“Judge Righteous Judgment” and “From Such Turn Away”

**JST Mt 7:1-7; 2 Tim 3:1-7.**

Judging between good and evil involves judging people, because good and evil do not exist outside of, or separate from, people. God blesses righteous people, not righteousness alone. God punishes sinners, not sin.

The Lord has directed us to discern between good and evil. We are to discern between the righteous and the wicked. The scriptures (standard works and teachings of the living apostles and prophets) which are included provide relevant evidence.

How many times have we been counseled by the General Authorities to be very careful in selecting our friends? That selection process requires judging and judgment.

Sometimes people will misquote or misuse scripture when we attempt to follow the counsel of making righteous judgments and turning away from those who could do us damage, such as “Judge not, that ye be not judged.” (Mt 7:1; but see JST version.)

2 Tim 3:1-7. Lists all kinds of sins existing in the “last days.” Among the list are: men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. And the given counsel is: from such turn away. It also warns about gullible women who get their religion from evil sources. We have to judge in order to determine from whom we turn away.

2 Thess 3:6. Members are commanded to “withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.”

1 Cor 5:9-13. Paul directs the good members not to “company with fornicators ... or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters.” He also directs them “not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner.”

The Hebrews 5:11-14. Paul says that he likes to tell them the truths of the gospel, but that many are “dull of hearing.” So he has to keep playing around with milk and never get to the meat. Some people prefer a sugar-coated, “soft” gospel rather than the real thing. “For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

D&C 101:95. “That I may proceed to bring to pass my act, my strange act, and perform my work, my strange work, that men may discern between the righteous and the wicked, sathy your God.”

Jn 7:24. “Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.”

JST Mt 7:1-2, 6-8. “Now these are the words which Jesus taught his disciples that they should say unto the people. Judge not unrighteously, that ye be not judged; but judge righteous judgment ... Beholdest thou the Scribes, and the Pharisees, and the Priests, and the Levites? They teach in their synagogues, but do not observe the law, nor the commandments; and all have gone out of the way, and are under sin. Go thou and say unto them, Why teach ye men the law and the commandments, when ye yourselves are the children of corruption? Say unto them, Ye hypocrites, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see more clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.”

3 Ne 24:18. “Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.”

Moro 7:13-16, 18-19. “But behold, that which is of God inviteth and enticeth to do good continually; wherefore, every thing which inviteth and enticeth to do good, and to love God, and to serve him, is inspired of God. Wherefore, take heed, my beloved brethren, that ye do not judge that which is evil to be of God, or that which is good and of God to be of the devil. For behold, my brethren, it is given unto you to judge, that ye may know good from evil; and the way to judge is as plain, that ye may know with a perfect knowledge, as the daylight is from the dark night. For behold, the Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil; wherefore, I show unto you the way to judge; for every thing which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ; wherefore ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God...." And now, my brethren, seeing that ye know the light by which ye may judge, which light is the light of Christ, see that ye do not judge wrongfully; for with that same judgment which ye judge ye shall also be judged. Wherefore, I beseech of you, brethren, that ye should search diligently in the light of Christ that ye may know good from evil; and if ye will lay hold upon every good thing, and condemn it not, ye certainly will be a child of Christ.”

Alma 5:37-39. “O ye workers of iniquity; ye that are puffed up in the vain things of the world, ye that have professed to have known the ways of righteousness nevertheless have gone astray, as sheep having no shepherd, notwithstanding a shepherd hath called after you and is still calling after you, but ye will not hearken unto his voice! Behold, I say unto you, that the good shepherd doth call you; yea, and in his own name he doth call you, which is the name of Christ; and if ye will not hearken unto the voice of the good shepherd, to the name by which ye are called, behold, ye are not the sheep of the good shepherd. And now if ye are not the sheep of the good shepherd, of what fold are ye? Behold, I say unto you, that the devil is your shepherd, and ye are of his fold; and now, who can deny this? Behold, I say unto you, whosoever denieth this is a liar and a child of the devil.”

2 Ne 15:20-25. “Woo unto them that call evil good, and good evil, that put darkness for light, and light for darkness, that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! WO unto the wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight! WO unto the mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink; Who justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him! Therefore, as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, their root shall be rottenness, and their blossoms shall go up as dust; because they have cast away the law of the Lord of Hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel. Therefore, is the anger of the Lord kindled against his people, and he hath stretched forth his hand against them, and hath smitten them; and the hills did tremble, and their carcasses were torn in the midst of the streets. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.”

