



WEEK EIGHT: DO NOT JUDGE

Jesus calls his followers to be people who spend most of their time examining their own faults rather than focusing on the faults of others.

TEXT: MATTHEW 7:1-5

1. CHRISTIANS ARE CALLED AWAY FROM THE EQUAL AND OPPOSITE ERRORS OF SELF-RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENTALISM AND POST-MODERN MORAL RELATIVISM

- John 7:24, 1 John 4:1

Over the years, the church has been poor at self-examination and has focused instead, on the sins of those in the world. Our immediate overreaction to this shame, which is equally problematic, is to have no moral absolutes at all, and to take the posture of being passive and accepting of everything = tolerance.

We need to remember that throughout the Old Testament, God always called his people to live morally pure lives. His standards were unwavering, and those who did not obey were judged accordingly. In the New Testament, God no longer judged according to the old covenant conditions, but sin was still to be judged and weighed within the church. The church was also told to judge whether or not something was from God. The concept of making sound judgement was and is still called for in the church. So we can be sure that Jesus was not making a blanket statement when he said, "Judge not..."

- ❖ Q: In what way are we as a church community, conforming to culture's norm of tolerance?
- ❖ Q: Why is tolerance of everything (i.e. having no moral absolutes) an overreaction to the fact that the church has been wrongly judgmental of the world?
- ❖ Q: In what way was judgement in the Old Testament different to judgement in the New Testament?
- ❖ Q: Why is it important to realise that there is a form of appropriate judgement within the church context?

2. WE MUST NOT JUDGE BLINDLY

- Read Matthew 7:1-5, Romans 2:1-3 & 1 Corinthians 11:29

Jesus' illustration of the speck in the eye versus the log in the eye, demonstrated perfectly the foolishness and blindness of our human ability to judge.

- We must accept that we suffer blindness ourselves – we so often look at small offenses in others while having deeply corrupt hearts ourselves. We need to start with examining our own hearts before daring to point out another's sin. Not only does this deal with our own rebellion against God, but it radically changes our posture to those in whom we see sin operating.

10 THINGS JESUS I WISH NEVER SAID

- The blindness we suffer means that there is much about others we cannot and do not see – the sin in our own life actually blocks the full view of the sin in others, and so we are totally unable to view their sin for what it really is. By virtue of being human, we are limited in what we can see and know, regarding the hearts of others.

- ❖ Q: Why is it so easy to see sin in others while have blind spots to our own?
- ❖ Q: Why does it change our posture towards others, when we deeply examine our own hearts for sin and rebellion against God?
- ❖ Q: Why does our own sin block our ability to rightly assess someone else's sin?
- ❖ *Personal Reflection Q: Would you be willing to ask someone in your life to point out the sin and rebellion in you, that you are unable to see for yourself? If not, think about why this makes you uncomfortable.*

3. WE MUST NOT JUDGE IN A MEASURE WE DON'T WANT USED TOWARDS OTHERS

The word “judge” here means to sift. If we hold people to the highest standards, those very same standards will be used to judge us. Jesus accused the religious leaders of doing this to the people they were leading. They were obsessed with every small detail of sin in the lives of their followers, and yet they were quite happy to give themselves leeway, when it suited them.

- ❖ *Personal Reflection Q: Are you someone that goes through the lives of others, looking for sin with a ‘fine tooth comb’? Or do you give lots of grace?*

4. WE MUST NOT JUDGE AS IF WE ARE GOD

- Read James 4:12, Romans 14:10-12 & 2 Corinthians 5:9-10

We are not called to be passive and indifferent towards sin, and become vague about the lines of morality. But we are to have a humble posture when considering the notion of pointing out the sin in someone else's life. We need to trust God to be the good judge that scripture says he is.

- God is a trustworthy judge – he does not have the human blindness we have, and is able to judge with absolute righteousness.
 - We too stand under his judgment – our sins would have been paid for but we will have that which is hidden laid bare before the Lord. We will be declared innocent, but our sins will be exposed.
- ❖ Q: Why is it not only right, but *best*, to leave judging sin to God?
 - ❖ Q: What is the one big take away that God has asked you to walk away with and apply to your life this week?
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