

# Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, January 27, 2021 – First Baptist Church Buda  
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study



IMPACTING OTHERS FOR CHRIST WITHOUT JUDGING  
“Judging Others”  
Matthew 7:1-6

*<sup>1</sup> Judge not, that you be not judged. <sup>2</sup> For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. <sup>3</sup> And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? <sup>4</sup> Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? <sup>5</sup> Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. <sup>6</sup> "Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.*  
-Matthew 7:1-6 (NKJV)

Judge Gently  
by I. H. Plemmons

<sup>1</sup> Pray, don't find fault with the man that limps, or stumbles along the road.  
Unless you have worn the shoes he wears, or struggled beneath his load

<sup>2</sup> There may be tacks in his shoes that hurt, though hidden away from view  
Or the burden he bears placed on your back might cause you to stumble too

<sup>3</sup> Don't sneer at the man who's down today unless you have felt the blow  
That caused his fall or felt the shame that only the fallen know

<sup>4</sup> You may be strong but still the blows that was his if dealt to you  
In the selfsame way, at the selfsame time might cause you to stagger too

<sup>5</sup> Don't be too harsh with the man that sins, or pelt him with word or stone  
Unless you are sure - yea, doubly sure - that you have no sins of your own

<sup>6</sup> For you know if the tempter's voice should whisper as soft to you  
As it did to him when he went astray it might cause you to falter too

**SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT:** Take a look at the words to this poem about judging others that has been around for quite some time, and consider the following question for discussion

- (1) What is the reason given in the first stanza for not judging another and what do you think the writer means by the phrase “unless you have worn the shoes he wears”? Can you cite example of what the writer might have in mind here.
- (2) The writer give a second reason for not judging another in the second stanza, what is that? Do you agree with this? Why or why not? *If you were going through what they are going through you might make the same mistake, fall, fail, commit the same sin. Do we ever feel like, “Oh, well I’d never make the same mistake he or she made? I’d never fall into that sin”? What is wrong with this spirit/attitude and what is the danger of thinking that way? At the very point we think we could never fall, that is often the point at which we do fall. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 10:12, “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” And Peter write in 2 Peter 3:17, “You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand beware lest you also fall from your won steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked.”*
- (3) In the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) stanza of the poem uses a words that indicates a “judgmental spirit/attitude” toward, what is that word and what do you think the poet is telling us about being judgmental? What else does the writer tell us may be going inside the one we are judging, and what should knowing this do inside of us?
- (4) In the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) stanza of the poem what is the poet telling us we must be aware of in ourselves? Why is this so important in your mind?
- (5) How does the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) stanza parallel with Jesus words in our passage (Mt. 7:1-7)? What common idea is shared here? What do you think is the important take away here, with these words?
- (6) The sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) stanza seems to be overstating the general idea of the poem, what is the general and most important truth of the power?

**“Before you can impact the life of another for Christ, you must have been impacted by Christ in a personal and life-changing way”** You can’t be a world changer if your world hasn’t been changed by Him to start with. Jesus’ “Sermon on the Mount” actually teaches us how we may impact our world and the lives of those around us for Christ. We have been adding these important keys to impacting your world from Jesus’s sermon. Let’s review where we’ve been and add another one in our study as we proceed through Jesus’ “Sermon on the Mount.” We are now up to 12 important keys to impacting your world...

### **12 Important Keys to Impacting Your World: (From the Sermon on the Mount)**

1. To impact your world for Christ you must **KNOW CHRIST PERSONALLY** = Matthew 5:1-12, “The Beatitudes”
2. To impact your world for Christ you must **REFLECT CHRIST** to the **WORLD** (others) = Matthew 5:13-16, “Salt and Light”
3. To impact your world for Christ you must **LEARN** to **LIVE** by the **WORD** of God daily = Matthew 5:17-21, “Fulfilling and Living by the Word”
4. To impact your world for Christ you must **RIGHTLY RELATE** to **OTHERS** = Matthew 5:22ff

