

FLIPPED

"THE FLIPSIDE OF JUDGMENTALISM" MATTHEW 7:1-6

This Week's Core Competency

Gentleness – I am thoughtful, considerate, and calm in dealing with others. Philippians 4:5, *Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.*

This study pertains to gentleness. People with this virtue are thoughtful, considerate, and calm in dealing with others. One statement that might be used to assess gentleness is "I consider my own shortcomings when faced with the failures of others." That statement precludes the kind of self-righteous judging that Jesus forbids in Matthew 7:1-6, an excerpt from the Sermon on the Mount. The word gentleness does not appear in the passage, but the virtue is implicit in what Jesus had to say. When he said, "Do not judge or you too will be judged," he was not forbidding us from rebuking one another for our moral failures. He was telling us how to do it—not self-righteously but with gentleness. "The command to *judge not* is not a requirement to be blind, but rather a plea to be generous" (John R. W. Stott, *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount*, TBST, 176).

In this passage Jesus warned against the marriage of self-righteousness and censoriousness. Together in a disciple they produce the proverbial pharisaical spirit that is quick to condemn in others what it condones in self. The question he

We have a fatal tendency to exaggerate the faults of others and minimize the gravity of our own.

- John R. W. Stott

answers is not "should disciples condemn sin or condone sin?" The question he answers is "with what spirit and to what end should disciples condemn sin?" And the answer he gave is with a gentle spirit and a view to help and not like the Pharisees. The Pharisees set themselves up as judges of all men and measured them by themselves. About them D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones writes, "They were boastful and demonstrative in their giving of alms; they were demonstrative in their praying at the street corners and in making broad their phylacteries; and they announced that they were fasting. They were, at the same time, mercenary and materialistic in their outlook with regard to the things of this world." What's more, they were terribly self-righteous. The same writer continues, "You remember the picture which He gives in Luke 18:9-14 of the Pharisee and the publican who both went up to the temple to pray. The Pharisee said, 'God, I thank thee that I am not as other men . . . or even as this publican.' It was that judging and condemning attitude of the Pharisees towards others that was so wrong" (*The Sermon on the Mount*, 2:166).

For Discussion

Bill's daughter is married to a young man who will graduate from seminary next year. Bill and his wife, Gloria, gladly gave their blessing to the marriage of their daughter to this young man almost seven years ago. But Bill and Gloria are concerned that Susie and Larry are looking into ministry in a predominately Muslim country after

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graduation. Missionary ministry is hard enough, but to people, many of whom are unfriendly to Americans in general and hostile to Christianity in particular, only makes matters worse. Bill has tried to convince his son-in-law that he shouldn't "throw his pearls to pigs" but to no avail. His son-in-law knows what Jesus said but doesn't think it can be used like his father-in-law is using it. What do you think?

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

Matthew 7:1-6

1 "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. 2 For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

3 "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? 4 How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

6 "Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces. (NIV(c)1984)

Cf., another translation

1 "Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. 2 For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged.

3 "And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own? 4 How can you think of saying to your friend, 'Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,' when you can't see past the log in your own eye? 5 Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye.

6 "Don't waste what is holy on people who are unholy. Don't throw your pearls to pigs! They will trample the pearls, then turn and attack you. (NLT)

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Circle "judge/d" in vv. 1, 2.
- * Box "for" indicating *reason* in v. 1.
- * Underline "in the same way" indicating *comparison* in v. 2.
- * Circle "speck" and "plank" in v. 3.
- * Bracket "brother/s" in vv. 3-5.
- * Underline "take out" and "remove" in v. 5.
- * Circle "dogs," "pearls," and "pigs" in v. 6.

day **2**

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Jesus' command is well known but much misunderstood and misused. How so?
2. Put the *reason* behind Jesus' command in your own words.
3. Explain the use of *comparison* in verse 2.
4. Verse 2 warns "you will be judged." By whom?
5. What do you infer from the use of "brother" in verses 3-5?
6. Explain the point of the rhetorical question in verse 3.
7. Explain the point of the *rhetorical* question in verse 4.
8. Hypocrites should just "shut up"—right? Explain.
9. Explain the *relationship* of verse 6 to the preceding verses.
10. **Discussion:** Talk about when enough evangelism is enough.

