



Small Group Guide: The Forgotten Jesus

“Should Christians Judge?”

Icebreaker

Before reading or hearing this passage, how would you have answered the question: "Should a Christian judge other people?" Has your answer changed at all?

Key Scripture

Matthew 7:1-6 CSB

“Do not judge, so that you won’t be judged. For you will be judged by the same standard with which you judge others, and you will be measured by the same measure you use. Why do you look at the splinter in your brother’s eye but don’t notice the beam of wood in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the splinter out of your eye,’ and look, there’s a beam of wood in your own eye? Hypocrite! First take the beam of wood out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to take the splinter out of your brother’s eye. Don’t give what is holy to dogs or toss your pearls before pigs, or they will trample them under their feet, turn, and tear you to pieces.

Main Takeaways

- Jesus is not issuing a blanket prohibition against all judgment. He is warning against a specific kind of judgment, one that is hypocritical, harsh, and self-righteous.
- There are two types of judgment: judgment that leads to condemnation and judgment that leads to evaluation. Christians are called to evaluate, not condemn.
- The standard you use to judge others will be applied back to you. Judgment carries a reciprocal weight.
- Scripture actually commands believers to make judgments in certain contexts, testing spirits (1 John 4:1), exercising church discipline (1 Corinthians 5:12-13), and identifying divisive people (Titus 3:10).
- We can observe what people do, but we cannot know why they do it. This limits the scope of any judgment we make.
- Forgetting your own need for grace is the root of a judgmental spirit. As Pastor Robby said, "The reason you are more critical of others is that you have lost sight of your own judgment that you deserve."
- Jerry Bridges summarized the posture every believer should maintain: "On your worst day, you are never beyond the reach of the grace of God. However, on your best day, you are still desperately in need of the grace of God."

Discussion Questions

The Text

- Read Matthew 7:1-6 together as a group. What stands out to you? What questions does the passage raise?
- Pastor Robby pointed out that Jesus himself, just a few verses later, tells his listeners to decide whether someone is a "dog" or a "pig" before sharing what is holy. What does this tell us about how Jesus understood the word "judge" in verse one?
- The group discussed two categories of judgment: judgment that leads to condemnation and judgment that leads to evaluation. In your own words, what is the difference? Can you think of a real-life example of each?
- Several passages were brought up, 1 John 4:1, Titus 3:10, and 1 Corinthians 5:12-13, that seem to require believers to make judgments in certain situations. How do you reconcile those commands with "judge not"?

Personal Reflection

- Kandi shared that judgment can cross a line into criticism, and that loving someone well sometimes means stepping back and letting God work rather than continuing to press your point. Have you ever experienced a situation where your concern for someone crossed that line? What happened?
- Pastor Robby reflected on a season when he was frequently critical of other pastors and noticed that he was also receiving a lot of criticism himself during that time. He connected this to the reciprocal principle Jesus describes in verse two. Do you believe there is a real connection between how we judge others and what comes back to us? Why or why not?
- Adam observed that it is easier to withhold harsh judgment when you have personally experienced the same struggle as someone else. Is there an area of your life where past experience has made you more compassionate toward others? Is there an area where you have never struggled that makes it harder for you to extend grace?

Application

- Kandi mentioned the importance of asking yourself whether you have earned the right to speak into someone's life before offering correction or evaluation. What does it look like, practically, to earn that right? What markers indicate that you have the relational authority to speak truth to someone?
- The group discussed the judgment seat of Christ and the great white throne of judgment. How does keeping eternity in view, both your own accountability before God and the eternal stakes for those around you, shape the way you engage with others?

- Kandi shared a helpful filter: when she hears about a difficult situation involving someone else, she asks herself, "What can I learn from this so it does not happen to me?" How might that posture shift the way your group talks about difficult situations or people in your lives?
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Closing Prayer

- Ask God to reveal any areas where your judgment of others has become condemnation rather than loving evaluation.
- Pray for a renewed awareness of your own need for grace, so that awareness shapes how you treat others.
- Ask for wisdom to know when you are called to speak truth into someone's life and when you are called to step back and pray.
- Thank God that, because of Christ, you will not stand before him on your own merit.