5. To impact your world for Christ you must **GUARD YOUR HEART** = *Matthew 5:27-30*
6. To impact your world for Christ you must **BUILD STRONG CHRIST- CENTERED MARRIAGES** and **HOMES** = *Matthew 5:31-32*
7. To impact your world for Christ you must **LIVE A LIFE OF INTEGRITY** = *Matthew 5:33-48*
8. To impact your world for Christ you must **PRACTICE RADICAL GENEROSITY** = *Matthew 6:1-4*
9. To impact your world for Christ you must **BECOME A MAN OR WOMAN OF DEEP AND FERVENT PRAYER** = *Matthew 6:5:15*
10. To impact your world for Christ you must **GIVE YOURSELF AT TIMES TO THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE OF FASTING** = *Matthew 6:16-18*
11. To impact your world for Christ you must **NOT LET THE THINGS OF THIS WORLD HAVE TOO GREAT AN IMPACT ON US**
12. To impact your world for Christ you must **GIVE TESTIMONY OF A FAITH BASED, WORRY FREE LIFE**
- ➡ 13. To impact your world for Christ you must **AVOID A JUDGMENTAL SPIRIT TOWARD OTHERS**

➡ **READ: Matthew 7:1-6**

How can we effectively impact the lives of others around us in this fallen world... especially when we see the sin and corrupt practices, and immoral lifestyles that seem to be paraded before us. Let's face it, it's hard not be critical, disapproving, even hypercritical and judgmental. How can we effectively impact our world and those around us, sometime even Christian brother and sisters, without being judgmental? How can we effectively perform spiritual surgery? How can we help someone caught in sin? Just like a medical doctor needs wisdom to perform a surgery, believers also need wisdom to perform spiritual surgery. In fact, it takes more than wisdom—it takes character. In Matthew 7:1-6, Christ describes what's needed to minister to somebody caught in sin—to take a speck, also translated splinter, from one's eye (v. 4).<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the Sermon on the Mount, Christ has been warning his disciples about the false teaching and self-righteousness of the Pharisees (cf. Matt 5:20). They lessened the demands of the law on lust, divorce, the treatment of enemies, oaths, etc. Their spiritual disciplines such as giving, fasting, and prayer were simply for self-promotion and not to honor and please God. Christ called his disciples to not be like them (cf. Matt 6).

When Matthew 7:1-6 is considered in that background, it is clear that Christ's command to not judge is another challenge for the disciples to not be like the Pharisees and other hypocrites. Since the religious leaders of Christ's time desired to exalt themselves in the eyes of others, condemning and judging was another way of lifting themselves up. A great picture of this is seen in the Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector. In Luke 18:11-14, the Pharisee prays, "Thank you, God, that I'm not like other people" as he points to a tax collector. Then he says, "I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I own" (paraphrase). The religious leaders criticized and condemned others as a way of building themselves up.

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<sup>1</sup> MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1985). *Matthew* (p. 435). Chicago: Moody Press.

Sadly, that often happens in the church as people begin to grow in knowledge and discipline. First Corinthians 8:1 says “knowledge puffs up.” After people start to grow in the knowledge of Scripture, they sometimes harshly condemn others who come to different conclusions on secondary issues. They even condemn those light years ahead of them in spiritual maturity. Their little knowledge makes them prideful and judgmental. The same commonly happens when we gain a measure of self-discipline. We often despise those who struggle with the very things we previously struggled with. We forget that we were once immature, that we sometimes missed church, didn’t read our Bibles, and struggled with particular sins. When we’ve forgotten our own propensity to weakness, we become little Pharisees—judging and condemning others. We exalt ourselves by putting others down.

It seems that Christ is warning the disciples of this pharisaical behavior as he tells them to not judge, so that they will not be judged. Ultimately, he is teaching them how to properly help people who are struggling with sin. Though born again, we have sin natures that we will always battle with for the rest of our lives (Gal 5:16-17). We also live in a world that is anti-god, and we have an enemy who constantly tempts us. Therefore, we will always struggle with sin while in this body, and we will always need to help others who struggle. How can we do this effectively? This process is very delicate, which is, in part, why Christ compares it to eye surgery.

In this study, we will consider how to effectively minister and help (impact the lives of others) perform spiritual surgery as we help people get free from various sins.