Morm 8:19. Don't judge rashly.


1 Kgs 3:9-12. An understanding heart to discern judgment between the good and bad.

Ezek 44:23-24. Discern between the unclean (wicked) and the clean (righteous).

Isa 1:17. “Learn to do well; seek judgment [justice], relieve the oppressed, judge [give a just verdict to] the fatherless, plead for the widow.”

**Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 96.**

“Men who have no principle of righteousness in themselves, and whose hearts are full of iniquity, and have no desire for the principles of truth, do not understand the word of truth when they hear it. The devil taketh away the word of truth out of their hearts, because there is no desire for righteousness in them. There are those who are evil people, and we should be able to discern such for the protection of the righteous.

**Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pp. 126-129.** “Such characters [traitors] God hates; we cannot love them. The world hates them, and we sometimes think that the devil ought to be ashamed of them.... Such characters God hates.”

Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses 5:57. “Do you know that there is no fellowship between Christ and Baal? Do you think a union has taken place between them? Can you fellowship those who will serve the Devil? If you do, you are like them, and we wish you to go with them; for we do not want you. We wish that all such men and women would apostatize and come out boldly and...”
say, ‘We are going to hell upon our own road’; and I will say, ‘Go ahead, and may the Devil speed you on your journey!’...’ But do not be snoopin’ round pretending to be Saints, at the same time be receiving such men into your houses and such spirits into your hearts, as many do ...” (19 July 1857).

Discourses of Brigham Young, p. 71. “How many times Elders of Israel try to make me fellowship the Devil, or his imps, or his servants; also try to make you fellowship your enemies, to amalgamate the feelings of the Saints and the ungodly? It cannot be done; it never was done, and never can be accomplished. Christ and Baal never can be friends.”

Discourses of Brigham Young, p. 78. “I would not associate with those who blaspheme the name of God, nor would I let my family associate with them. By this you may know whether you are in the path that leads to life and salvation. If you can hear the name of the Deity lightly spoken of an blasphemed, and not be shocked by it, you may know that you are not in the path.”

Discourses of Brigham Young, p. 240. “I have not the least desire to mingle with or look upon the faces of those who hate God and his cause.”

Discourses of Brigham Young, p. 43. I pray both for my friends and for my enemies, that, if they will not repent, the earth may be speedily emptied of the ungodly. Journal of Discourses 4:346.

Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses, 8:158, August 26th, 1860. We are the best people in the world, and have the greatest reason to be thankful because of our location and situation. Let us love one another, and love God supremely. It is written, “Love your enemies.” Brother Erastus Snow was going to correct Paul for trying to excuse himself. I do not think the term was any more misapplied than when the Apostles wrote, “Love your enemies,” for I do not believe a word of it to others. In the Church we have the agency to believe whatever we want to believe. But we are not authorized to teach it to others as truth.

If someone approaches you individually or invites you to very private meetings, claiming to have some special calling, whatever you do, follow Paul’s counsel—“from such turn away.”...”

“Is it not the belief in a false notion that is the problem, it is the teaching of it to others. In the Church we have the agency to believe whatever we want to believe. But we are not authorized to teach it to others as truth.”


and for the Church of Jesus Christ, so that he will fight and lie about the Church and the truth, and seek by every power within his reach to injure and wrong them, there is no forgiveness for that man, and if he goes just far enough, there is no repentance for him either.”

Boyd K. Packer, Gen. Conf., Ensign, 5/1985, pp. 33ff. “Brethren and sisters, I had in mind speaking on another subject today. How-ever, during the last few days, I have had pressing upon me, by inspiration as I believe, the feeling that I should present some counsel on another subject...”

“The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy of perilous times and apostasy to come in the last days. He listed the many evils that would be abroad in those perilous times, such things as false accusers, despisers of those that are good, and traitors, and he warned, ‘From such turn away.’ (2 Tim 3:1-5) ...”

“The very nature of the priesthood allows for a great variety in the gospel knowledge of members struggling to learn as they serve.

“At any given time, may not understand one point of doctrine or another, may have a misconception, or even believe something is true that in fact is false.

“There is not much danger in that. That is an inevitable part of learning the gospel. No member of the Church should be embarrassed at the need to repent of a false notion he might have believed. Such ideas are corrected as one grows in light and knowledge.

