

Walking in the *Foot Prints* of Jesus

A Discipleship Journey



Sermon on the Mount

Week 25

What is that in My Eye?

Matthew 7:1 - 5

Opening Prayer:

God our Father,
Your Son Jesus called his disciples and said,
“You did not choose Me, but I chose You.”
I thank You that You consider me
worthy to be a disciple of Jesus.
Transform me, Father, into the image of Jesus

Just like Jesus,
Make my heart long for You in **poverty of spirit**.
Make my heart **mourn** at the misfortune of others.
Make me **meek and humble of heart**.
Make me **hunger and thirst** for what is right.
Make me **merciful** and overflowing with compassion.
Make me **clean of heart** and share in Your holiness.
Make my life an instrument of **peace** and **reconciliation**.
Make me **bold** to face the consequences of discipleship.

Grant me the grace, Father, so that
I may **think** like Jesus, **act** like Jesus, and **talk** like Jesus,
for in this is **Radical Discipleship**

I make this prayer in the name of Jesus,
Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Reflection

So far in Matthew chapters 5 & 6, we have explored a Christian's character, influence, righteousness, piety, and ambition. Now, in chapter 7, Jesus concentrates finally on our relationship with others. We begin with the *wooden beam in our eye*:

Stop judging, that you may not be judged. For as you judge, so will you be judged, and the measure with which you measure will be measured out to you. Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, "Let me remove that splinter from your eye," while the wooden beam is in your eye? You hypocrite remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter from your brother's eye.

Matthew 7:1 – 5

"Judgment" is a word with two very different understandings, which, as such, makes this passage problematic for many of us. The first clarifies a choice between two options: this is of value, this is not of value; this is what God is calling me to, this is not what God is calling me to. Call it discrimination or discernment, this kind of judgment is not only good, but is absolutely necessary; this is not the kind of judgment Jesus is warning against.

Judgment can also be used to control or condemn, to explain, justify, or validate yourself or others. In this form, we are no longer looking for clarity around a choice; instead, we're looking for control. This is the judgment that Jesus is talking about in the passage above.

Our natural human tendency is to compare ourselves with others. However, in doing so, it's almost impossible for us to be completely objective and impartial. Instead, we often use judgment to justify our way of thinking or validate our sense of identity. Carl Jung, the famous psychiatrist, psychoanalyst, and the founder of analytical psychology, observed that "[e]verything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves."

It is not necessarily the person or the behavior that gets to us but something deep within that is being triggered which finds expression through a negative emotional reaction.

In the passage above, Jesus invites us into a deeper self-awareness. When we judge others, we are often avoiding those same characteristics in ourselves that make us feel uncomfortable or insecure. If we are able to pause and reflect for a moment, we may uncover that behavior in ourselves and gain awareness as to its root cause. Jesus refers to this as *the wooden beam* in our own eye. In that awareness, we then can decide whether or not we want to strive to change. Either way, by recognizing and perhaps removing *the wooden beam* from our own eye, we will see our brother or sister more clearly, perhaps with more kindness, understanding, and compassion and will be in a better place to lovingly help rather than just condemn. As Jesus puts it, *then you will see clearly to remove the splinter from your brother's eye*.

Reflection Question: How do I hold the displeasing things about myself to create a more pleasant shelter for Jesus?

Closing Prayer

Speak to Jesus about what is on your heart, then rest in silence for a few moments listening for His response.