

"To Judge, Or Not To Judge? Is that the question?"

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[0 : 00] If you'd open up your Bibles to Matthew chapter 7, we're going to skip ahead this morning to Matthew chapter 7, 1 through 5. Matt Sear next week is going to come back and come back to that wonderful passage in which Jesus addresses our anxiety.

And so I will be preaching out of Matthew 7, 1 through 5. I was hoping to get to verse 6, but I just, there's not enough time. So let me read this for you.

You've heard this. This is the words of Jesus. Judge not that you be not judged, for with the judgment you pronounced, you will be judged.

And with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?

Or how can you say to your brother, let me take the speck out of your eye when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite.

[1 : 07] First, take the log out of your own eye. 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. We are a judgmental bunch.

We have a knack for finding fault in each other. In fact, there's a story of two pastors. They didn't know they were pastors, but they happened to be down by the marina together, and they kind of bumped into one another.

And one of the pastors started a conversation with the other, and it went something like this. Are you saved or are you unsaved?

Well, I'm saved. Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! Do you believe in believer's baptism or infant baptism?

Well, I believe in believer's baptism.

Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! Do you dunk or do you sprinkle? We dunk. Oh, hallelujah! Praise the Lord! Are you a Calvinist or an Arminian?

[2 : 11] Well, I lean towards Calvinism. Praise the Lord! Amen! Are you a complementarian or an egalitarian? Well, I'm a complementarian. Amen!

Praise the Lord, brother! Are you a continuationist or a cessationist? Well, I'm a continuationist.

Praise the Lord, brother! Are you old earth or young earth?

Well, I lean towards old earth. Oh, praise the Lord, brother! All right! All right! Are you pre-mill, post-mill, or aw-mill? Lean towards pre-mill.

Amen, brother! Are you hymns only or contemporary worship songs only? Well, we're both. Amen, brother!

Are you committed to expository preaching or do you topical stuff? Well, we do both, but we relatively emphasize expository preaching. Amen, brother! Amen! Do you do small groups or Sunday school?

[3 : 21] Well, we do small groups right now, but maybe Sunday school. Amen, brother! Do you observe communion weekly or communion monthly?

Well, we observe communion monthly. What? And you call yourself a pastor? And you call yourself a pastor? And you call yourself a pastor?

And he walks off. We have a knack for finding fault in each other, don't we? If it's not doctrinal matters, it's what we wear to church. If it's not what we wear to church, it's what we sing at church.

And if it's not what we sing at church, it's who's the candidate you're going to vote for on November 8th? That can be a source of some fault finding. This morning, Jesus is telling his followers that they are not to be characterized by judgmentalism.

We're not to be harsh in our judgments. We're to hold our opinions, even our theological convictions, with humility. So whether it's about what you dress, or the worship music we think we should have, or how are you going to vote, or whether you're pre-mill, post-mill, or ah-mill, Jesus

calls us to a clear-eyed humility.

[4 : 42] And this morning, we're going to see Jesus kind of walk through an argument. So four steps in this argument. And there's these key words. He starts by saying, judge not.

A cease and desist order from our king. So judge not. And then he says, for, in verse 2. And he gives us the reason why we're not to judge.

And then he does this whole speck in the eye, log in the eye. By this kind of ridiculous kind of example. But he's making a point. And then, in verse 5, he lands this plane.

And the word, you. You. Jesus' followers are not to be characterized by a prideful judgmentalism. We're to be marked by humility. And really help people. So, let's dig in. Matthew chapter 7, verse 1.

[5 : 47] Two words. Judge not. These two words are carrying a lot of weight. They're coming off the lips of our king. Judge not.

It's a cease and desist order. Do you know what a cease and desist order is? If, like, you're putting a, something on the back of your house. And you're digging in. And the city of Kenosha says a cease and desist order.

This is for you. That means you immediately need to stop your work. So that they can bring people in. Make sure it's okay. Then you can start up again. Well, this, judge not, is a immediate, urgent, cease and desist order for Jesus' disciples.