**Big Question:** What principles can be discerned from Matthew 7:1-6 about helping those caught in some sin?

**TO EFFECTIVELY IMPACT THE LIVES OF THOSE AROUND US, WE MUST AVOID A JUDGMENTAL DISPOSITION**

*“<sup>1</sup>Judge not, that you be not judged. <sup>2</sup>For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. -Matthew 7:1-2*

***Interpretation Question:*** Does Christ’s command to “not judge” mean that we should never judge anybody?

*“Judge no, that you be not judged” or “Do not judge so that you will not be judged”* is probably the most abused text in the Bible. Unbelievers that can’t quote any other Scripture verse, know this one. It is often used to say that we should never judge anyone—even those in unquestioned sin.

Few sayings of our Lord are better known or more often quoted than these words: *“Do not judge lest you be judged yourselves”* (Matthew 7:1). Likewise, few sayings are more misunderstood and misapplied. For this reason, I think it is important that we lay some ground work here, and understand just what Jesus most likely was not saying and did not mean by this warning to not judge (because it is so abused, misapplied and misunderstood)

**4 Things Jesus Did Not Mean When He Said “Judge not, that you be not judged”:**

**(1) Jesus did not mean that it is wrong to have law courts and law enforcement** - Such was the understanding of Tolstoy. Other Scriptures clearly teach that government is a divinely appointed instrument to mete out punishment (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-14). Jesus did

not dispute Pilate's authority to execute capital punishment. Indeed, He stated that this authority came from God (John 19:10-11).

- (2) **Jesus did not mean it is wrong to think critically** - Some would have us believe that godliness is closely akin to gullibility. This is really an extension of the error some have made concerning Matthew 6:25 (“... Take no thought ...” KJV). We should accept every statement of men on its face value, and in no way should we ponder or weigh it as to its veracity (we are told). That is not the teaching of Scripture (cf. Acts 17:10-11; 1 Corinthians 14:29; 1 Thessalonians 5:21). We should think critically Christians/believers and in that way “judge” each many work, an words up against Scripture and what the Bible says. We should be grounded in the word of God, theologically sound, know the truth, so that we may discern/judge error. It is not wrong to think critically. When you and I hear error, we ought to judge it as such, based on the truth as revealed in God's Word. Similarly..
- (3) **Jesus did not mean that it is wrong to take a decisive stand on doctrinal and moral issues** – We should! This one goes right along with what we just said. So often whenever a Christian takes what might be regarded as a negative position, the response is, “Judge not ...” But the very context of our passage indicates that we must make decisions and take a stand. If we are not to ‘give what is holy to dogs’ (verse 6), then we must decide who are dogs, or hogs. If we are to “beware of false prophets” (verse 15), then we must determine who such men are. Paul took a public stand on the issue of immorality within the Corinthian church (1 Corinthians 5:4-5). Timothy was instructed to take a stand in Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3-7). We are to refuse to invite false teachers into our homes (2 John 8-11). We are also instructed to “contend earnestly for the faith ...” (Jude 3).
- (4) **Jesus did not mean that it is wrong to correct those in error** - In the 18th chapter of this same Gospel, Matthew recorded our Lord's instructions concerning church discipline (verses 15ff). In Galatians 6:1, Christians are instructed to restore a sinning brother. Paul corrected Peter face to face (Galatians 2:11). Even the elders of a church are not above correction (1 Timothy 5:19-20). Good friends sharpen each other with constructive criticism (Proverbs 27:7,17).

What, then, did our Lord intend for us to understand by these words, “Judge not”? Since the Lord Jesus has all along been dealing more with attitudes and motives in the Sermon on the Mount, we are safe in concluding that the problem here has to do primarily with a critical, condemning spirit.

When interpreting Scripture, we must be sure to consider the context—the context of the surrounding verses, the chapter, that particular book, and the entire Bible. If a person pulls any one verse out of Scripture, apart from recognizing the unity of the Bible, one can make that verse mean almost anything. Without even considering the many texts outside of this chapter that call Christians to discernment, the surrounding verses alone tell us that Christ is not forbidding all judgment.

