

Relationships

Life Paths--part 1

Matthew 7:1-6, 12 September 7, 2014

DAY 1: Attitude toward our brothers: "Judge not..."

1. We begin our 4-week study of Matthew 7. Each week focuses the principles of Christianity and applies them into our relationships.

Matthew 7:1 "Do not judge, or you too will be judged."

2. What do you think is Jesus' point?

3. Let's eliminate a few things He doesn't mean:

- a. Pretend not to notice someone faults
- b. Turn a "blind eye" to someone's weaknesses
- c. Don't be critical in your head
- d. Don't think negatively

4. (We live in a world where we have to make value judgments every day)

5. What *does* Jesus mean by, "Do not judge?"

- a. Do not elevate yourself up to the judge's bench looking down on to the defendant.
- b. Be very careful about the critical or negative words that come tumbling out of your mouth.
- c. Do not assume the worst of motives of someone.
- d. Do not be stingy with mercy.

6. If we won't be generous and hoping for the best from others, for *their* sake, Jesus tells us to be generous and hoping for the best, at least for *our own sake!*

Matt. 7:2 "For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

7. What does Jesus say will happen to the standards by which **God judges us** IF we raise the standards of how **we judge others?**

8. What strikes you most from today's verses?

DAY 2: Attitude toward our brothers: don't be a hypocrite

Matt. 7:3 "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?"

1. What does Jesus say is easy for us to do?

2. What does He say grabs our attention most?

___ The small things in others, or

___ The giant faults in ourselves

3. I think of this as the "90/10 Rule." We "naturally" can see someone else is 90% wrong while we may be 10% wrong. If that's how you "see" the situation, what are you most "naturally" going to be compelled to take care of, first?

4. Draw, yes, I said DRAW a picture of Matt. 7:3. Use two people, a speck of sawdust and a wood plank.

5. Now think of this verse in reverse. What goes on inside of you when someone with some obvious "problems" or "dysfunction" or "drama king/queen" tries to point out a small problem in you?

Matt. 7:4 How 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?

Matt. 7:5 You 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. "Hypocrite." Why do you think Jesus uses the word "hypocrite" to challenge us on trying to fix someone else's sawdust?

7. The "hypocrite" is a hypocrite, not because he tries to fix others' specks of sawdust, but because he refuses to allow others to deal with his wood planks!!!

8. The **ATTITUDE** of the hypocrite appears to be, "Let me be magnanimous by helping you, who needs help, while I feel superior in doing so because I don't need any help."

9. What's your biggest take away from today?

DAY 3: Attitude toward our brothers: be a brother!

Matt. 7:4 How 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?

*Matt. 7:5 You 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.*

1. If we are to avoid being someone's Judge (in attitude) and being a hypocrite (inflated and blind about ourselves) does that mean we are to do nothing about issues we see in others?

2. Instead, if we see something that needs attention in a brother, what is the **first** thing we are supposed to do?

3. How would you take the plank out of your own eye?

4. What is a prime of example where you have undertaken to eradicate your own plank?

5. List the major items that you needed in order to bring about change:

___ Wisdom of someone else or others

___ Asking for prayer support

___ Accountability

___ Seeking to understand scripture related to your need

___ Getting around some positive examples that "showed the way."

___ Other: _____

6. What attitudes would you likely have *after* you fully dealt with your own plank?

___ Humility

___ Mercy

___ The desire to extend grace to others

___ Sympathy for how hard it is to change patterns of behavior

___ The desire to have someone understand how difficult it is for you to change

___ Other: _____

7. Write down your biggest take away from today's study.

DAY 4: Attitude toward foolish scoffers

Matt. 7:6 "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 then turn and tear you to pieces."

1. We spent three days looking at how to relate to *brothers*. Now, we look at how to relate to a "fool."

2. In Proverbs, a "fool" is a technical name. Here are some of the characteristics of a fool: hot-headed, unteachable, doesn't think he needs correction, doesn't need God or you to help him, quick with an answer, etc. Fools value what has little value, and scoff and mock at the things that have great value. These are the people Jesus is telling us about in Matt. 7:6.

3. He compares these people to "dogs" and "pigs." In this context, we would think Jesus was being disparaging of them. That is not the point of the comparison!

a. "Dogs" - here, means wild dogs, dogs eating out of trash cans in back alleys. A wild dog has no appreciation or even an ability to differentiate between great food and the worst of "food."

b. "Pigs" - here, means an animal with no appreciation for being clean.

2 Peter 2:22 Of them the proverbs are true: "A dog returns to its vomit," and, "A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud."

3. Jesus tells us not to give dogs *what is sacred*; do not throw *your pearls* to pigs.

What do you think He means?

4. He does NOT mean we should *not* share the gospel with them. What He is saying is that there are people who are fools, who no matter how well-intentioned you may be in trying to help them or correct them or show them a better way will turn and bite you as a wild dog would, or will take your pearls (of wisdom) and mistake them for something hideous and just get mad at you. Don't be surprised if they attack you (verbally or physically).

Proverbs 9:8 Do not reprove a scoffer or he will hate you. Reprove a wise man and he will love you. Give instruction to a wise man and he will be still wiser. Teach a righteous man and he will increase in learning.

5. "Dogs" and "pigs" are made by God. They are like humans in that they have physical life. But they have very little if any spiritual life within them. They are "dogged" and "pig-headed."

6. Is there someone in your life like this? Do you need to change how you relate to them? How you pray for them?

DAY 5: Attitude toward everyone

Matthew 7:12 "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."

1. We finish our week with "the Golden Rule," one of the most well-known verses in the world. Jesus' words have found their way into both secular life and other religions.

2. In ancient history the *negative* principle of these words was well-known. Here's an example:

"Do *not* do to others what is *hateful* to you."

3. What differences do you see between this *negative* principle and Jesus' positive principle?

a. To do the *negative principle*, I'd only have to ...

b. To do the *positive principle*, I'd have to ...

4. How do we put the Golden Rule into practice? It requires two things:

a. Use your **imagination**. Imagine that you were in their situation, their predicament, their embarrassment, their failure, etc.

b. Ask yourself: "If that was me, how would I most want to be treated?"

5. The entire Sermon on the Mount is driven along by the idea that God is our Father, and our fellow Christians are brothers and sisters. We are family!

a. How would the idea that God is *your Father*, help you relate to others using the Golden Rule?

b. How would the idea that your fellow Christians are *brothers and sisters* help you relate to them using the Golden Rule?

6. Re-read Matt. 7:12.

7. What final point is Jesus making at the end of that verse?

8. Who is someone you need to intentionally apply the Golden Rule with in your relating to them?