Not just in the first century, but in the 21st century. For us. He, in all of his authority, is commanding us to stop judging each other.

You'll notice the word brothers repeated throughout this. He's thinking in-house, among the family. But here's the deal. We need to answer this question.

[6 : 52] What does Jesus mean by judge? When he says judge not, what does he mean? Is he talking about all judging in general? Or just a certain kind of judging?

Well, that word judge in the Greek language has a range of meanings. And it all has to do with evaluating. Sometimes it means discretion. Sometimes it means condemning somebody. Sometimes it means judgmentalism. This over-the-top, critical, kind of dealing with the detail of my new things and making a big deal about it. And what Jesus is addressing here, and what he is forbidding, is that judgmental spirit that can show up in many of us.

That critical spirit. Judgmentalism is a manifestation of pride. Ungracious and unloving. Judgmentalism is a manifestation of pride.

It comes from the inside. It's a manifestation of pride that shows up in a quickness to find fault in others. And if that's not enough, finding fault in others with no intent to help.

[8 : 09] Judgmentalism is a readiness to find fault in others. So what Jesus is forbidding here is this prideful attitude in evaluating one another.

Lifting yourself up over someone else in judgment. So the question we need to ask now is, how do we know that's the case? How do we know that that's what Jesus is forbidding right here?

Well, there are some compelling clues from the context that make it clear. And so if you look at verse 5, we read, you hypocrite, first take the log out from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

So what Jesus is saying here is, get the log out so you can judge clearly. So he's not forbidding all judging here. He's forbidding a certain kind of judgment. Log-eye judgment.

And then in verse 6, he goes on to say, do not give dogs what is holy and do not throw your pearls before pigs. He's talking about people. Dogs and pigs. He's asking us to exercise judgment for those people who are resistant and hostile to the things of God.

[9 : 26] It's like, don't give them what's holy. They don't want it. In fact, they'll turn on you, shred you, if you do. He's calling us to exercise judgment.

In chapter 7, verse 15, Jesus tells us to watch out for false prophets with the expectation we'll be able to judge between true and false prophets. He's calling us to exercise discretion, to make a judgment, clear judgment.

Perhaps the most compelling clue is back in verse 5. It's the very beginning. He says, you hypocrite.

You hypocrite. First, remove the log from your own eye. What Jesus is forbidding here is hypocritical judgment. I mean, he's been going after hypocrisy all throughout the Sermon on the Mount.

We're going to come back to that when we get to verse 5. So, it seems like the clues from this context are making things pretty clear that Jesus is forbidding a judgmentalism, not just all judgment.

[10:36] Which is relieving. Because that means we still get to exercise wise, loving judgment in discernment. We just need to steer clear of this prideful judgmentalism.

So, the kind of evaluation that we're being told not to do is fault-finding, selfish, unloving. Jerry Bridges in his book, *Respectable Sins*, calls judgmentalism when we equate our opinions with truth. We elevate our opinions to a point where we think that they're right all the time. Judgmentalism is an elevation of oneself over another.

And oftentimes this takes place in majoring on the minors, making mountains over molehills, breaking fellowship over how many times a month you observe communion.

In the middle of this word pride, because at the heart of judgmentalism is pride, and at the middle of that word pride, five-letter word, is the word I.

[11:52] I is at the middle of pride. Me is at the center. Judgmentalism is a manifestation of pride. And God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. And so, consider the effects of a judgmental critical spirit.

It demeans the one being judged. Does God want that? No. It puffs up the one who is doing the judging. Does God want that?

No. Judgmentalism results not in building up other people, but tearing them down. It's not constructive. It's destructive. Does God want that among his people?

No. Over time, a critical spirit will have a withering effect on those closest to you. It exasperates people either into forced compliance or fierce rebellion.

It's either the shrug soldier effect or it's the raised fist effect. Does God want either of those? No.

[13:02] He wants peace for his people. He wants unity held together by a bond of peace. He wants there to be love among his people, even when we disagree.