day 3

EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

Matthew 7:1 is without doubt one of the most widely misunderstood and for that reason most often misused passages in the entire Bible. Only Paul's words to Timothy, "use a little wine for your stomach's sake" (1Ti 5:23), even come close to suffering the same measure of abuse. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus warned his disciples, "Do not judge, or you too will be judged." Ripped from their context his words sound like a blanket prohibition against ever condemning anything anyone else says or does. People who take what Jesus said this way claim that no one should ever judge another person; instead, they insist that people should be tolerant and never impose their personal moral choices on others. Some even use Jesus' words as a club to pummel anyone who would dare question their values or virtue. In doing so they kowtow to the view of those in our postmodern society who reject external moral standards altogether.

A quote from Philip Yancey suggests that the world is squeezing some Christians into its postmodern mold. "A friend of mine named Susan, a committed Christian, told me that her husband did not measure up and she was actively looking for other men to meet her needs for intimacy. When Susan mentioned that she rose early each day to 'spend an hour with the Father,' I asked, 'In your meetings with the Father, do any moral issues come up that might influence this pending decision about leaving your husband?'

"Susan bristled: 'That sounds like the response of a white Anglo-Saxon male. The Father and I are into *relationship* not *morality*. Relationship means being wholly supportive and standing alongside me, not judging.' I gently pointed out that we all make judgments in our relationships. Had not she judged her husband incapable of meeting her needs? Susan fended off my arguments, and we moved on to more congenial topics" ("Nietzsche Was Right," www.christianitytoday.com/bc/8b1/8b1014.html).

Susan obviously believed that Yancey was out of line intimating that her pending decision to leave her husband might be morally wrong. In her view he was coming perilously close to "judging" her—something that Jesus banned by the words, "Do not judge." Not only did she believe that Yancey *should* not judge her, apparently she also believed that her heavenly Father *would* not judge her. As far as she

was concerned, neither Jesus nor relationship leaves room for judging.

You probably know someone like Susan, somebody who bristled the last time he heard you question someone else's decision to terminate a pregnancy, end a marriage, have an affair, move in with a fiance or lover, neglect a child, spin the truth, evade taxes, cheat on an exam, or pad an expense account—to mention just a few possibilities. People like Susan make morality a matter of personal preference and in so doing unwittingly cast a vote for un-morality, the notion that there is no such thing as morality. There is no such thing as morality because there is no basis for a moral consensus. There is only individual choice that either serves personal ends or not. Self-interest ultimately rules. As Helen, an alcoholic character in the movie *Ironweed*, told God at a candlelit altar, "You may call them sins; I call them decisions."

People *misuse* what Jesus said because they *misunderstand* what he meant. They misunderstand what he meant because they take his words out of context. Jesus was not telling his disciples to stop judging others entirely. Otherwise, verse 6 makes no sense and neither does verse 15. He was telling them more specifically to stop judging other disciples censoriously and hypocritically. This is confirmed by his words in verses 3-5. In verse 3 Jesus questions the *reason* one would fix his gaze on some minor fault, as insignificant as a speck of sawdust in another disciple's eye, all the while paying no attention to some major fault, as significant as a plank of wood in his own eye. Then, in verse 4 he questions the *ability* of that one to help remove the speck from his brother's eye all the while blinded by the plank in his own eye. Finally, in verse 5 he *instructs* the "hypocrite" to first deal with his "plank" before trying to deal with his brother's "speck." As one writer observes, "The picture of somebody struggling with the delicate operation of removing a speck of dirt from a friend's eye, while a vast plank in his own eye entirely obscures his vision, is ludicrous in the extreme. Yet when the caricature is transferred to ourselves and our ridiculous fault-finding, we do not always appreciate the joke" (Stott, 178).

This, of course, does not mean that "specks" and "planks" don't matter. Both demand attention. "Jesus does not teach the wrongness of taking a speck out

of a brother's eye, *i.e.*, of rebuking a fellow disciple for a sin (see 18:15-18). Rather, Jesus teaches the wrongness of doing so with the larger sin of self-righteousness on one's own part (cf. 6:1-18 and contrast 5:3-10). Self-righteousness makes the rebuke a hypocritical 'act' of showiness instead of a genuine attempt to ensure the well being of the sinning brother. On the other hand, absence of self-righteousness will not only make the rebuke more suitable, but also make the one who rebukes better able ('you will see clearly') to restore his brother" (Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew*, 122).

