

## JUDGMENT & HUMILITY

Matthew 7:1-5

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### **Introduction: Read Matthew 7:1-5 together**

The heart issue Jesus focuses on is: *How do we form opinions about other people? What is my understanding of God, people and my position in these relationships?"*

Think back to a time when you were misjudged. The hyper-critical condemnation, unfair presumption or piling on beats down morale, creates a sense of betrayal and mistrust. Relationship chaos with God and others is reflected in visual cues, words, and actions. Flip the coin and see yourself as judge and jury. It's not pretty.

Pause to pray silently in repentance over any unconfessed sins, 1 minute. Pause another minute to pray that God will reveal to you where you have some heart issues in the area of judgment and humility before beginning the study.

### **Understanding:**

**The Definition(s) of Judging (in this passage):** Criticizing someone in a way that's: uncalled-for or unfair or unjustified; hyper-critical or condemning; piling on.

**We can swiftly dismiss or quickly make an unjustified opinion** if we do not take the time to understand what is going on, without patience or consideration of another human being's need or situation. **Think of a Bible story where Christ demonstrates love when others demonstrate unfair judgment. (Example: The man born blind was judged unfairly) Explain**

**We can be hyper-critical**, seeing the worst in people, lacking trust in them or their motives-and treating them that way. **Think of a person or group of people in the Bible who demonstrate this attitude and explain. (Example: Pharisees) Explain**

**We can pile on, publicly (or privately) seeking pleasure in beating someone down.** Although people may do something wrong and seek (or not seek) forgiveness, our pride takes precedence over the relationship or the dignity of the person who is created in God's image (Read Genesis 1:27), whom Christ died for and desires to come to Him (Read 2 Peter 3:9), and who may be a brother or sister in Christ as well (Read 1 Corinthians 12:26-27)! (Example: The Prodigal Son's brother) **Think of a situation where you wish you had not judged someone, where it has been difficult to rebuild trust and relationship. It is like spilled oil paint, the damage is done and difficult to repair. What do you now do to avoid piling on?**

### **The Danger of Judging**

Researchers define "bias blind spots" as the way we evaluate other people and the way we evaluate ourselves is totally different. **The Bible just calls it sin**—which causes chaos in our relationships. **"Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy." (Matthew 5:7)** Being a judgmental person comes back to bite us in judgment from others and from God. In a more eternal way, James 2:13 says ..."judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful." These people show they do not know God's grace and will hear God

say, "Depart from me. I never knew you!" (Matthew 7:23) Have you ever documented your "bias blind spots", where you sin by not displaying mercy in judgment? (Where do you easily anger, project your responses and behavior onto others as righteous expectations, or believe you deserve more from someone? Where do you expect more "perfection" of someone than you do yourself?) Discuss how evaluating yourself in this way has helped you change your attitude and actions.

## The Good Kind of Judging

**This is different "judging", an evaluation, discerning with the Holy Spirit's guidance for our instruction, protection and spiritual growth, highly regarding God's Biblical instructions which bring life to all who humbly obey. Christ says in John 7:24 "Stop judging by mere appearances, but instead judge correctly. Also in Matthew 7:15 "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly they are ferocious wolves."**

**BUT FIRST**, Verse 5 says: "You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then—listen—you will see clearly (to do what?) *to remove the speck from your brother's eye.*" There is a proper time and need to make an evaluation which is good and loving and essential to a healthy relationship. 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.**

*The way I respond depends on the person who is pointing out my speck.*

What kind of characteristics do people exhibit who earn the right to speak to my sin and potentially harmful behaviors or obsessions (words, actions and thoughts expressed)?

How have you encouraged a loved one or friend in a loving manner, guiding toward change or repentance from sin? (avoid sharing names, what is said remains in the group...no gossip!)

Deep community requires supernatural help, the gospel. The gospel humbles and instructs us.

Jesus went to the cross for all who turn to him in repentance, to forgive their sins. They follow Christ, exhibiting their permanent status as children of God. The gospel that humbles also gives confidence. The gospel actually makes it safe to have difficult conversations regarding blind spots to sin. The gospel is great for our relationships with others, not just for our own salvation!

It is the lens that we look at life through, it makes us humble and vulnerable and confident at the same time. If you have not surrendered your life to Christ in repentance, talk to your group leader in confidence.