We can disagree. We can disagree. We can disagree in love. What we can't do is go judgmental on each other.

So what is Jesus commanding us here? He's saying, judge not. Do not be quick to find fault in each other. Now, if you're sitting there in your pew right now and you're saying, whoa, I think Jesus is speaking to me this morning, what you need to hear is that cease and desist order.

You need to stop that now. Jesus is saying, judge not. Stop it. Are you starting to feel the weight of it? So that's the first move here.

Jesus says, cease and desist this judgmentalism. It has no place among my people. The next step is that Jesus provides a reason why we're not to be judgmental with one another.

[14:14] And it's clued in by the word for in verse 2. So Jesus says, judge not that you be not judged for, it's a reason, for with the judgment you pronounce, you will be judged in the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

So Jesus is saying this, don't be merciless in your judgment of others because you will be judged without mercy. That's the reason he's giving.

It's a sober reason. It's a warning. Jesus is emphasizing this with a play on words and he can't see it in English. You can see a little bit of it in English.

In English, we read, for you, for with the judgment you pronounce, you will be judged. You see how the word judge is repeated. And then we read, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

And so you see how the word measure is repeated. And essentially, judge and measure are being used synonymously to talk about this judgmentalism. But in the original language, it reads like this.

[15:26] For with the judgment you judge, you will be judged. And with the measure you measure, you will be measured. It's even more emphatic. It's a play on words. It's a repeating of ideas.

To judge and to measure are getting at the same thing. It's a kind of evaluation with which you evaluate others. What you evaluate others with, you will be evaluated with.

So how do you evaluate others? How do you judge others? With what do you measure others by?

And then we've got to ask, well, who's doing the evaluating of me if I'm evaluating of others?

Is it other people? Well, it could be. There's a tendency when we're critical of others that other people tend to be critical of us. Is that who Jesus is talking about? Well, it's kind of vague.

Because it can also mean God. And if we keep with the overarching kind of theme and motif of the passage, it most likely is God.

[16:36] And if it is God, then it should give us considerable pause when we render judgment on someone. We are to be slow to judge. What Jesus is saying here is, in keeping with what he said in Matthew 6, verses 14 and 15.

Remember that? He says, For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

And what he's warning his followers is, what will happen if they're not forgiving of others? It's God will not forgive them because their unforgiving spirit reveals that they're not followers of Jesus. And a similar principle is in play here. If someone persists in judgmentalism, it reveals their heart and God will be merciless in his judgment. He will judge them with the kind of judgment they have judged others.

Dr. Don Carson, who is a professor down at Trinity, said it this way regarding this verse. A judgmental attitude excludes us from God's pardon for it betrays our unbroken spirit.

[17:52] It reveals we have a critical spirit, not a poverty of spirit. Blessed are those who are poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God.

Now, this kind of judgmentalism has been happening in churches for a long time. If you trace it all the way back to the first century in Rome, there was a Christian church in Rome, a bunch of believers.

And they were kind of sniping at each other because of different foods. Some said you should eat. Some said you shouldn't eat. Different holidays.

Some said you should observe them. Some said you shouldn't. In Romans 14.10, Paul rebukes them all. He says, Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or why do you despise your brother?

And so he's linking this judgmentalism with despising your brother. It's unloving. And then he goes on to remind them, For we will stand before the judgment seat of God.

[18:54] So then each of us will give an account of himself to God. Each of us will give an account before our Father.

God himself. So what we need to keep in mind and why this reason is so sobering is that how we treat other people now, how we judge them and measure them, that's going to be part of our judgment when we go before God.

It's really sobering. Let me illustrate it this way. So we have these repeated plays on word.

Jesus says, For with the judgment you judge, you will be judged. With the measure you measure, you will be measured. So there's these six repeated words. And here's how I want you to think about them.

Think about these six repeated words as those orange and white sawhorses in a road. And they're put there to say, Watch out!

[20:04] And what Jesus is saying with these repeated words is, Don't go down the road of judgmentalism. Don't go down that road. In fact, what he's saying is, Turn around.

