

Judging Others

Introduction

Blame, shame, and condemnation. It's been a part of human history since almost the beginning (see Genesis 3) and it's just as bad today as it was then. Jesus shows and teaches us that there's another way to approach others, especially those whose behavior we disagree with. It all starts with recognizing and confessing our own faults, limitations, and shortcomings. To take oneself *out* of the throne of judgment and place yourself *in* the hot seat. The humility of that action helps us to keep God where he rightly belongs in our heart, on the throne, and to have empathy and compassion towards those around us. Confessing our faults and humbly receiving God's grace also empowers our hearts to be generous towards others with our words and actions, pointing them to the forgiving, loving, and grace filled God we have in Jesus Christ.

Read Your Bible

- Matthew 7:1-5
- James 4:1-12

Apply God's Word to Your Life

1. Jesus' command to not judge others comes shortly before his giving of "The Golden Rule" (v.12). What correlation do you see between the two commands?
2. Based on Jesus' teaching, who is responsible for removing "specks" and "planks"?
3. Why do you think people tend to see the "saw dust" of others over their own "plank"?
4. Why do you think tending to "the plank out of your own eye" first is so important to Jesus?
5. What "saw dust" do you tend to notice in other people?
6. According to James, who is the only Lawgiver and Judge?
7. James writes of people being "double-minded," which means to have divided loyalty between God and the world or self. How is sitting in a place of judgement (or condemnation) toward others being double-minded?
8. Why is humbling ourselves before the Lord a gift of grace rather than punishment?
9. In what areas of life are you aware you are double-minded and need to humble yourself before the Lord so he can lift you up?

Reflecting on the text

- What did you learn about God?
- What did you learn about the world?
- What did you learn about yourself?

Pray

Heavenly Father, you are the one and only Judge. Through Jesus, we know you have judged us as sinful and at the same time worthy of your forgiveness and grace. May your forgiveness and mercy fill our hearts to help us be gracious towards those with whom we disagree, and follow in the loving ways of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.