

Judging Others (Matt. 7:1-6)

A Small Group Outline



1. Praise *(Purpose: To worship God)*

- What are you thankful for this week? *(let the group's secretary write these down in an A4 hardcover or some notebook)*
- Song Service
 - Sing a few songs of praise to God

2. Pray *(Purpose: To carry each others' burdens and to seek the Lord)*

- What challenges did you have this week? *(write these down in an A4 hardcover or some notebook)*
- Go into a season of prayer

3. Review *(Purpose: To learn accountability)*

- Tell us how it went with what you promised to do in last week's meeting? *(e.g. Who did your share your faith with this past week? Who did you minister to? How did actioning your I WILL STATEMENT go?)*
- *Where people have failed to fulfil what they said they would, do not be harsh with them but gently encourage them to try again in the coming week. Give them more support by phoning or joining them in the week.*

4. Give *(Purpose: To be good stewards of our monies)*

- This is the time to return tithes and offerings. If done electronically, kindly ensure that you get the bank account details of your local church from your treasurer. Don't forget to complete an envelope and to send the breakdown to him/her.

5. Discover *(Purpose: To learn to listen to God, and be obedient to His Word)*

• **Notes for the facilitator**

- Read *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings (MB)*, pp. 123-130
- Vs 1: 'Judge not' does not mean one cannot express an opinion about another person. Matt. 7:6 and even 7:19-20 imply that we exercise judgement. Furthermore, the church as a body is called to reprove sin, which implies that it has to 'judge' (cf. Matt. 18:15-20). The judgement that Jesus calls us to surrender in Matt. 7:1-5 is that of condemnation, of judging the motives of others *(George Knight, Walking with Jesus on the Mount of Blessing)*
- A hypercritical spirit is not Christian, and is the opposite of love as defined in 1 Corinthians 13. It is correspondents with the spirit of Satan, "the accuser of our brethren" (Rev. 12:10) *[Ibid]*.
- The spirit of hypercritical judgementalism gets pleasure when it hears something unpleasant about another; when a competitor makes a serious mistake *(Ibid)*
- Arguments against judging *(Ibid)*
 - Because of our incomplete knowledge of motives and circumstances
 - We are not impartial. Humans are loaded with pre-conceived opinions
 - No person is good enough to judge others motives. We are all sinners.
- "A system of human invention [salvation by works], with its multitudinous exactions, will lead its advocates to judge all who come short of the prescribed human standard. The atmosphere of selfish and narrow criticism stifles the noble and generous emotions, and causes men to become self-centered judges and petty spies" (MB 123)
- "Do not make your opinions, your views of duty, your interpretations of Scripture, a criterion for others and in your heart condemn them if they do not come up to your ideal. Do not criticize others, conjecturing as to their motives and passing judgment upon them" (MB 123).