Stop. Turn around. That is not a road you want to go down. You're going to have to face God someday. So let me ask you this.

Let's say someone calls your favorite presidential candidate a moron. What would happen if when you were tempted to be critical back, what came into your mind was standing before your God and having to give an account.

This word for is a sober reason to stop our judgmentalism. So Jesus moves from this sober warning for to a rather ridiculous example.

In verses 3 and 4, let's read it. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, Let me take this speck out of your eye when there is the log in your own eye?

[21:42] It's almost cartoon-like. One commentator talked about it as being Jesus' employing humor here. But it would be funny if it were not for it being about judgmentalism, which is not funny.

What Jesus is saying here with this very creative illustration is that those who are being judgmental, they don't see things clearly.

their view is obstructed. And even worse, they tend not to be aware that they've got a log in their eye.

They're unaware of their obstructed sight. So if you look at verses 3 and 4, there's this brother with something in his eye. Jesus calls it a speck.

It's probably a speck of sawdust. Remember, Jesus was a carpenter by trade. He knew what it was like to cut wood. And I'm guessing he probably got a speck of sawdust in his eye.

[22 : 43] And so what Jesus is not denying is there's going to be situations where we need to help one another get specks out of our eyes. And so Jesus is saying there's not a place for that.

There is a place for that. But the problem is that the one who volunteers to help, look at verse 4, or how can you say to your brother, let me take the speck out of your eye.

The problem is the one who volunteers has a log in his eye. Now that word log is not referring to a 2x4. It's referring to a support beam.

A support beam. In a first century Palestinian home that held up the roof, it would be the equivalent for us as an eye beam. Or two 2x12s nailed together in order to hold a considerable amount of weight.

It is a ridiculous picture to imagine. Someone walking around with an eye beam in their eye? A support beam?

[23 : 50] Jesus is obviously making a contrast between the speck and the beam. And in the contrast, what it's bringing out is the seriousness of judgmentalism.

Because that's what the log is. And notice that though the brother with the speck in the eye apparently knows he's got a speck in his eye, the brother with the log in his eye is completely unaware of it.

That's the effect of pride. Pride blinds us. Those who are judgmental are often blind to their own judgmentalism.

Let me ask you a question. Of those two brothers, which one is in the greatest need? The one with the log in his eye.

That's the worst problem of the two. And what's crazy about this is that the one in greatest need with the eye beam in his eye is actually trying to help out the one with the speck in his eye.

[25 : 08] It's completely ridiculous. And that's Jesus' point. For a Christian who is blinded by their own judgmentalism to try to help a brother or sister in Christ with a speck in their eye, it's ridiculous because it's presumptuous.

So from these two verses we can draw out that judgmentalism, this quickness, quickness to find fault in one another. It's a serious problem.

It's eye beam problem. It blinds Christians from seeing themselves. It's what pride does. It prevents Christians from really helping one another.

Do you really think that someone with an eye beam is going to be able to help someone with a speck in their eye? So let me ask you a question. Have you ever thought about judgmentalism this way?

Are you starting to feel the weight of it? How serious this is in God's sight? So in this ridiculous example, Jesus' point is how ridiculous judgmentalism is in God's eyes.

[26 : 18] I mean, after all, God alone knows what's going on in each of us. So now in verse 5, Jesus in this last step calls us to a clear-sighted humility.

The solution to log-eye syndrome, this judgmentalism, is a humble repentance. So in verse 5, Jesus says, 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. So let's just say that you're sitting there and you're realizing you have a tendency of being judgmental with other people, with other Christians.

And with that growing sense, you have this also kind of growing weight that that is grievous in God's sight. That's actually a good thing. God is doing a work in your heart.

He wants to help you. He wants to rid you of something. That's his kindness to you. And so you're realizing you tend to rush into making harsh, unmerciful judgments about others.

[27 : 33] Remember, judgmentalism is, it's a temptation common to man because it's got pride at its root. We equate our own opinions with the truth.

So we've got to ask the question, what must we do? What step do we take in order to obey Jesus' cease and desist order?

