

Don't Take the Bench

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Prayer

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Scripture Reading

Matthew 7:1-6 NKJV

“Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? 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? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye. “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.

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In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is laying out the principles of the Kingdom of Heaven. Why does He speak to this subject? The Fall of humankind gives us insight . . .

[Add Your Notes](#) ^[3]

Genesis 3:6-13

Genesis 3:6-13 NKJV

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. And they heard the sound of the Lord

God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself." And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?" Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate." And the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

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Fall > Accusation

When I sin, I begin to look at others and notice their sin. In my fallenness I take the seat of judgment to call out in others the shame I see in myself. It's twisted way of softening the sense of my own sin and shame. It helps me feel better. However, we discover that it takes a sinner to know a sinner.

[Add Your Notes](#) [5]

Matthew 7:2-5

Matthew 7:2-4 NKJV

For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? 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?

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Me VS Them

"The" speck vs "the" plank. Notice, Jesus uses the DEFINITE article here to indicate a specific speck, a specific plank--not just any misbehavior. Simply put, Jesus' teaching is that the need to point out the sin in another's life is ALWAYS a beam in comparison to a speck--no matter how great the sin in the other person's life. The critical, self-justifying, self-centered thinking that leads to judging; setting others straight; criticizing; saying it like it is; etc. is ALWAYS the greater of the two evils. Rather than being some evidence of my personal holiness it is damning proof of my fallenness. I'm living my life just the same way the father and mother of our race did AFTER the fall. Notice Paul's teaching on this same subject.

Add Your Notes ^[7]

Romans 2:1

Romans 2:1 NKJV

Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.

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It takes on to know one.

One can only 'read' the motives of others by the barometer of himself. As the saying goes, it takes one to know one. Thus, we can make negative assumptions about others only when we, by our own experience, have come to associate

external behaviors with internal impurity. The capacity to discern fault in another comes from personal experience with fault in myself. It does not reveal any moral superiority but rather moral similarity, or inferiority. We demonstrate / reveal our own sinfulness by claiming the insight to discern another's. If we were genuinely different, we would not draw the conclusions we do. It is because we identify others actions with our own immoral motives that we feel so certain of our negative conclusions about them. I can bear personal testimony to the truth of Jesus' teaching . . . and I'm afraid all of us could, were we to stop and examine our own motives behind why we judge or criticize others. The practice or attitude of sitting in judgment of others flies in the face of EVERYTHING Jesus taught so far in the Sermon on the Mount--which He did not give as another tool for sizing others up. Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount radically challenges our self-centered, self-justifying behavior. What Jesus teaches is radical. Let's take a quick overview. It will help us get a sense of the direction Jesus is moving when He gets to the point: "Judge not, that you be not judged."

Add Your Notes ^[9]

Jesus' Teaching in the Sermon on the Mount

According to Jesus, the Kingdom of Heaven is about (all references from Matthew): 5:5 being meek 5:7 showing mercy 5:9 making peace 5:13 rejoicing when treated wrongly 5:20 being righteous on the inside 5:23 eager to make peace with those around me 5:41 willing to go the second mile 5:42 generous 5:44 loving and blessing my enemies 5:48 loving AS He loves 6:2 being kind for kindness sake 6:14 generous in forgiving others 7:1 not critical of others 7:2 generous in my treatment of others 7:12 treating others as I wish to be treated Notice how Jesus shows the radical shift that Kingdom-living brings from self-interest to deep personal relationship with God and gracious, loving treatment of others. Jesus focuses on personal godliness--not on how others appear or what others are doing. He moves us away from external behavior as our focal point to internal transformation through a relationship with Him. This internal transformation ALWAYS makes us kind and gracious to others. Have you ever noticed that when we criticize others we end up withholding ourselves from

them? Somehow we deem them inferior, unworthy of our elevated company. This reaction is OPPOSITE of Jesus' teaching. Jesus turns the focus of my life from this self interest toward God and how I may bless others. He turns if from others behaviors to my own behavior; from seeking to change others to experiencing personal change that is revealed in showing grace to others. This is the impact of the Kingdom of Heaven in the heart. Every time. This is radically new thinking and behavior for sinners--even sinners in the church! The truth is not given to me for the purpose of straightening other people out, but for the purpose of redeeming them. God's righteousness is not meant to make us feel superior but to make us gracious, more like the Him. The bottom line: the drive to straighten others out is NEVER from God. This whole change in thinking is difficult for me, but what I'm realizing is that if I'm worried about how to address faults in others (however pure I think my motives are), then I'm still on the throne of judgment. I must get off! It's almost hard to believe . . . but until I step down from the throne, I am in no place to help anyone.