For example, in Matthew 7:6, he says to not give what is holy to dogs nor pearls to swine. There are some people in the world, and often in the church, who will not only reject but become hostile to the Word of God. They may even try to tear us apart if we present it to them. In that situation, we must discern their character and potentially not share God's pearls with them. They have the character of a wild animal who can't appreciate what's holy or valuable. Soon after that, Christ describes how there are wolves in sheep's clothing—false prophets—within the church,

and we must discern them by their fruits. Again, we must practice righteous judgment to do this (7:15-20). In fact, Christ goes on and says there are many in the church who are not saved at all. Eventually, he will tell them, *"Depart from me, you workers of iniquity, I never knew you"* (Matt 7:23 paraphrase). In response to this, we must judge ourselves to see if we are truly born again. Therefore, Christ is not forbidding all judgment.

So we need to ask, *"What type of judging is Jesus forbidding then?"* What is Jesus talking about there?

Understanding this is important because it will help us better minister to others, and impact our world... unlike the Pharisees, who simply hurt others in the name of ministry.

***Interpretation Question: What type of judging is Christ forbidding, which can be a hindrance to ministering to others?***

### **3 Types of Judging Jesus is Forbidding in Matthew 7:1-6:**

- (1) **Be careful of judging other people's hearts** - A judgmental spirit will often attribute the worst possible intentions to others. In **1 Corinthians 4:4-5**, Paul said, *"<sup>4</sup>My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. <sup>5</sup>Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God."* Often when critiquing others, we go beyond the bounds of human judgment. "He shared that because he wants people to think he's spiritual!" "She did that because she is so prideful and jealous!" We must leave heart motives to God. Judge nothing before the time, as God is the only one qualified to know and judge the heart motives of others.
- (2) **Be careful of judging people out of a wrong heart attitude** - We must consider our own heart when we point out the sins and failures of others. Paul says in **Galatians 6:1**, *"Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted."* Are we pointing out their failures because we genuinely love them and want the best for them? Or is it out of anger, pride, or jealousy, vengeance? When we point to people's failures out of pride, anger, or jealousy, there will often be a sense of "ill-will" in their failure or demise... as if it makes us feel better about ourselves... as if they get what they deserve. Sometimes, there is even a spirit of retaliation, which desires to spread and broadcast others' failures. This spirit is often seen in gossips. On the contrary, when pointing out failures is motivated by love, pain and heart break will accompany it. **1 Corinthians 13:6** says that love *"... does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth."* Also, **1 Peter 4:8** says, *"... love covers a multitude of sins."* It does not spread gossip or speak evil of others behind their backs. All these wrong attitudes and actions shall be judged by God. Interestingly **Proverbs 16:28** says, *"A perverse person stirs up conflict, and a whisperer separates close friends."* In other words, they harm the work of God.
- (3) **Be careful of judging people without all the information** - Scripture forbids hasty judgments. **Proverbs 18:13** says, *"The one who gives an answer before he listens—that is his folly and his shame."* It's interesting to consider that in Scripture, even God, who is omniscient, gathers information before pronouncing final judgment.

- With Adam, God asked if he had eaten from the forbidden tree—though God, obviously, knew the answer.
- With Sodom and Gomorrah, God sent angels down to see if the outcry against it was true (Gen 18:21).

*If God, who is omniscient, gathers all the facts before making a conclusion, how much more should we?* This is especially true when hearing only one side of the story from two warring parties. We should not jump to conclusions when only hearing one side. Someone said, “There is always three sides to every story. What one said, what the other said, and then there is the truth.” Sadly, our sin and the sins of others often shade the truth in any situation, which Christ implies through the illustration of the speck and beam, as these affect a person’s view of the facts.

Essentially, the primary reason many of us are ineffective at ministering to others is that we often try to play God. We judge people’s hearts and motivations; we judge with our own evil intentions, and we often lack all the information. We are not God. God knows all things, including hearts’ motives, and his intentions are always good. We must remember that when we judge, God is the final court, and we should not step into his jurisdiction.

**Interpretation Question:** What did Christ mean by the warning attached to the prohibition of not judging?

Matthew 7:1-2 says, “<sup>1</sup>Judge not, that you be not judged. <sup>2</sup>For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.”

It means that if we are critical, unloving, and unwise in how we minister to others, God will treat us harshly as well.

