

The Fruit Inspector

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Photo by Anna Tukhfatullina

Jesus warned us, “Do not judge, or you too will be judged,” (Matthew 7:1), but we are required to make judgments all the time. Based on what Jesus says just a few verses later (Matthew 7:16), the famous Los Angeles preacher, Marshall Keeble, use to quip, “I’m not a

judge - I’m a fruit inspector!” So, what’s the difference?

A judge makes a solemn pronouncement branding someone for all time: “Guilty!” and people who act like judges condemn people and don’t give them a chance to grow: “You’ll never amount to anything” or

“You are such a disappointment!”

A fruit inspector on the other hand makes allowances, “It’s not quite ripe yet,” or “It’s past its prime. This apple is rotten.” A fruit inspector knows the difference between a peach and a mango. As Jesus said,

By their fruit, you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them,” (Matthew 7:16-20).

Judges are harsh and their decisions are not easily reversed. A fruit inspector recognizes produce, and knows how to care for it. Wouldn’t it be great if we were all fruit inspectors?

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'Jh'.

Exercise

1. What’s the difference between a judge and a fruit inspector?
2. Has someone ever mis-judged you?
3. After reading this passage, what should you do?