What do we need to do in order to judge not? If the heart of judgmentalism is pride, some kind of inflated view of yourself, the solution will be humbling yourself, seeing yourself as God sees you. So Jesus calls us to humble himself. And this passage, he says something that is difficult to hear. Remember, Jesus is speaking to his disciples. And Jesus, in the movement of this passage, he starts in verses 1 and 2 by saying, y'all.

[28 : 48] He's talking to all of his disciples. And then in verse 3, he goes from y'all to you. And in verse 5, he says, you hypocrite.

If you're being judgmental, regularly giving vent to critical, a critical spirit to others, or gossiping about others, Jesus is saying, you are a hypocrite.

Now, can you imagine Jesus himself calling you out as a hypocrite?

If you are judging others ungraciously, that's exactly what he's doing. And what you need to understand is that judgmentalism is hypocrisy.

Let's ask this question. It's a basic question. What is so hypocritical about judgmentalism?

[30 : 07] Do you remember the word hypocrite comes from the Greek theater in which actors would change from character to character by putting different masks over their face?

And so they would put a different face on depending on who their character was. So what Jesus is saying is judgmentalism is putting on a false face. It's thinking that you are healthy and able to help others with their specs when in fact, you're the one in greatest need of help.

You're the one in greatest danger. You've got the bigger problem. That's the hypocrisy. And it would do us all well to take heed of it.

If you struggle with judgmentalism, and I have, I do, the first thing you need to know is that it is hypocritical. But it's not enough to know it.

There's a step of humility of confessing it. Confessing it to God. Keith, earlier when we were worshiping, quoted 1 John 1.9. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

[31 : 26] We have an advocate, Jesus. He is our propitiation. That word confess, it literally means same word. If we call judgmentalism the same word that God calls it, we're confessing it as sin.

And what does God call judgmentalism? He calls it hypocrisy. He calls it hypocrisy. And so the first step of humility here, after being confronted with this, you hypocrite, is to confess it.

Is to say, oh Lord Jesus, you are right. You're right. I'm prone to it. Even I've given myself to it.

You're right. It's wrong. It's hypocritical. So you call it sin. And then you realize what this same Jesus has done for you. This same Jesus, who says you hypocrite, on the cross, said, it is finished. I paid for that. Forgiven in full. So you call it sin. You call it forgiven. And you call on God to change you.

[32 : 46] And so the next step, after confessing it to God, calling it what it is, the next step is to take the log out of your own eye.

Once you've confessed it, you've positioned yourself to remove it. Because if you don't see judgmentalism as sin against God, you're not going to be compelled to do anything about it.

But if you see it as God sees it, you're going to be compelled to get rid of it. Or what the Apostle Paul says, to put it to death. It's a step of humility.

It's a step of coming under what God says. So when we remove remove the log out of our own eye, we are repenting of judgmentalism.

And in order for you to see the log, I want to help you. I want to help you to see it. I want to help you see judgmentalism in your own life.

[33 : 51] So I've got three questions for you. Three questions that are intended to help you see judgmentalism in your life. In your life. Don't be thinking your spouse's life.

Don't be thinking your children's life. Don't be thinking your pastor's life. Be thinking your life.

Evaluate yourself. Three questions. First one is this. Ask yourself, what are the topics in which I'm tempted to be quick to find fault in others?

What are the topics? Maybe it's politics. Maybe it's social issues. Maybe it's sports. Someone says something about your pack and man, you are like pulling your sword out.

Maybe it's how you dress on a Sunday morning. Maybe it's the songs we sing on a Sunday morning. Maybe it is your favorite theological point. Maybe it's the roles of men and women in the church.

Maybe it's do the gifts exist or not. Maybe it's you hear the word predestination and you want to fight. Here's a big clue as to paying attention of where you will be tempted to be critical.

[35 : 07] What are the things that you value most? What are the topics that are near and dearest to your heart? Be paying attention to those things.

Second question. Ask yourself, who are the people I'm tempted to harshly criticize most frequently? Who are the people? Do you have a regular set of targets?

