

Matthew

Sermon on the Mount

August 04, 2024

I. Introduction

- A. **Matthew 7:1–5**, “Do not judge so that you will not be judged. [2] For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. [3] Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? [4] Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ and behold, the log is in your own eye? [5] You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.”
- B. These five verses are packed with information about judging, and we must consider all of it if we are to rightly understand any of it.
1. Last week, in talking about the phrase, “Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?” I urged you to be on the lookout for these kinds of significant phrases or verses because they are easily overlooked. I said that when you come upon such a phrase or verse, it is wise to pause and ponder rather than continue reading.
 2. Today, it is not the phrase or verse that we must take into account, but the context and the varied parts of the whole because they are important to understanding the whole.
 - a. Obviously, **vs 1-5** provide their own context, which in this case is about judging. However, if these verses are to be properly understood, we must include the larger context of the Sermon on the Mount, the book of Matthew, the NT, and finally, the entire Bible.
 - b. For example, **Matthew 7:1** is a classic example of the need to include the largest possible context when seeking to understand what it means. Some Christians read **vs 1** as a stand-alone statement, and then conclude that (1) Christians are not to judge at all (*even though they judge those who continue judging*), (2) Judging others brings God’s judgment on us, and (3) Not judging others frees us from being judged by God.
 3. However, if we examine all five verses as a complete whole (*which includes judging and correcting ourselves before judging and correcting others*), and if we take into account **vs 6**, where Jesus says, “Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine,” (*which requires judging who is a dog and who is a pig*), and if we

- include **vs 15-20**, which cautions us about being taken in by false prophets (*which requires judging who is a false prophet*), and if we go beyond all this and take into account other portions of God's word that deal with judging, we see that there is a much larger context that should influence the way we understand these five verses.
4. The point is, we must consider the largest possible context if we are to understand and apply **vs 1-5** in the most accurate and practical way possible.
 5. Finally, how we judge others is as much about having a righteousness that surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees as anything else in the Sermon on the Mount.

C. Pray

II. The hypocrisy of judging others without first judging yourself

A. [1] Do not judge so that you will not be judged.

1. As stated earlier, taking in the largest context possible makes it clear that Jesus is not condemning judging, as if all judging is wrong. And we know He is not condemning all judging because of the following scriptures.
 - a. **Matthew 7:6**, "Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces." The reality is, you cannot discern who is a dog or a pig without judging a person's character, their way of thinking, and their treatment of those who oppose them by disagreeing with their beliefs, values, and views.
 - b. In **Matthew 7:15-20**, Jesus warns us about false prophets, and tells us we can tell who is and who isn't a false prophet by the fruit or results of their ministry – which includes how they speak, what they teach, their use of power, their use of finances, their home life, their dealings with those who follow them, and the way those who follow them live their lives. *This all requires judging.*
 - c. **Matthew 18:15-17**, "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. [16] But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. [17] If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector." *You cannot deal with a fellow Christian this way without judging him, and if necessary, asking other believers to judge him.*

- d. **1 Corinthians 5:9-13**, “I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; [10] I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world. [11] But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler – not even to eat with such a one. [12] For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? [13] But those who are outside, God judges. Remove the wicked man from among yourselves.” *According to this, believers are responsible for judging each other while God is responsible for judging unbelievers.*
 - e. All this to say, judging others is both an accepted and needful part of the Christian life. Therefore, not judging is not what Jesus is talking about in **Matthew 7:1**.
2. We can also conclude from other parts of the word of God that refusing to judge others does not exempt us from God’s judgment of us – as seems to be implied in **vs 1**. For example:
 - a. **Hebrews 12:5-10**, speaks of God’s discipline of His children. It begins by exhorting us to pay attention to His discipline, because this is an act of a loving God toward those He loves. And He judges us for our good, that is, so that we may share in His holiness. There is no hint in these verses, or anywhere else in the Bible, that refraining from judging others will exempt us from God’s discipline.
 - b. **2 Corinthians 5:10**, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”
 - c. The scripture seems clear to me, God does and will judge us regardless of **if** or **how** we judge others.
 3. The point here is that if we are to understand **vs 1**, it cannot be taken as a stand-alone statement, but must be understood within its larger context.
- B. [2] For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.
1. Like **Matthew 6:14-15** (*which talks about God forgiving us if we forgive others*) this is a statement that affirms that our treatment of others will directly affect God’s treatment of us. And as with the other statements, it ought to put, at the very least, an element of healthy