Add Your Notes ^[10]

Matthew 7:6

Matthew 7:6 NKJV

“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.

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Matthew 7:15-20

Matthew 7:15-20 NKJV

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly

they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

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On a side note

Jesus talks about judging two specific ways in Matthew 7. Don't give truth to people who don't want it. Jesus demonstrated this by instructing the disciples to walk away. There were a few occasions when Jesus gave truth to those who didn't want it, but this is not the rule of life. There were specific reasons which we won't address here. Second, Jesus said to be aware of false teachers / prophets. Anyone coming with a claim to be teaching truth is inviting examination--and this should be done, though still doing so in full harmony with Jesus' about loving others.

[Add Your Notes](#) [13]

Matthew 7:5

Matthew 7:5 NKJV

Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

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Remove the plank

Remember, THE plank, is my drive to correct others. This self-centered thinking must be removed BEFORE I can be of any benefit to someone else.

Add Your Notes ^[15]

Matthew 5:3-6

Matthew 5:3-6 NKJV

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.

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Galatians 2:20

Galatians 2:20 NKJV

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

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What both passages teach

What both passages teach is that I've got to get off the throne! I must lose myself in Christ and love like He does. We get ourselves off the throne ONLY by coming to the foot of the cross—and being crucified ourselves. Our own self-interest must be laid in the grave.

Add Your Notes ^[18]

Matthew 7:2

Matthew 7:2 NKJV

For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

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Matthew 7:12

Matthew 7:12 NKJV

Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

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Matthew 6:14, 15

Matthew 6:14-15 NKJV

“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive

you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

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Think about others

Jesus AGAIN introduces this powerful principle of living: think about others through HOW I would wish to be treated if we switched places. Ask yourself: Would you want to be measured by the ruler you hold up to others? Would you want to be weighed in the balance with which you weigh others? God has never treated us as we deserve . . .

[Add Your Notes](#) [22]

Romans 5:8

Romans 5:8 NKJV

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

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Matthew 18:21-35

Matthew 18:21-35 NKJV

Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to

you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. "But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."

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1 Corinthians 4:5

1 Corinthians 4:5 NKJV

Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.

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Matthew 7:5

Matthew 7:5 NKJV

Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

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Philippians 2:3

Philippians 2:3 NKJV

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

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THEN I can help others

When I am merciful, pure in heart, a peacemaker, then I know just when, what and how to give redemptive, grace-filled rebuke or exhortation. When love takes hold of my heart, I won't need to worry about "will I have the right words, approach, etc" I will be ready. The Spirit of God that is at work deep in my own heart will lead me in saying or doing with such love that change is likely. The rebuke born of love has the potential to be life changing!!!! Getting off the throne frees my mind to see people as people, not as mere objectives for evaluation.

[Add Your Notes](#) [28]

Appeal

As you come to the conclusion of today's study, I want to invite you to experiencing a new level of transformation in your life. I want this to be a new beginning for you. I want you to discover a new way of treating other people--to come into harmony with God's attitude toward others. Won't you take this moment to ask God to change your heart that it might become like His?

Add Your Notes [29]

1. <https://www.adventistgiving.org/login/Login.aspx>
2. <http://www.a.youversion.com/bible/nkjv/Matt.7.1-6>
3. <http://www.a.youversion.com/events/281976/notes>
4. <http://www.a.youversion.com/bible/nkjv/Gen.3.6-13>
5. <http://www.a.youversion.com/events/281976/notes>
6. <http://www.a.youversion.com/bible/nkjv/Matt.7.2-4>
7. <http://www.a.youversion.com/events/281976/notes>
8. <http://www.a.youversion.com/bible/nkjv/Rom.2.1>
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12. <http://www.a.youversion.com/bible/nkjv/Matt.7.15-20>
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14. <http://www.a.youversion.com/bible/nkjv/Matt.7.5>
15. <http://www.a.youversion.com/events/281976/notes>
16. <http://www.a.youversion.com/bible/nkjv/Matt.5.3-6>
17. <http://www.a.youversion.com/bible/nkjv/Gal.2.20>
18. <http://www.a.youversion.com/events/281976/notes>
19. <http://www.a.youversion.com/bible/nkjv/Matt.7.2>

20. <http://www.a.youversion.com/bible/nkjv/Matt.7.12>
21. <http://www.a.youversion.com/bible/nkjv/Matt.6.14-15>
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23. <http://www.a.youversion.com/bible/nkjv/Rom.5.8>
24. <http://www.a.youversion.com/bible/nkjv/Matt.18.21-35>
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