“It is not the belief in a false notion that is the problem, it is the teaching of it to others. In the Church we have the agency to believe whatever we want to believe. But we are not authorized to teach it to others as truth.”

extend the hand of prospective fellowship to those who seek the truth and who are living according to the best light and knowledge they have, but it is quite another to clasp an enemy to the bosom of the Church. ‘Public meetings, which are held before the world,’ are open to anyone. Non-members ‘who are earnestly seeking the kingdom’ are welcome in sacrament meetings. (D&C 46:3-5.) However, those who have known the truth, and who have rebelled and become enemies of the Church, are in a different category. Those who sin and remain unrepentant are cast out of the Church. (D&C 42:20-28.) Excommunicated and disfellowshipped persons have definite restrictions placed upon them. Even God cast one-third of the hosts of heaven out for rebellion.”

Spencer W. Kimball, *Miracle of Forgiveness*, pp. 45–46. “What shall be said of those members who press so hard and publicize their criticisms of the Church that they give encouragement to its enemies and embarrass its leadership and the other faithful members? Being ‘false to an obligation or duty’ is one definition of a traitor—and surely baptized members have an obligation to support the Church and further its ends.

“What could be more despicable than a traitor to a friend, a church, a nation, or a cause? Paul thought this defection ugly enough that he included it in his prophecy of latter-day sins. (See 2 Tim 3:4.) The traitor often works in the dark, deceitfully.... does anyone love or admire them? We are not without traitors in the Church today, those who would destroy that which is good to win their own selfish earthly rewards or to accomplish their base schemes.”

*Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, pp. 592-593. “You are nineteen years old when you are called; maybe you will be seventy-nine when you die. In those sixty years, what a powerful influence you can be. And you must do it! You must do it because it will be a wasted life, to a degree, if any one of you go home and let your hair grow and wear sloppy clothes and do ordinary things and break the Sabbath or any other of the laws of God.... The Lord knew what he was doing when he impressed the Brethren to have you be neat and tidy and clean in the mission field....

“Sometimes we find a returned missionary who lets his hair grow long immediately. He is very anxious to become part of the world again. He has been free of the world for a couple of years, now he would like to taste that ‘sweet’ world, if you can call it that. We find that some young men who return home their missions put on their overalls and very first day they get home, and that old sweater that was ready to throw away before they left. They like to put on all those things. It always pleases me when I go to a community and I see the returned missionaries still well dressed, well groomed, and have their testimony and are eager to give the message that they had been teaching all those years....

“I want you to know it is hard for me to be disappointed, and I rejoice in the blessings of the Lord daily. But a few things disappoint me occasionally and one of them is the returned missionary who, after two years of taking great pride in how he looks and what he represents, returns to this campus or some other place to see how quickly he can let his hair grow, how fully he can develop a moustache and long sideburns and push to the very margins of appropriate grooming, how clumsy his shoes get, how tattered his clothes... how close to being grubby he can get without being refused admittance to the school. That, my young returned missionary brethren, is one of the great disappointments in my life.”

Spencer W. Kimball, *Miracle of Forgiveness*, p. 104. “Not only does a person become what he thinks, but often he comes to look like it.”

Spencer W. Kimball, *Ensign*, March 1980, p. 2. “I assure you that all Church standards, both those relating to moral conduct and those relating to dress and grooming, are the result of intense, prayerful consideration by Church leaders. Young adults whose clean-cut appearance demonstrates that they feel no need to follow after the pattern of the world—which often rebels in filth and disorder and garish fads.... *We are affected by our own outward appearances; we tend to fill roles.*”

James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, p. 649. “We are not the invested judges of Judas nor of any other; but we are competent to frame and hold opinions as to the action of any.”

Neal A. Maxwell, *A More Excellent Way*, p. 127. “Jesus made it crystal clear that the outer appearance and inner feelings must, ultimately, coincide.”

Neal A. Maxwell, *A More Excellent Way*, p. 90. “Too often in the Church we are slow to reprove even when reproof is needed.”

Neal A. Maxwell, Conference Report, *Ensign*, November 2001, p. 80. “Previously, society has often had helpful, though subtle, balancing and restraining mechanisms—including fashion, church, and school— to check excessive individual behavior. But too often some of these mechanisms are either missing, malfunctioning, or equivocating.