Verse 6 seems at first to be unrelated to what Jesus has just said, but perhaps not. One author relates this verse to the previous verses this way. "If we are not to 'judge' others, finding fault with

them in a censorious, condemning or hypocritical way, we are not to ignore their faults either and pretend that everybody is the same. Both extremes are to be avoided. The saints are not judges, but 'saints are not simpletons' either . . . the 'dogs' and 'pigs' with whom we are forbidden to share the gospel pearl are not just unbelievers. They must rather be those who have had ample opportunity to hear and receive the good news, but have decisively-even defiantly-rejected it . . . to persist beyond a certain point in offering the gospel to such people is to invite its rejection with contempt and even blasphemy" (Stott, 182). Disciples should not attempt to force-feed the gospel to those who repeatedly purse their lips to it.

The Message of the Passage

Christ's disciples are neither judgmental nor indiscriminating—they neither condemn in other disciples what they condone in themselves nor persist in ministering the gospel to those who scorn it.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James suggests in James 1:22. Try some of the challenges below to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Journal your thoughts on the passage:**

–Write about what God wants you to know . . .

–Write about how God wants you to feel . . .

–Write about what God wants you to do . . .

notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 1 *judge*

The word refers to sharp criticism or passing a harsh, adverse verdict on the conduct of another. "To judge' can mean to discern, to judge judicially, to be judgmental, to condemn (judicially or otherwise). The context must determine the precise shade of meaning. The context here argues that the verse means, 'Do not be judgmental.' Do not adopt a critical spirit, a condemning attitude" (D. A. Carson, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 133). Jesus was neither abolishing law courts nor forbidding the exercise of the kind of discernment demanded by verse 6. "What did he mean by *Judge not*? In a word, 'censoriousness' . . . Censoriousness is a compound sin consisting of several unpleasant ingredients. It does not mean to assess people critically, but to judge them harshly. The censorious critic is a fault-finder who is negative and destructive towards other people and enjoys actively seeking out their failings. He put the worst possible construction on their motives, pours cold water on their schemes and is ungenerous towards their mistakes. Worse than that, to be censorious is to set oneself up as a censor, and so to claim the competence and authority to sit in judgment upon one's fellow men" (Stott, 176).

v. 1 *will be judged*

These verses contain three future tense passive verbs. The subject of an active verb *performs* the action of the verb, whereas the subject of a passive verb *receives* the action of the verb. Jesus is warning those who judge others that they will be likewise judged. Many commentators identify this as a divine passive implying that God is the one doing the judging (e.g., Michael J. Wilkins, *The NIV Application Commentary*, 309; cf., GNT). Some point out that others will respond in kind. "The latter clause may perhaps be taken like the first: if you are judgmental, others will be judgmental toward you. Alternatively, depending on the ambiguity of the Greek verb, the sentence may mean: do not be judgmental, or you will be condemned (whether by God or others)" (Carson, 134).

v. 1 *for* . . .

The term introduces the *reason* why disciples should stop judging. "It is theoretically possible to understand these words, like the words of 7:1b, in more than one way. They may mean that the measure we use on others will be the measure others use on us; the person with a critical spirit is inviting a lot of criticism. Alternatively, verse 2 may mean that the measure we use on others will be the measure God himself will use on us. I think it is the latter meaning that is in views; and if so, the ambiguity in 7:1b must be interpreted in a similar way" (Carson, 135; cf., 5:17; 6:14, 15). On the other hand, the connection to the Golden Rule argues for the former. "The immediate practical rationale for his command is that others, including God, may treat us in the same manner we treat them. Verse 2 provides the premise for v. 12" (Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, NAC, 127 italics added).

v. 3 *speck of sawdust*

The word can refer to a little piece of anything such as speck of dirt or chaff. It points to an insignificant irritant (Fritz Rienecker, *A Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, 20). The NIV specifies a "speck of sawdust." Another possible translation is "splinter" (NJB).

v. 3 *plank*

The word refers to a heavy timber used for the main beam in either the floor or the roof of a building or "a post sticking out grotesquely" (20).