Your spouse, your children, your church, your elders, your life group leader? Maybe it's your supervisor at work. Maybe it's your parents or your siblings. Maybe it's your teachers.

Or maybe it's your government officials. Or maybe it's your Facebook friends. Who are the people that you're tempted to harshly criticize? That will help you kind of narrow the field down.

It's an area to consider when you'll be tempted to criticize. Third area. Ask yourself, what's going on inside of you when you're tempted to be critical?

[36 : 08] For example, are you tired? Or are you stressed out?

Are you impatient? When you are sharp, when you're harsh, when you're rash, ungracious, what's going on inside of you? Do you feel insecure?

If you feel insecure, sometimes the way that you push back is by unfair criticism. Do you feel angry? Do you feel out of control? Are you disgusted by someone? Do you feel overlooked? Are you offended? These are all ripe opportunities to get critical real fast.

Now, if you're experiencing any of these, do not be surprised that you'll be tempted in those moments to react harshly and to criticize in a manner that's displeasing to God.

[37 : 18] Oftentimes, the first thing we go when we're not getting something we want is we want to blame somebody. You're the reason for this. So we've identified some areas where you'll likely be tempted to judge sinfully, right?

And if you take that whole list together, it might be overwhelming. So just pick one. Start somewhere. Start paying attention to it. And now what I want you to do is I want to help you to know how to humbly fight this prideful judgmentalism because I'm guessing it's going to come up later today or sometime this week.

I want to help you to fight. Humbly fight. But before I do, let me just say this. This is about removing the log from your eye so that you can see clearly and help people out.

So God wants to get something done here for the building up of our body. So with that said, I'm going to wrap up by pointing you to four things, four recommendations to remove the log out of your eye so you can help others.

First one is this. Ask God to weed out your prideful, critical spirit and to plant in its place a poverty of spirit.

[38 : 42] Ask God to weed it out. To remove the pride and replace it with humility. Remember, a critical spirit and a poverty of spirit do not coexist.

Kick one out so that God can cultivate the other. Blessed are the poor in spirit, the humble, for they shall see, for theirs is the kingdom of God.

So ask God to weed it out and to plant in humility. Two, slow your judgment down. Slow that train down. If you're quick to find fault in other people, humility means slowing it down.

Believe the best. Seek to understand. Get the right weight on the issue. If you find yourself harsh, humility means being gentle.

A tender hearted. See others as God sees them. Not as your enemies. Don't demonize them. See them as God sees them. Get perspective. Slow the judgment train down.

[39 : 56] Third recommendation. You know, we went through that list of people that you would be tempted to be critical of. You know that list? Start praying God's fullness of blessing and peace on that person.

The person you're tempted to be critical of, ask God to bless them richly. Go number six, 24 through 26, that God, would you cause your face to shine upon this person all the days of their life?

Go show them your goodness. It's really hard to be critical and angry with somebody you're praying for like that. You're seeking to love them with your praying. Finally, remember this and remember this often that you yourself, you were under God's holy judgment for your judgmentalism.

He sees it for what it is. And Jesus bore all of God's wrath for your critical spirit.

The one who spoke the words you hypocrite also spoke the words it is finished. Paid and full.

[41 : 18] Jesus died for your judgmentalism. He hung on the cross for it. Remember the gospel. Major on the major.

First things first. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15 I present to you that which is of first importance. Christ died for your sins was buried and on the third day was raised from the dead according to the scriptures.

That's the main thing. Keep the main thing the main thing. And it puts what we have opinions on whether it's what we wear or the kind of music we want to sing by our preferred candidate or our theological hobby horses it puts it in the right perspective.

So when you remember often what God has done for you in Christ that's the sweet spot that will keep you humble and that will help you remove the log so you see clearly.

Let's pray. Lord Jesus would you help us to remove the logs in our eyes so that we can see clearly and so that we can actually help one another and build one another up.

[42 : 41] God we entrust this to you in the name of Jesus we pray Amen.