

INTRODUCTION

Ray Pritchard, president of Keep Believing Ministries, stated that “*Fault finding is the ‘venom of the soul’. It destroys our joy, drains our happiness, and prevents us from having close friendships.*” Richard Strauss, author of “*Getting Along With Each Other*”, believes that “*negative criticism is a poison that kills the enthusiasm of Christian leaders and hinders the progress of God’s work. It is a contagious disease that spreads among God’s people, and can turn a loving community of believers into a battleground.*” It is no wonder that Jesus tackled hearts that judge in the Sermon on the Mount! How can you live with an attitude of humility rather than a judgmental spirit?

SCRIPTURE

¹Do not judge, or you too will be judged. ²For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. ³Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ⁴How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? ⁵You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye. ⁶Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

Matthew 7:1-6

GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Discuss a time when your first impression of someone was completely wrong.
2. Read Matthew 7:1-6. What does Jesus say will happen to you if you judge others? What does this mean?
3. Many interpret “*Do not judge, or you too will be judged*” to mean that we should never judge others. Read the following passages, and discuss whether this is an accurate interpretation.

Matthew 7:5 _____

Matthew 7:15-20 _____

Matthew 18:15-20 _____

John 7:24 _____

1 Corinthians 5:12-13 _____

4. Read 1 Corinthians 4:5. Who, ultimately, judges all mankind? What makes Him the best judge (see 1 Samuel 16:7, 2 Timothy 4:8)?

Study Questions for Community Groups

- 5. Joe titled his sermon, “*unchristian: reframing our faith through humility*”. What does humility have to do with judging others?

APPLICATION

How do you judge others? Read through the list below, marking the ways that you tend to judge (write in any that you do that aren't listed):

- Unnecessary criticism
- Jumping to negative conclusions
- Not seeing the whole picture
- Setting up your own standards for others
- Condemning others
- _____
- _____
- _____

Ask Jesus to forgive you for judging others, and to replace your judging spirit with a humble spirit.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

- 1. Read Matthew 7:2. This is the third time in the Sermon on the Mount that Jesus uses this structure. Read Matthew 5:7 and 6:14-15. What principle is being taught here (hint – see Matthew 7:12)?
- 2. The Sermon on the Mount, just like the Beatitudes, are not just a collection of ideas. They are interconnected, with each section building on the last. Jesus spoke about pure motives for giving, praying, and fasting (Matthew 6:1-18), then about making Heaven our priority in where we store our treasure (Matthew 6:19-24), then about trusting God by not being anxious (Matthew 6:25-34), and now about humility – not placing ourselves in God's place by judging others. What connects each of these passages?
- 3. Matthew 7:6 is a difficult verse to understand. Many commentators believe that it speaks to the idea of not wasting words (particularly the gospel) on those who will not hear them. Read the following verses and discuss how this action was carried out by the disciples and the Apostle Paul:

Matthew 10:5-15 _____

Acts 13:44-51 _____

Acts 18:5-6 _____