In the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant (Matt 18:23-35), when that servant didn’t forgive his fellow servant, God handed him over to the torturers. Likewise, if we are merciful and loving in the administration of justice, God will be the same way with us. Matthew 5:7 says, “Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy.”

It is good to remember that Spirit-filled judgment is constructive, as it builds others up. While pharisaical judgment is destructive, as it hurts others and ultimately hurts us. We must avoid the latter at all cost if we are going to effectively minister to those struggling with sin.

**Application Question:** How have you seen the phrase “Do not judge, lest you be judged” abused? How can we practice godly judgment instead of pharisaical judgment?

**How may we effectively impact the lives of others (those around us) for Christ without violating Jesus admonitions here in Matthew 7:1-6 concerning judging?** Let me give these to you and then we will dig into each on a little bit.

### **3 Ways to Effectively Impact the Lives of Others for Christ Without Judging:**

- (1) To effectively impact others for Christ without judging, we must gain clear vision through personal repentance
- (2) To effectively impact others for Christ without judging, we must gently care for people
- (3) To effectively impact others for Christ without judging, we must practice discernment as we share truth

Let look at each of these and unpack what Jesus is teaching in our passage concerning judging others, and how we may impact our world and those around us without passing judgment.

## **TO EFFECTIVELY IMPACT OTHERS FOR CHRIST WITHOUT JUDGING, WE MUST GAIN CLEAR VISION THROUGH PERSONAL REPENTANCE (Matthew 7:3-5)**

Notice Jesus words again in verses 3-5 <sup>3</sup> *And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?* <sup>4</sup> *Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye?* <sup>5</sup> *Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.* ”

When Jesus uses the analogy of one person having a speck in his eye and the other a beam of wood, he describes how sin blinds our ability to evaluate and minister to others.

The word **“speck”** is probably better translated **“twig”** or **“splinter.”**<sup>2</sup> Both of these people have serious sin issues which affect their sight, but the one trying to help the other has the biggest problem—making him unequipped for ministry.

Some Biblical examples/illustrations of those who exhibited this problem:

### **2 Biblical Examples of the Speck and the Plank: (one not recognizing their own sin)**

- **Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:1-12)** - This propensity to focus on other's sins and diminish our own began at the fall in the Garden of Eden. After Adam's sin, instead of recognizing his own failure and the gravity of it, he focused on the seeming failures of others. When God asked him if he ate from the forbidden tree, he replied in verse 12, *“Then the man (Adam) said, “The woman whom YOU gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.”* Who was Adam blaming here? At best he was blaming the woman, but he was really blaming God. Essentially, he blamed God and the woman. Since our sin nature is prone to selfishness, we now tend to minimize our sin and magnify the failures of others. This leads to misevaluating others' failures and being overly harsh to them.
- **David and Nathan (2 Samuel 12:1-7)** - A great picture of this is the story of David and Nathan (2 Sam 12). David committed adultery with Bathsheba, killed her husband, and then married her. In response, Nathan shares with David a story about a servant with one lamb that he loved, and a ruler who had many sheep. When guests came to visit, instead of killing one of his many sheep, the ruler killed his servant's lamb—the one he loved. When David heard this story, he was outraged. He declared in verse 5, *“... As the Lord lives, the man who has done this shall surely die!”* Then Nathan replied in verse 7, *“You are the man!”* You see David was ready to kill a ruler who unjustly took another man's lamb, when David had committed a worse sin. He killed a man and took his wife, though David had many wives. David was suffering from spiritual blindness because of the beam in his eye.

Sadly, many leaders in the church, like David, have beams in their eyes. They have the beam of pride, anger, greed, or lust, which all hinder their ability to properly evaluate and minister to others. In their ministries, they commonly hurt people because of their spiritual blindness.

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<sup>2</sup> MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1985). *Matthew* (p. 435). Chicago: Moody Press.

Many Christians have left the church wounded because of leaders who hurt them, all the while claiming to be ministering to them. But this is not just true of spiritual leaders, it is true of many members in the church... many Christians. They are not prepared to help and impact the lives of others in any real and meaningful way because haven't taken true inventory of their own lies and made things right... they haven't first judged themselves.

