

What matters is treating others the way you want to be treated



What matters life – Sermon on the Mount - Session 8ⁱ ¹

CITY BIBLE FORUM

To explore how being a follower of Jesus is a matter of treating others how you would like to be treated (from Matthew 7:1-12)

Matthew 7:1-12 ¹“Do 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. ³“Why 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. ⁶“Do 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. ⁷“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. ⁹“Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! ¹²So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

Q1. Have you ever been in a situation where you felt that other people were judging you?

Q2. Can you think of situations when you have judged other people?

As we have learnt in previous weeks, Jesus knows our hearts. And he knows how we relate to each other and how we relate to God. Before we explore what he has to say about our attitude towards others, let us do some quick revision.

Previous weeks

In the last few weeks, we talked about matters of the heart. The Pharisees, who were part of the religious leadership in Jesus’ day, were extremely zealous in their devotion to God and were focused on keeping the 613 laws.

¹ Scripture taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version, NIV, Copyright 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society.

But Jesus reminds that that God is concerned not just about our outward actions, but that he is more concerned about whether we truly follow him from our heart.

Jesus then gives examples of how God looks at the heart. For example, it's not about whether you murder someone, but about whether you are angry with someone. And it's not just about whether you love your neighbour – it's about whether you love your enemy.

Instead of doing things so that other people will see and give approval, Jesus teaches us to do things in secret, which only God can see. This is because it shows that we truly mean what we do, and that we really care about following the God who looks into our hearts and our true intentions.

We then were faced with some choices. Storing up treasures in heaven or treasures on earth. Serving God or money. And if we serve God, then we need not be anxious about money. God cares for us and will look after us – he even cares for the birds and flowers and we are far more valuable to him.

This week, we will take a look at relating to other people and to God.

Relating to other people who follow Jesus

to judge:

- (i) *to condemn or to be "censorious" ("fault finding, severely critical"), or*
- (ii) *to be discerning, to be able to see the truth*

hypocrite: a person who engages in behaviour that he or she condemns others for (Oxford Concise Dictionary)

Matthew 7:1-5 ¹**"Do 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. ³"Why 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.**

Q3. Why does Jesus say we should not judge?

Because of the condemnatory aspect of judging others – that is not how we wish to be judged (by others or God).

Q4. Why is it easy to pass judgment on other people?

Q5. Does Jesus mean we can never comment on issues, or point out that something or someone is wrong?

No, there is a difference between judging others in order to condemn, and judging as a way of showing discernment. The first is condemned by Jesus, not the second. (For an example of discernment, you need to be able to recognize what is a "pig" and what is a "pearl" so that you don't throw pearls to pigs in Matthew 7:6).

Relating to those who hate God

Matthew 7:6 ⁶ "Do 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.

Q6. Jesus is using 2 images to essentially say the same thing – so what is sacred is also a pearl. What do you think he means by this? (hint: what do you think Jesus thinks is most precious?)

His teaching.

Q7. Who are the pigs and dogs?

Those people who don't appreciate his teaching.

Q8. What do you think Jesus is saying?

Don't bother sharing Jesus' teaching with them because it's useless. This in itself will take some discernment – it might be useless sharing Jesus' teaching with someone at one point in their life, but that's not to say they will always hold that position.

Relating to God himself

Matthew 7:7-11 ⁷ "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. ⁹ "Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹ If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

Q9. How do we relate to God?

By asking, seeking and knocking...all images that evoke calling upon the relationship in an active way.

Q10. Why can you be sure that you will be heard?

Earthly fathers know how to give good gifts to their children. How much more than the heavenly father (God)?

Q11. Does this mean God will give us anything we ask for?

No – the good gift God gives might not be what we consider good!

Relating to everyone

Matthew 7:12¹² So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

Q12. How should we treat others?

As we would like to be treated ourselves.

Q13. How is this different from “what is hateful to you, do not do unto others”?

Treating others as we would like to be treated ourselves goes further than this. It means that if someone does what is hateful to us, we respond with kindness rather than just not doing what is hateful in return.

Q14. What difference would it make if we all did this?

Q15. Why is it so hard to do this?

Q16. What can we do about our struggles?

Ask God for help (Matthew 7:7).

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