



Small Group Guide: The Forgotten Jesus

“What Does It Mean to Judge”

Icebreaker

Think of a time you misjudged a situation completely, either about another person or about yourself. What did you learn from it?

Key Scripture

Matthew 7:3-6 CSB

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

- Self-examination must come before judgment of others. Jesus is not saying we can never discern right from wrong. He is saying we are dangerously prone to magnifying the faults of others while minimizing our own. Honest self-reflection, through Scripture and trusted relationships, is the starting point for any meaningful engagement with others.
- How we respond to correction reveals the condition of our heart. The contrast between Saul and David is striking. Both sinned. Both were confronted. Saul deflected, rationalized, and made excuses. David said simply, "I have sinned against you." Our response to correction is one of the clearest windows into our spiritual health.
- There is a time to pull back from sharing truth. Jesus's warning about pearls before pigs is not a license for silence. It is a call to wisdom. When someone has repeatedly hardened themselves against the gospel, continuing to force the conversation can deepen their resistance rather than soften their heart. Wisdom knows the difference between a closed door and a closed season.
- Relationship and love are often more effective than argument. As Adam shared about his son Ryder's experience, shifting from debate to genuine love and invitation opened a door that confrontation had closed. People are rarely argued into the Kingdom. They are often loved into it.

- Sin desensitizes us and clouds our spiritual discernment. When we fill our lives with unfiltered content and allow judgment and criticism to take root, we lose the sensitivity of conscience needed to recognize when God is inviting us into someone else's story.
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Discussion Questions

The Text

- Read Matthew 7:3-6 together as a group. What is the most striking image Jesus uses in this passage, and why do you think he chose such extreme examples, a splinter versus a plank?
- Adam described the telescope illustration, looking at others' sins through the magnifying end while looking at our own through the small end. Where do you see this tendency most in your own life? At home? At work? On social media?
- The contrast between Saul and David is a powerful one. When you are confronted about sin or a blind spot, which response feels more natural to you, Saul's deflection or David's confession? What makes confession so difficult?

Going Deeper

- Adam said, "Until you understand what you have been forgiven from, you will have a hard time extending forgiveness to another person." Do you agree? How does a fresh awareness of your own forgiveness change the way you see others?
- Think about the idea of a "sensitive conscience" versus being "desensitized." What habits or inputs in your daily life are sharpening your spiritual sensitivity? What might be dulling it?
- James 1:19 says we should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger. Which of those three is hardest for you personally? What does it cost you when you get that order wrong?
- Adam mentioned that "our battle is not against flesh and blood." How does remembering that truth change the way you approach conflict with people, especially people who seem hostile to the gospel?

Personal Reflection

- Is there a relationship in your life where you have been throwing pearls, pushing truth on someone who has repeatedly rejected it? What might it look like to shift your approach toward love and invitation instead?
- Is there someone in your life who has tried to point out a blind spot in you, and you have resisted or rationalized it away? What would it look like to revisit that conversation with an open heart?

- Adam closed by saying Christians are often "masters of friendly fire, shooting people in the barracks who are on the same team." Have you experienced this, either as the one firing or the one being hit? How did it affect your faith?
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Closing Prayer

- Ask God to reveal any planks you may be carrying without knowing it.
- Thank God for the specific things He has forgiven you of, and let that gratitude fuel grace toward others.
- Pray for one person in your life who seems hardened to the gospel. Ask God to soften their heart and to show you how to love them well.
- Ask for a sensitive conscience, one that is quick to hear when God is inviting you into someone else's story.