***Application Question: How can we remove the “plank” or beams of various sins that blind us so we can properly minister to others?***

In **verse 5** of our passage in Matthew 7 Jesus says, “...*First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.*”

Well, how do you remove the “plank” or “beam” from our own eye so we can be used of God to impact the lies of others.

### **3 Helpful Truths About Removing the Plank from Our Own Eye So That We Can Help Others”:**

- (1) **To remove the plank, we must constantly evaluate our sins honestly** - When Jesus says in **verse 3** that we are to, “...*consider the plank in your own eye*,” the word there “*consider*” has the idea of “*serious and continuous meditation*”.<sup>3</sup> It’s easy to get in the Word or listen to sermons and think primarily about how others need to hear these messages. We need to first focus on what God is speaking to our hearts and how we can become more like him. As we abide in God’s Word and prayer, we must give serious attention to discerning our sins.
- (2) **To remove our plank, we must humbly ask others to help evaluate our sins and short comings** – I think this is an important one, and one we should give serious consideration to. Sometimes we are the last to see our own faults, failings and weaknesses... the areas we are falling short. And often we are unteachable in those area, and the truth of the matter is that often those around us are too nice to tell us. We need to humbly invite their help in helping us to see our vulnerabilities and failing. That’s not easy, but is helpful. *Because of our propensity to spiritual blindness, we all need Nathans in our lives.* They might not get it right all the time, but we should love them for their willingness to challenge us when we seem to be straying from the path. Who is your Nathan? Who have you given permission to speak prophetically into your life? *What might this say about one of the functions of the church, the body of Christ and our own brothers and sisters in the Lord?* A word of cautions, “restore gently” still applies! Don’t go tearing other up!
- (3) **To remove our beams, we must sincerely confess and forsake anything that might blind us** - We will not be truly useful and able to effectively minister to the hurts, needs, lives of others when we are holding onto sins or things that are not pleasing to God. We likely won’t even be able to correctly hear and receive what God has for us. We must confess and forsake them. Scripture says to, “*flee all appearance of evil*” (1 Thess 5:22). We must run away from anything that might dull our senses—ungodly entertainment, relationships, practices, etc. When a doctor comes to perform surgery, we don’t want him to have anything in his system that might dull his senses and hinder his effectiveness. It must be the same for us as spiritual nurses and doctors. We must confess and repent of all sin and compromises in order to effectively minister to others and impact their lives for Christ and His kingdom. This is so important. And consider this, how must it look to an outside world that we are trying to impact for Christ when they look at our lives and see what is not of Christ playing out in us.

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<sup>3</sup> MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1985). *Matthew* (p. 436). Chicago: Moody Press.

**Application Question:** In what ways have you experienced how sin causes spiritual blindness—the inability to evaluate your own sin and others'? Who is your accountability—who helps you evaluate your own sin?

## **TO EFFECTIVELY IMPACT OTHERS FOR CHRIST WITHOUT JUDGING, WE MUST GENTLY CARE FOR PEOPLE (Matthew 7:5)**

Notice **verse 5** of our passage again in Matthew 7... Jesus says (powerful/strong words ehre), *"<sup>5</sup> Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."*

In considering Jesus analogy of eye surgery, it reminds us of our need to be gentle with those struggling with sin. Our eyes are very delicate and easy to permanently damage, and therefore, when a doctor is performing surgery, he must be gentle. We must do the same when ministering to others. If we are harsh and judgmental like the Pharisees, we will only hurt others—losing our ability to minister to them and possibly causing them to rebel against God. Instead of being harsh and condemning like the Pharisees, we must be gentle.

Here it is again... Paul's words in **Galatians 6:1**. Paul says, *"Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted."* Paul recognizes our tendency to be harsh with those struggling in sin, and therefore calls us to be gentle.

It seems, by Paul's words here, that the immature are especially prone towards harshness, as Paul commands the spiritually mature to this task. Part of the reason harshness is common for the spiritually immature is because they often don't recognize their vulnerability. They previously struggled with certain sins, but now they feel confident and strong. They forget how vulnerable they are and how easy it is to stumble. Their perceived strength is really a weakness that blinds them and makes them ineffective ministers. They have only replaced one sin with another—the sin of pride—which causes them to judge others.