- fear into us. Why? Because God will judge us in the **same way** and by the **same standard of measure** we use in judging others.
2. Are you aware of the **way** in which you judge others?
 - a. For example, do you seek to know the whole story, the motives, and the circumstances, or do you judge only on what you have seen in the moment, or what others say? Do you allow race, ethnicity, gender, religious or political affiliation, one's social circle, or their ability to do you good to unduly influence your view of their behavior? Do you judge others in the same way you want to be judged?
 - b. The reality is, we show how much we appreciate God's grace, mercy, patience, and forgiveness related to our sin by the way we show grace, mercy, patience, and forgiveness toward those we are judging.
 - c. The point here is not to avoid judging, but to do so in the same gracious, merciful, patient, gentle, humble way God judges us.
 3. What **standard of measure** do you use when judging others? Does a small infraction bring a harsh response? Do you require sinless perfection or more than you require of yourself? Do you take into account such things as a person's age, maturity, education, and the environment in which they were raised? Do you judge to educate – when possible, or mostly to punish? Do you take into account how hard it is for you to do what is right and how easily you are tempted to do what is wrong? What is your standard of measure?
 - a. Your **standard of measure** is just as important as the **way** in which you judge others, for it effects the way God judges you.
 - b. For example, if you want God to remember you are but dust, and that you are like a child who needs His compassion, then you must use this same standard of measure when judging others.
 - c. Consider this: you prove how much you know about right and wrong by the standard of right and wrong you use in judging others. Therefore, you cannot plead ignorance or give some other excuse when being judged by God because you have exposed your knowledge of right and wrong in holding others to what you know.
- C. [3] Why do you **look at the speck** (*small fault / sin / repeated sin*) that is in your brother's eye, but **do not notice the log** (*big fault / big sin / big repeated sin*) that is in your own eye? [4] Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye?

1. **Vs 3-4** begin to bring into clarity what Jesus is getting at in **vs 1**.
2. The **focus** that Jesus is condemning is a focus on the faults of others while ignoring, or living in denial of, or either giving no or insufficient thought to your own faults. And it is not a case of being completely evil, but rather that of ignoring a few ways and behaviors in your life that prevent you from loving God and those around you as you ought.
3. The **practice** that Jesus is condemning is the practice of judging and correcting others (*telling them how to live*) while acting as if there is nothing in your life that God wants you to correct or change or stop. You may admit to specific faults or failings, but if you do not do what is necessary to correct your ways, the outcome is the same as denying or justifying your faults or failings.
4. Therefore, this teaching is not about NOT judging, but about **not judging others** without **first judging yourself** in the same way and with the same standard of measure you use in judging them.
5. Jesus confirms this in His next statement.

D. [5] **You hypocrite**, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

1. Who is the hypocrite? The one who judges others but does not judge himself in the same way and with the same standard of measure.
 - a. Who is the hypocrite? The one who feels both capable and justified in correcting others, but will not admit or correct his own foolish, irresponsible, selfish, ungodly, or sinful behavior.
 - b. Who is the hypocrite? The one who believes people can change if they really wanted to, yet he himself knows nothing about the challenges and difficulties related to changing because he has not entered into the process himself.
 - (1) The reality is, when it comes to correcting waywardness, you cannot lead a person to a place you have not gone yourself. You cannot teach a person what you have not learned. And you cannot walk a person through the challenges and difficulties of change if you have not faced them yourself.
 - (2) In such a situation, all you can do – after judging and condemning – is to leave the person in their mess.
 - c. Who is the hypocrite? The one who lacks mercy, patience, gentleness, and humility in his judgment of others, but wants it from God and from those who judge him.
2. Someone said it this way, “Practice nothing in your deeds for which you condemn others in your words.” And I add, “Do not presume you

- can show someone the right way to live if you are not living that way yourself.” You may be able to tell them what is right, but you cannot lead them or show them how to go from where they are to where they ought to be because you have not, and therefore do not know, how to walk that path yourself.
3. So what are we to do in relation to judging others.
 - a. Clean up your life – first and foremost. Then you will have the kind of humility, grace, patience, and experience to speak to others about their faults and help them change.
 - b. Put the same kind of time and energy into becoming as godly yourself as you want the people around you to put into changing and correcting their faults and failings.
 - c. Don’t judge to condemn, but rather to reveal the weakness or fault or sin in a person, and to show them a realistic, workable path to change from who they are to what they can and ought to be.
 - d. Don’t judge, criticize, or correct others to make your life better or happier. Do it for their good, God’s good, and the good of everyone they effect.
 - e. Avoid attacking the person or the person’s character. Avoid exaggerating the wrong. Rather, in a respectful and gentle way, address the behavior and the motives and thinking driving the behavior.
 - f. Remember, you are not equipped to do surgery unless you have been trained as a surgeon, and in relation to judging others, you gain surgical training by honestly and sincerely judging yourself, and by working through the change process yourself.
 - g. Never forget that you are setting yourself up for either gentler or harsher judgment from God by how you judge those around you. So don’t be foolish. You don’t need God’s harsher judgment. Given your faults, failings, and sins, you need His mercy and grace, just like I do.

III. Conclusion

- A. This teaching is not against judging, but against ungodly, one-sided judging that is supports a double-standard – one for you and one for them.
- B. May we judge as God judges us, and as we would like God to judge us. And may we remember that God’s judgment cannot be avoided, but it can be influenced by how we judge those around us.