

**Welcome to the
Common Ground Café!**



Sunday, June 9, 2019

**Your “Critical” Problem
A Study of Matthew 7:1-6**

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Are you more likely to **trust** until proven wrong, or to **distrust** until a person proves himself/herself?

In the passage we'll study today, Jesus calls us to **judge** without becoming **judgmental**. It's a tough balance.

On the One Hand, Fight Your Tendency to be Judgmental

Jesus gives us two reasons why we need to fight against a critical spirit.

First: Our need for mercy makes criticism of others dangerous.

Read Matthew 7:1-2.

The word translated "judge" is *krino*. It means "to habitually deliver a verdict, to condemn." According to Jesus' warning, why should we consider a critical spirit to be personally dangerous?

Our church teaches that we are saved by our faith in God's grace. But do these verses imply that we're saved or condemned based upon our treatment of others? How can 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 help here?

Second: Our need for improvement makes criticism of others ridiculous.

Read Matthew 7:3-5.

What was Jesus's earthly profession before he began to teach? Do you think he had in mind his many experiences in this profession when he used this illustration?

A speck of sawdust and a plank are both wood products. Why do you think Jesus used the

exaggerated picture of a speck and a plank? In other words, why didn't Jesus say, "Take the speck out of your own eye and then take the speck out of your brother's eye"? Why did he change the image to a plank in your own eye?

According to this passage, where should we focus most of our critical attention: on ourselves or on others?

While we should focus most of our attention on our own failings, what can you point to in this passage that would indicate Jesus still intends you to help others deal with their failings?

Which is more loving: to offer to help someone get sawdust out of their eye, or to ignore the matter?

Of these two options, which do we tend to do today?

Read Galatians 6:1. How does this verse instruct us about dealing with our own sin while helping others deal with their sin?

So, to follow Jesus's instructions in Matthew 7:1-6, on the one hand, fight your tendency to be judgmental.

On the Other Hand, Fight Your Reluctance to Make Good Judgments

Read Matthew 7:6.

We tend to pamper dogs today. What animal did Jesus pair "dogs" with in this passage, and what does that tell you about the attitude that Jesus's culture had toward dogs?

To give dogs “what is sacred” was likely an image of feeding dogs the sacred meat that had been sacrificed and cooked on the holy altar. And, like diamonds in our day, pearls were the most precious thing a person could possess in Jesus’s day. So, verse 6 is about distinguishing between that which is sacred and profane, and distinguishing between that which is precious and filthy. In other words, it’s a proverb about making good moral judgments in life.

Read John 7:24. Does this verse indicate a need and a place for discernment? Explain.

What is the difference between the type of judgment Jesus forbids in verses 1-5 and the type of judgment he requires in verse 6?

Pastor Tom said that the main point of Matthew 7:1-6 is: “Open your heart but don’t close your mind.” Why is it difficult to balance between exercising judgment and being judgmental?



Close with praise reports and prayer requests