In contrast, the spiritual are not just spiritual because of their ability to conquer sin, but also their humility. They recognize they are always vulnerable to failure, which draws them even closer to God and makes them more gracious with others. No doubt, we see this in Paul who called himself the chief of sinners and least of all God's people (1 Tim 1:15, Eph 3:8). In his maturity, Paul recognized how weak and vulnerable he really was. It has been said that until a person sees himself as a chief of sinners, he is not yet ready to minister to others. That person will be prideful and harsh.

**Application Question:** How can we practice gentleness in our ministry to others?

## **2 Keys To Practicing Gentleness Toward Others in Helping/Impacting Their Lives for Christ:**

- (1) **Gentleness comes from recognizing our own sin and vulnerability to fall back into it** -As mentioned, gentleness comes from recognizing our own sin and vulnerability to fall back into it. David, a man after God's own heart, committed adultery and then murder. Moses fell to anger and was kept out of the promised land. Noah fell into drunkenness before he died. Recognition of our weakness will protect us and help us be humble in our ministry to others. **1 Corinthians 10:13** says, *"So let the one who thinks he is standing be careful that he does*

*not fall.*” We gain this awareness the more we see and experience God. In Isaiah 6, when Isaiah saw God, he saw his own imperfections. He cried out, *“Woe is me! I am a man of unclean lips.”* The more we experience God’s light, the more we will see our own darkness and vulnerability to it, apart from God.

- (2) **Gentleness comes from ministering through the Spirit** - True ministry doesn’t happen out of our power. If we minister in the flesh, we only get fleshly results. We will find ourselves often frustrated, angry, and impatient. But spiritual ministry comes from abiding in the Spirit (Gal 5:16)—through prayer, time in God’s Word, worship, fellowship with the saints, and obedience. As we abide, the Spirit produces the fruit of gentleness in us so we can better minister to others, especially those who have failed us.

**Application Question:** Why is gentleness so important when ministering to those caught in sin? In what ways have you experienced the importance of gentleness as you received ministry or offered it?

### **TO EFFECTIVELY IMPACT OTHERS FOR CHRIST WITHOUT JUDGING, WE MUST PRACTICE DISCERNMENT AS WE SHARE TRUTH (Matthew 7:6)**

Notice Jesus’ words in **verse 6** of our passage there in Matthew 7... *“Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.”*

**Interpretation Question:** Who or what was Christ referring to when he referred to dogs, pigs, what is holy, and pearls?

Before a doctor performs surgery, he evaluates the readiness of the patient. On some occasions, though surgery is needed, one postpones or cancels it all together for various reasons... heart problems, blood issues, sickness, etc. Surgeons must practice great discernment. In the same way, spiritual surgery should not be performed indiscriminately. It must be accompanied by wisdom and discernment.

Because of this reality, Christ says that we should not give what is holy to dogs or throw pearls to pigs. What is holy and pearls seem to refer to the doctrines of the kingdom. Christ called God’s kingdom the pearl of great price that a person sells everything to purchase (Matt 13:45-46). The dogs and pigs Christ spoke of were not domesticated dogs and pigs. He referred to wild dogs who were scavengers, which people lived in fear of. Sometimes they would attack people to steal their food. Also, since pigs were considered unclean, Jews did not domesticate them as the Gentiles often did. Christ probably referred to wild boars, who, like dogs, were often dangerous.<sup>4</sup>

Christ essentially says, *“As we seek to minister to others, we must practice discernment.”* Some who we preach the gospel to or try to deliver from some sin will only become violent towards us. In that case, we should cease to offer it. Dogs and pigs will not recognize the value of God’s truth. They will mock it and us.