“Moreover, the foregoing [immoral] trends are further accelerated by the *fashionable nonjudgmentalism* which excuses whatever wrong individuals do—as long as they do anything else commendable. After all, didn’t Mussolini make the trains run on time?”

Marvin J. Ashton, Conference Report, *Ensign*, October 1976, p. 125. “To those who would say, ‘It’s what you really are inside that counts, not the length of the hair or beard,’ I would say, ‘If this is true, and I agree it is, why run the risk of looking like something you’re not?’.... Self image is often enhanced by the clothing worn.... To be overdressed or immodestly dressed may create wrong impressions and improper identifications. Improper clothing may also lead to wrong actions.”

Harold B. Lee, *Manchester Area Conference, Ensign*, November 1971, p. 14. “The gospel of Jesus Christ does have the answers to the problems that afflict the world, whether it be in the youth area, whether it be in public life, the social customs and manners, the standards as laid down in the church and kingdom of God, and the manner by which those standards are maintained.... As we see the hideous dress standards among the men and women, as we learn of the terrifying portrayal of filth and rot in entertainment places, we say, as we said to the brethren last night: Never go to any place that you wouldn’t take your priesthood with you. Stay out of such places. Someone said, when you find a place that is labeled ‘adults only; no children or youth allowed,’ no adults should be allowed either, if you will be safe from the pitfalls of the devil. We are members whom the Lord expects to be a light unto the world, and to set a standard for people to seek it.

“As we see the lewd demonstrations of dress, I am reminded of what a man said to one of our brethren—President Anthony W. Ivins of the First Presidency—who was over in the Hawaiian Islands, where we first saw the lewd exposure of those who were bathing in the surf. This businessman said, ‘Mr. Ivins, in the world where I come from, any woman who displays herself in nude or seminude clothing is inviting rape.’

“Now you sisters, because the world is setting a fashion of lewd dress that makes for lewd exposure, may I plead with you to keep yourselves sacred, and not let your dress be an invitation to those who are wicked or those who look with wicked glance upon your person.

“As in former times, there may be many who take offense at what to them may seem hard things, and they are prone to turn away and walk no more with us.”

Bruce R. McConkie, *Millennial Messiah*, pp. 502-503. “The saints in the Church and the Gentiles in the world will both be judged by the same standard—the standard of Christ. How can anyone be judged by any other measuring rod? He hath given a law unto all things, and all things are subject unto him.”

David O. McKay, Conference Report, October 1920, p. 44. “... we can judge our boys and our girls greatly by the companions they keep, as well as by their actions in the home.”

David O. McKay, Conference Report, April 1947, p. 121. “When you know what right is and are capable of correcting a person that is wrong, then it is time enough for you to judge.”

David O. McKay, Conference Report, October 1953, p. 9. “Whether we live miserably or live abundantly depends upon ourselves. Look introspectively, young man and young woman, and determine whether your innermost thoughts hold you on the animal plane or whether they tend to lift you into the mental, moral, and spiritual realm. And you be your own judge. Are you scheming to exploit another for personal gain? Are you justifying a lie? Are you entertaining the thought of robbing a young woman of her virtue? Are you, young woman, justifying an act of unchastity in exchange for the attention or favor of a male companion? If these or any other selfish sinful thoughts obsess you, then you are not following the path of the abundant life, but are contributing to the
continuance of a sordid, unhappy world.”

Boyd K. Packer, General Conference, *Ensign*, November 1991, p. 22. “For the past several years we have watched patterns of reverence and irreverence in the Church. While many are to be highly commended, we are drifting. We have reason to be deeply concerned.

“The world grows increasingly noisy. Clothing and grooming and conduct are looser and sloppier and more disheveled. Raucous music, with obscene lyrics blasted through amplifiers while lights flash psychedelic colors, characterizes the drug culture. Variations of these things are gaining wide acceptance and influence over our youth.”


“You see, we know the reason you wear short skirts and these things is because you are pure in heart. ‘I’m doing everything I can do. What difference does this make?’ Do you know, it makes a great deal of difference. Please be modest in your dress.

“And fellows, lest peradventure you think we might just talk to the girls, we know the reason you sometimes let your hair grow too long. It’s because you are pure in heart. But please do not do that; do not let your hair grow too long, where it look feminine—not because of the conditions around, but be-cause the Lord’s holy prophets said, ‘Let’s follow the pattern of the Brethren; let’s dress the way they do.’ Be modest.”