- “We cannot read the heart. Ourselves faulty, we are not qualified to sit in judgment upon others. Finite men can judge only from outward appearance. To Him alone who knows the secret springs of action, and who deals tenderly and compassionately, is it given to decide the case of every soul” (MB 124)
- Vs 2: Don’t judge because in the final judgement God will give to you what you give to others.
- Vs 3: “His words describe one who is swift to discern a defect in others. When he thinks he has detected a flaw in the character or the life he is exceedingly zealous in trying to point it out; but Jesus declares that the very trait of character developed in doing this un-Christlike work, is, in comparison with the fault criticized, as a beam in proportion to a mote. It is one's own lack of the spirit of forbearance and love that leads him to make a world of an atom. Those who have never experienced the contrition of an entire surrender to Christ do not in their life make manifest the softening influence of the Saviour's love. They misrepresent the gentle, courteous spirit of the gospel and wound precious souls, for whom Christ died. According to the figure that our Saviour uses, he who indulges a censorious spirit is guilty of greater sin than is the one he accuses, for he not only commits the same sin, but adds to it conceit and censoriousness” (MB 125)
- Vs 3: Getting something out of one’s eye is a very difficult operation. No bodily organ is more sensitive than the eye. Similarly in dealing with people we need to use sympathy, patience, calmness and coolness (*George Knight, Walking with Jesus on the Mount of Blessing*).
- When we think others must be judged according to our preferences and standards, we are putting ourselves in Christ’s place. He is the only true standard of character.
- “He who is guilty of wrong is the first to suspect wrong. By condemning another he is trying to conceal or excuse the evil of his own heart. It was through sin that men gained the knowledge of evil; no sooner had the first pair sinned than they began to accuse each other; and this is what human nature will inevitably do when uncontrolled by the grace of Christ” (MB 126)
- “He who looks often upon the cross of Calvary, remembering that his sins placed the Saviour there, will never try to estimate the degree of his guilt in comparison with that of others. He will not climb upon the judgment seat to bring accusation against another. There can be no spirit of criticism or self-exaltation on the part of those who walk in the shadow of Calvary's cross” (MB 128)
- “Not until you feel that you could sacrifice your own self-dignity, and even lay down your life in order to save an erring brother, have you cast the beam out of your own eye so that you are prepared to help your brother. Then you can approach him and touch his heart” (MB 128)
- Vs 6: “Jesus here refers to a class who have no desire to escape from the slavery of sin. By indulgence in the corrupt and vile their natures have become so degraded that they cling to the evil and will not be separated from it. The servants of Christ should not allow themselves to be hindered by those who would make the gospel only a matter of contention and ridicule. But the Saviour never passed by one soul, however sunken in sin, who was willing to receive the precious truths of heaven” (MB 129)
- Sometimes we are blind to our own sins, the log in our own eyes. How can we better evaluate ourselves so that we will notice those logs and remove them? Here are some practical applications:
 - Be the first to admit you are wrong and apologise
 - Do not be hasty to point out other people’s faults
 - When you have disagreements with others, humbly pray and ask God to show you your own faults and deal with them

- From time to time ask a friend or accountability partner to give you feedback in certain areas of your Christian journey of growth. They may be more likely to spot problems you didn't notice yourself.
(<https://studyandobey.com/inductive-bible-study/matthew-studies/matthew-7-1-12/>)
 - We break the command of Matt. 7:1-5 when we:
 - Think the worst of others
 - Only speak to others about their faults
 - Judge an entire life by only its worse moments
 - Judge the hidden motives of others
 - Judge others without considering ourselves in their same circumstances
 - Judge others without being mindful that we ourselves will be judged
(https://www.blueletterbible.org/comm/guzik_david/studyguide_mat/mat_7.cfm)
- *Read Matt. 7:1-6. Preferably let one person read it. Let everyone then put down their Bibles and get the group to reconstruct the passage in their own words. This teaches the group to be careful in quotation Scripture correctly and to use it as the basis of their discussions.*
- **Discussion Questions** (*use only a few*). *The notes in italics after some of the questions below are for the facilitator, and not to be read out to the group.*
 - What do you think is the meaning of the sentence: "Do not judge or you too will be judged?"
 - When, if ever, are we allowed to judge others?
 - Do you see the following statement as true or false: "The traits of others that irritate us the most are often the very ones that are present in our own lives". Elaborate, preferably through a personal illustration.
 - Give examples of faults we often notice in others?
 - What causes us to become critical and judgmental of people?
 - What are the dangers of a critical spirit?
 - How can we become more merciful and non-judgmental?
 - What do you think verse 6 means? Can you illustrate this through an example? (*ask one question at a time*)
- **Application Questions** (*select a few depending on your time. One has to be the I WILL STATEMENT*)
 - Do you find that you are quite critical of others? If so, how can you avoid this habit?
 - Are there people in your life that you need to pray for or reconcile with, that you have been critical toward?
 - I WILL STATEMENT: Formulate an I will statement in response to what you have discovered in the Word. Let the group's secretary also record these in an A4 notebook. Ensure that everyone gets a chance to give their I WILL STATEMENT. You have to be specific. E.g. "I will try to keep quiet when I want to be critical and expose people who irritate and frustrate me"

6. Share (*Purpose: To be witnesses of our faith*)

- Do you have anyone you could share today's lesson with this week? *Be specific.*

7. Closing prayer

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