We saw this in Christ’s ministry. He was not indiscriminate with God’s Word. He told the disciples when they went into towns and preached the gospel, if people rejected it, they should wipe the dust off their shoes and go somewhere else (Matt 10:14). When Christ was taken before

<sup>4</sup> Carson, D. A. (1999). *Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount and His Confrontation with the World: An Exposition of Matthew 5–10* (p. 112). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Herod and questioned, Christ did and said nothing. Herod didn't really care about the gospel, and therefore, Christ didn't share it. Herod only wanted to see a spectacle (Lk 23:6-10). Even with Israel, who continually rejected God's Word, Christ eventually stopped sharing it with them clearly. In Matthew 13, after the Pharisees' rejection of Christ in Matthew 12:24-32, as they said his works came from Satan, Christ began to teach using parables. Why did Christ give parables? It was a form of judgement. Listen to what Christ said when asked by his disciples about his parabolic teaching in Matthew 13:11-13, *"You have been given the opportunity to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but they have not. For whoever has will be given more, and will have an abundance. But whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. For this reason I speak to them in parables: Although they see they do not see, and although they hear they do not hear nor do they understand."*

Because Israel continually rejected Christ's Word, he began to hide the truth from them through parables. After sharing, he would explain the meaning to his disciples alone. Israel had rejected the pearl of great price, and therefore, Christ stopped offering it.

Sometimes, it seems like God has done the same with many of our churches today. Instead of them receiving clear teaching from God's Word, all that is shared from many pulpits is stories and illustrations with vague references to Scripture. If so, this is a form of judgment. Like Israel, the church has developed the character of wild dogs and pigs who cannot stand the pearl of great price and, therefore, are under judgement (cf. 2 Tim 4:3-4). God simply ceases to offer it.

With all this said, certainly we must demonstrate both the diligence and patience of Christ. We must distribute God's truth far and wide, and with those who are willing to listen or want more, we must continually offer it. With those who reject it, we must wait until they are ready and share it with others in the meantime.



This is important for ministry in general. Sometimes those we hope to help are not yet ready for it. *For a season, it may be prudent to withhold or step away from them, as we pray and wait for God to prepare their hearts.* Sometimes, he may do this through a trial that softens the ground of their hearts. At other times, he may prepare their hearts as they watch our lives or that of other faithful Christians. God is ultimately the one who prepares the heart for growth. We just sow the seed and water it.

But either way, we must gain discernment if we are going to do ministry—whether that be to unbelievers who need the gospel or believers caught in some sin. Certainly, with believers God gives more instructions on how to minister to them: He says, go to them once to confront the sin. If they reject, go with another believer. If they still reject, take it before the church. If they still reject, treat them like an unbeliever (Matt 18:15-17, 1 Cor 5:9-13). They should be separated from until they repent. They have the character of a wild dog and pig.

***Application Question:*** How can we gain discernment so we can better minister to others caught in sin?

## **2 Important Ways to Gain Discernment To Better Minister/Impact the Lives of Others:**

- (1) **To develop discernment for ministry/impact, we must pray for it, and at times, ask other believers for their counsel - James 1:5** says. *"If anyone lacks wisdom, let them ask of God who gives liberally."* Also, Proverbs 15:22 talks about how a multitude of counselors brings success. Each person and situation are different—we need God's wisdom to help us discern the best way to minister to others. In fact, in the next verses, he says we should ask,

seek, knock until God answers (Matt 7:7-8). In the context, that may, at the minimum, be talking about how we gain discernment for ministry. We must continually seek the Lord for it.

**(2) To develop discernment for ministry, we must watch people's responses to God's Word**

- It is not that we should stop sharing the gospel or challenging those in sin. We shouldn't. It's when they persist in rejecting it that their character is revealed. So, in order to discern one's character, we must faithfully share God's truth with them. If they become overly critical and even violent, it may be prudent to prayerfully withhold the pearls until the right time... and let God lead and reveal to us when that right time is. If we watch and listen, He will lead us!

## **CONCLUSION**

***Application Question:* Why is discernment of people's hearts so important in ministry? How have you witnessed an overzealous and unwise sharing of truth which only led to great anger and antagonism? Have you ever had to stop sharing God's message because people were so antagonistic towards it? What happened in those situations?**

### **How should we effectively perform spiritual surgery as we help others get free from sin?**

- 1. To effectively impact others for Christ, we must avoid a judgmental disposition**
- 2. To effectively impact others for Christ, we must gain clear vision through personal repentance**
- 3. To effectively impact others for Christ, we must gently care for people**
- 4. To effectively impact others for Christ, we must practice discernment as we share truth**