

**Week of October 14, 2012**  
***Right Relationships***



**Passage Outline:**

1. Don't Be Hypocritical (Matt. 7:1-5)
2. Discern Rightly (Matt. 7:6)
3. Receive and Show Grace (Matt. 7:7-12)

**What's This About?**

This lesson is about living in right relationship with others and with God.

**How Can This Impact Your Life?**

This lesson can help you change how you see yourself, how you relate to others, and how you walk with God.

**1. Don't Be Hypocritical - Matthew 7:1-5**

**Matthew 7:1-5**

<sup>1</sup> "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. <sup>2</sup> For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. <sup>3</sup> "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? <sup>4</sup> 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? <sup>5</sup> 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.

- A. Jesus is teaching on an all-to-common practice that fractures fellowship; namely, passing harsh, critical judgment on fellow believers. Our job isn't to judge others for their shortcomings but to help them do better.
- B. Jesus pointed to a better approach. It begins with not judging another believer.
- C. What does Jesus mean by "judge?"
  - i. Jesus meant we are not to be judgmental or harshly critical of one another.
  - ii. If we judge others, we will be judged on that same basis.
  - iii. We all live in glass houses so to speak and should be careful about throwing rocks lest we become targets ourselves.
- D. We easily can see others' faults; but rather than pounce on them, we are to examine our own hearts and lives to see where we fall short. We are to confess them in a spirit of repentance. That's getting the log out of our own eye.
- E. Jesus says that anyone who doesn't first take care of his or her log before attempting to help a brother or sister with their "speck problem," is just a plain hypocrite.
- F. But when we clearly see and openly acknowledge how far short we come of God's standards, we are prepared to help others who struggle.

**Please read the articles "Motes & Beams" and "Hypocrite" contained in your preparation packet you picked up last Sunday. If you were not able to get one, additional copies are on the back table.**

## "Can't See the Forest for the Trees"

Like the old saying (above), "logs" come in many shapes, sizes, and descriptions, but all distort our vision of ourselves and of others. Funny thing about logs—we have more trouble seeing our own logs than we do seeing another's speck.

Ask your spouse or a trusted friend to help you identify any log in your life that hinders your effort to develop right relationships, then work to whittle that log down in size. Removing those "trees" in our lives helps us to see the forest more clearly.

## 2. Discern Rightly - Matthew 7:6

### Matthew 7:6 (NIV)

<sup>6</sup> "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.

- A. When my brothers and I were growing up, our family had several pet dogs. We dearly loved each of them. And since we did not penned up our dogs, eventually they were run over by a car or truck, breaking our hearts. If you are a dog lover, you understand.
- B. In Jesus' day, people did not have pet dogs. Instead, the dogs He was talking about were half-wild, snarling, scavenging dogs that run in packs.
- C. In Jesus' day, pigs as well as dogs were unclean animals and were despised.
- D. While God loves everybody and sent His Son to die for the sins of everybody, not everyone will receive these holy gifts with joy and appreciation. But some people want nothing to do with God.
- E. So you just went to the Temple with your family and there offered a sacrifice to God. Often times, the family received a portion of that meat offered to God to take home and eat it as a family. The meat sacrificed on the altar was considered holy, but would the dogs understand that? Of course not.
- F. Or, if you placed precious and valuable pearls before some wild pigs, would they "ooh" and "ah" over them, delighting in their beauty and worth? Not a chance.

**Read the article "Pearls in the Ancient World" contained in your preparation packet you picked up last Sunday. If you were not able to get one, additional copies are on the back table.**

- G. Both illustrations make the same point, namely, some people are not at all ready for gospel truth. If we are witnessing about Jesus to someone and encounter a strong negative, insolent, or mocking response, pushing on could do more harm than good. Maybe later the person would be more open, but to plow ahead blindly might build enough resentment to close his or her mind for good.
- H. Obeying Jesus' command doesn't mean being mean or ugly to those who reject the gospel. Remember, He also taught us to love our enemies.

### 3. Receive and Show Grace - Matthew 7:7-12

#### **Matthew 7:7-12**

<sup>7</sup> "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. <sup>8</sup> For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

<sup>9</sup> "Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? <sup>10</sup> Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? <sup>11</sup> 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! <sup>12</sup> So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

- A. Jesus did not suggest that we pray. No, He outright commanded that we believers "Keep asking .... Keep searching .... Keep knocking."
- B. With the command He gave the assurance that we will receive that for which we pray.
- C. The Father doesn't play favorites. For everyone who asks receives. Wow! What a gracious promise!

#### **So, why don't we pray more?**

I know in my adult life, I spend a lot of time in church doing church work. I strategize, plan, organize, enlist workers, train them, and work like crazy to do the Lord's work. Oh, I do pray; but often that seems more like a formality. While our programs and projects often have a measure of success, the number of transformed lives typically is small.

How about in your life? Would your work or school day be different if you prayed more? We need the same divine grace that saved us to enable us to become more of what God saved us to be. We can't do it on our own. Why not make a commitment right now to pray each day for just 10 minutes. Jesus says it will make a big difference.

- D. Our fathers, even though not perfect, respond kindly to their children's requests. They wouldn't think of giving them something worthless or even dangerous.
- E. Our heavenly Father doesn't play tricks on us either. Even better than our earthly fathers, our heavenly Father desires only what is "good, pleasing, and perfect" (Romans 12:2).
- F. Jesus concludes His sermon with the Golden Rule. In a nutshell, here's how properly to keep the Law and the Prophets (the whole Old Testament teachings):
  - i. Treat others as you want them to treat you.
  - ii. While this is concise and simple, it is incredibly demanding.
  - iii. We need God's grace for this, so let's regularly ask for it.

#### **Receiving Grace - Extending Grace**

When people treat us as they would want to be treated, we say they have given us grace. Sometimes it's grace when we did not expect it. When have you received grace recently when you didn't expect it? How might you have extended grace in the next seek to someone who might not be expecting it?

## **Biblical Truths in Focus**

1. To relate rightly to fellow believers who fall short, we are not to condemn them but to help them do better.
2. To be in position to relate helpfully to stumbling Christians, we have to deal honestly and openly with our own failings.
3. To relate rightly to lost people, we can trust the Lord for discernment in how far to go in witnessing to them.
4. To relate rightly to the Father, we can trust Him to answer our prayers in line with His will and purposes for us.
5. To relate rightly to the Lord's teachings and to people, we can ask for grace to treat everyone as we want them to treat us.