“Where do we stand? Where is our allegiance? Can we now see why the Savior said we cannot serve both God and mammon, why we cannot serve two opposite masters?

“Can anyone be clean and dirty at the same time? Can anyone be an honest man and yet a thief? Can anyone be both virtuous and adulterous? Can anyone revel in worldliness and at the same time be saintly?

“But some try!

“How many businessmen make a pious appearance on Sunday and act otherwise during the week? How many people in government make a show of honesty while they manipulate their office to bring themselves personal advantage?”

Presiding Bishopric, *The Messenger*, No. 13, January 1957. “Proper dress Noted for Sacrament Service. Again we remind bishoprics, general secretaries, and quorum advisers, that young men are to be encour-aged to wear white or pastel colored shirts, with or without coats as they prefer, when passing the sacrament. Priest should always wear white shirts and, preferably,coats as well when administering at the sacrament table.”

Jeffrey R. Holland, General Conference, *Ensign*, May 1995, p. 68. “May I suggest that wherever possible a white shirt be worn by the deacons, teachers, and priests who handle the sacrament. For sacred ordinances in the Church we often use ceremonial clothing, and a white shirt could be seen as a gentle reminder of the white clothing you wore in the baptismal font and an anticipation of the white shirt you will soon wear into the temple and onto your missions.

“That simple suggestion is not intended to be pharisaic or formalistic. We do not want deacons or priests in uniforms or unduly concerned about anything but the purity of their lives. But how our young people dress can teach a holy principle to us all, and it certainly can convey sanctity. As President David O. McKay taught, a white shirt contributes to the sacredness of the holy sacrament (see Conference Report, Oct. 1956, p. 89).”

Vaughn J. Featherstone, *Stockholm Area Conference Report*, p. 75. “And girls, let’s be modest in our dress—no body shirts, form-fitting, form-revealing shirts and dresses that you wear. Let’s wear our skirts long enough, where they are not a temptation to the Aaronic Priesthood. How dare you tempt the Aaronic Priesthood of the Church! What a transgression that is!

“Now that any style is acceptable, surely decent women could lose nothing by being modest—and how much they would gain! And how much the world would be spared in this day of immorality and seduction!”

*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, pp.286–287. Modesty is for men, also. Now just a word to the boys. Sometimes we have young men, they swim scantily clad, of course, when they are in the water, that’s all right. Sometimes they play games, basketball, for instance, with very, very little on them. Maybe that’s all right on the basketball floor, but certainly it is immodest for them to go around dating before and after the game in those kinds of clothes. It is just as bad for a man to be undressed as it is for a woman to be undressed and that, I am sure, is the gospel of Christ. We have only one standard of morality, only one standard of decency, only one standard of modesty, and I hope our men will remember that. There is no reason why a man should go around half dressed either before the people. (56-10)

Extreme styles betray character weakness. Our young people should know also that it is hard for them to hide their upbringing, their inner thoughts, their weaknesses. There is nothing criminal about grammatical errors or careless speech or even slang. But such do reveal the character of the user and reflect upon his home life. It may be an unwarranted and weak demand for attention which one feels powerless to stir otherwise. The chewing of gum in public certainly gives no suggestion of culture or refinement and certainly will not build confidence in or esteem for the one who indulges. Inappropriate clothes, extreme makeup, fantastic hairdos, gum chewing, slang, ugly speech, bad table manners, and other such irregularities brand the individual at once as weak, uncouth, cheap or careless, and thoughtless, and his family is judged by his weaknesses...

Boys seldom criticize a girl for using too little makeup. Sometimes they say, “She’s a nice girl, but I wish she’d dress up, and she uses too much makeup.” To be overdressed, to be gaudily dressed, to be dressed to look sexy, to be overdecorated is bad taste, to say the least. The young woman is smart who can don just enough powder and lipstick to convince the fellows it isn’t makeup at all, but the “real you.”

Perhaps there is no transgression in painted eyelids or dangling earrings or fancy hairdos, but surely all these eccentricities and extremes betray character. Her life is open like a book, and people read it. There may be no harm in the style itself, but it may indicate some weakness, some insecurity, some unsureness.

Young men should keep their faces shaved, their hair combed, their haircuts reasonably conservative, their nails cleaned. Overtight, suggestive pants brand young men as vulgar. Young people can be smart and personable, dignified and attractive by finding an area somewhere less than the extremes and still in good style.”