

Below is a response from a student (Sarah) at a high school visited by OSA, November 17, 2004. Flip responds to her concerns about making judgments. "Do not judge!" seems to be the Christian mantra of the day and yet, is that truly what Jesus would have us do?

Dear Operation Save America,

I am a student at a high school in Concord, North Carolina. Members of your organization are currently protesting at my school and intend to do so all week. I am a very active Christian at my church. I participate in praise band, puppets, ensemble, etc. I participate in CYC (committed young Christians) which is held at my school every Friday morning. In NO WAY WHATSOEVER has my school ever oppressed my values that I can think of. I go on mission trips. I spread the good news of Jesus Christ, His grace, His love and his mercy towards all humankind.

I go to a public school, so naturally I am exposed to all walks of life. I eat lunch with a Muslim girl. I have classes with some gothic people. I know a few homosexuals. The message I am receiving from your organization and the demonstrators at my school is that I should shun these acquaintances and reject them. This confuses me because doesn't the Bible say that we are to show Christian love towards the world? LOVE, not forcing someone to believe what I believe and if they don't they are going to hell. Jesus is going to do the saving, not me and if I cannot show my friends enough love and understanding through Christ, then it is not my problem, it is the person's. I cannot change them and you certainly cannot. Which brings me to another point.

I am extremely outraged at the persona of a Christian your organization portrays. Every non-Christian I have talked to now perceives a Christian as someone who hates anyone that is not like them with a passion (Muslims, Goths etc.). Non-Christians at my school are getting the message that Christians force values on people, discriminate, and are close-minded. I feel that any hope or curiosity that someone had in Christianity is now extinguished.

My Christian friends and I will now have to work twice as hard to show people that Christians are unconditionally loving, accepting, and that Jesus is a god of love, not wrath. (mainly of love sometimes wrath). I am not accepting homosexuality, devil worship, etc, I am just saying that your organization is not going about the best way to show people God's saving grace. I am not sure what your purpose was in coming to my school, but I can tell you that you have only caused extreme anger, confusion and hurt. Are these the things God wants?

Flip's response:

Dear Sarah,

Thanks for your wonderful and very sincere letter. If nothing else, we've got you thinking. You have written well! I sure wish you had picked up some of our brochures. They would have helped you to understand that we are not "protesting" anything. We are simply proclaiming that Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life and that no one comes to the Father, but by Him.

Pretty judgmental, huh !

This simple truth is one you must share with your Muslim friend, if you love her.

You see Sarah, Islam says that Jesus was a prophet, but that is all. It does not believe that He died on a cross. It does not believe that He rose from the dead. It does not believe that He is God. Either Islam is a lie or Christianity is a lie.

Now, the Apostle Paul said that if Christ was not raised from the dead we would still be in our sins, and that our faith would be in vain. Sarah, the wonderful news is, that our faith is not in vain. Jesus was crucified on a cross, He has risen from the dead, and our faith in Him cleanses us from all sin. He is God and apart from Him there is no other.

Sarah, this may not appear to be loving to you because you feel that it is judgmental. **But God is judgmental and He calls you and I to be the same.**

That's right! If you will closely examine the context of **Matthew 7:1-11**, you will find that we are not to judge others hypocritically for **"...in the measure you use, it will be measured unto you."** The measure we use Sarah, is the very measure that we apply to ourselves. It is the Word of God!

You have seen the large set of the Ten Commandments displayed outside of your school. You have seen the "Jesus is the Standard" banners at the entrances of your school. This is the measure we use Sarah – it is the Word of God.

This Word judges what is good and what is evil. It judges that murder is evil, stealing is evil, adultery is evil, etc. May I ask you a simple question? How do you

distinguish between what is good and what is evil if you don't make a judgment?

As a matter of fact Jesus requires us to judge and make a right judgment in **John 7:24**. In **Matthew 7:3-5**, you will find the criteria for making a right judgment. First, we must remove the log from our own eye so that we can see (judge) clearly, and then we can remove the speck from our brother's eye.

There is no room for hypocrisy here! We must first judge ourselves by the Law of God and then use that same measure to help our brother who has a speck in his eye.

Then, in **Matthew 7:6**, the Bible says that we are not to give to dogs what is sacred. How will I know who or what a dog is if I do not make a judgment? It says later not to cast pearls before pigs. How will I know who or what a swine is if I don't make a judgment? Further on in context (**Matthew 7:15-20**) it tells us to beware of false prophets. How will I know who a false prophet is if I don't judge him by his fruit?

Significantly, the Bible tells us that the spiritual man makes judgments about all things (**1 Corinthians 2:15**). Think about that Sarah. We, as Christians, are called by God Himself to judge - but only by His Word.

Jesus told His earthly brothers in **John 7:7**, that, "...the world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that what it does is evil." Why did the world hate Jesus? Was He not "LOVE" personified? Why then, did the world hate the One who loved it? It hated Him because He made judgments. Yes, it was His "hate speech" testifying that what the world was doing was evil that made everyone angry at Him.

Jesus became a mirror to the world so to speak, and revealed to all of us what we really are. Pretty ugly picture isn't it!

Was it because He hated us that He revealed to us our sin, or was it because He loved us?

It was because He loved us! Yes, He was willing to be despised by all to reveal to each of us that we are sinners and deserve only death. But God so loved us that He sent us His Son, that if we would believe on Him, we would have eternal life. This is what it says in John 3:16.

But what follows is John 3:17. God didn't send His Son into the world to condemn it, but to save it. God's love always feels like condemnation initially. It judges us for what we really are and exposes an ugly truth - we are, all of us, sinners (**Romans 3:23**).

When we confess that we are sinners in need of a Savior, and believe in our hearts that God has raised Jesus from the dead for the forgiveness of sins, we shall be saved.

Real love, Sarah, loves others enough to tell them the truth. It will require you to be judgmental. Are you willing to tell the truth? Are you willing to really love your neighbor?

In Christian love,

Flip Benham,
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OPERATION SAVE AMERICA



"Do Not Judge!"
*Conversation Between a High School
Student and Flip*