v. 5 *hypocrite*

This word occurs 13 times in Matthew but elsewhere only 3 times in Luke and once in Mark. It was used of actors who played a part and therefore whose words and deeds did not represent their true identity. One author writes, "There are religious actors still, and they draw good houses" (Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 137).

v. 6 *Do not . . . pieces*

In the words of one commentator, "The word-pictures in verse 6 are not easy to interpret" (Myron S. Augsburger, *Matthew*, TCC, 97). Two different interpretations of verse 6 have been proposed. Some see it as a continuation of the previous paragraph. According to this interpretation the verse deals with how persons who, though properly confronted about their "specks," refuse to deal with them. Rather than accept the help of the brother-who can now see clearly—they turn on him and attack him. Jesus cautions his disciples to use discretion and not offer help where it is not welcome. Others see it as a new command intended to balance what Jesus commanded in verse 1. "Disciples exhorted to love their enemies (5:43-47) and not to judge (v. 1) might fail to consider the subtleties of the argument and become undiscerning simpletons" (D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, EBC, vol. 8, 185).

v. 6 *dogs, pearls, pigs*

Jesus uses *metaphor* to refer to certain people. "The dogs described here are wild scavengers. The pigs best represent unclean animals for Jews. Both are natural opposites to what is holy or, like pearls, of great value. Both 'dogs' and 'pigs' were regularly used a pejorative epithets for Gentiles within ancient Judaism. Jesus is using terms equally pejoratively but in the more general sense of those who are ungodly (cf. 2 Pet 2:22 for the same combination) . . . Jesus is obviously not telling his followers not to preach to certain kinds of people, but he does recognize that after sustained rejection and reproach, it is appropriate to move on to others (cf. Paul's regular practice in Acts—e.g., 13:46; 18:6; 19:9)" (Blomberg, 128, 29).

v. 6 *dogs, pigs* . . .

Many see a literary feature called *chiasmus*, i.e., verse 6 contains a *chiasm*, that involves a, b, b', a' arrangement; "pigs" are the ones that "trample" and "dogs" are the ones that "tear you to pieces" (Blomberg, 128; cf., Stott, 181-83; see E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, 356, 61).

Family Time

Family time will help you take a break from your busy schedule and spend time connecting with your family.
Tips for your Family Time: Keep it simple! Be flexible! Do it often! HAVE FUN!!

We have the privilege of living in a community that is diverse. Many countries and ethnic groups are represented in our area. Look across the worship center and you will see people who are different from you. Our diversity is a great strength and is preparing us for the day when all nations will gather before the throne in one accord to worship God. However, sometimes our differences can lead to judgmentalism. Often we judge people we don't understand. When others look and act differently than us, we measure them by our own standards and find them lacking. Jesus teaches us not to judge. In our text today he is referring to judging others' sins, but when we elevate ourselves above others we are breaking the command to love them as ourselves. To help your kids learn to appreciate differences in people, plan an ethnic outing this week. There are many great ethnic restaurants in our community. Read up on a culture and find a restaurant that serves that particular cuisine. Over dinner, share what you've learned. Another option is to visit one of the great ethnic grocery stores in town. Ask an employee how to make an authentic dinner. You will be creating a fun family memory and teaching your kids to appreciate the difference of others.

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Matthew 7:1-6

1. Who is talking in this passage?
2. What does Jesus say will happen when you judge?
3. What measure will be used to judge you?

What Do You Think

1. What are you focusing on if you are judging the faults of others?
2. Instead, what should you be focused on?
3. What is a hypocrite?

What R U Going To Do

Place a plank of wood somewhere prominent in your house this week. Write something on it to remind you to love others and not judge. Have all family members sign it.

MEMORY TIME

Post the kid-friendly Core Competency and the Memory Verse throughout the house.

Core Comp

Gentleness - Responding to others in a nice way

Memory Verse

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized CC ____ and Verse _____. Family completed **Say** _____ **Think** _____ **Do** _____

Child's name _____ Grade ____ Parent's signature _____

Earn tokens by completing the Bible study portion of this page.
 Questions: Kids@pantego.org

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9*

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness *Matthew 6:33*

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians*

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience *Proverbs 14:29*

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is tbulick@pantego.org.