



The Best Life

A SERIES THROUGH THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

LIFE
GROUPS
WEEK 16 • JUL 05

NORTHSHORE'S COMPELLING STATEMENT

Hope changes everything.

ICE BREAKER

Was there ever a time you almost didn't ask for help with something because you assumed the answer would be no — and what happened when you did ask?

BACKGROUND

Jesus never expects His followers to be flawless — but He does expect them to be honest, starting with themselves. Matthew 7:1-7 sits in the back half of the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus moves from describing kingdom character to correcting kingdom relationships. Verses 1-5 confront a specific temptation: using someone else's faults to distract from our own. The image is deliberately absurd — a man with a plank in his own eye offering to perform eye surgery on his neighbor. Jesus isn't being subtle. Throughout Matthew 5-7, He has repeatedly pushed past outward religious performance toward inward transformation, and this passage is no exception.

The command 'do not judge' is often misread as a call to abandon moral clarity altogether. That's not what Jesus means. He is condemning a specific posture — a hypocritical, self-exalting judgment that measures others by a standard we refuse to apply to ourselves. His prescribed order is: examine yourself first, honestly and thoroughly, and only then will you 'see clearly' enough to help someone else. Self-examination isn't a delay tactic before we get to correct others — it's the prerequisite for doing so with any credibility or love.

Verse 6 then adds necessary balance: don't give what is holy to dogs, or throw your pearls before swine. Read right after a warning against judging, this can sound contradictory — but it isn't. Jesus is distinguishing between self-righteous condemnation and wise discernment. One evaluates people's hearts to feel superior; the other evaluates situations to steward what's sacred well. William Hendricksen captures the tension precisely: "The Lord has been admonishing his listeners to abstain from judging others (Matt. 7:1-5), yet also to judge (Matt. 7:6); not to be hypercritical, yet to be critical; to be humble and patient, yet not too patient." Verse 7 then completes the thought — once our own eyes are clear, we're free to simply ask God for what we need, rather than posturing our way through relationships on our own strength.

REVIEW

What was meaningful from the above context or the sermon from last Sunday?



KEY VERSES: Matthew 7:5

You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

READ: Matthew 7:1-6



HEAD LEVEL: *What does it say? These help us to examine what the Word tells us.*

1. Jesus uses the image of a speck and a plank to describe hypocritical judgment. Why do you think He chose such an exaggerated, almost comical picture to make His point?
2. According to verse 2, what standard does Jesus say we will be judged by? Why does this raise the stakes for how we treat others?
3. In verse 6, what does it mean to not give what is holy to dogs or throw pearls before swine? What is Jesus protecting here?



Heart Level: *What does it mean? These questions help us shape our beliefs around the objective truth of God's word.*

1. What is the first thing you tend to notice or evaluate when you meet someone new? What does that instinct reveal about what you value?
2. Jesus assumes we all have a 'plank' — some real, significant fault of our own. What kind of faults are easiest for us to overlook in ourselves while noticing instantly in others?
3. Verse 6 comes right after Jesus warns against judging — yet it calls for real discernment. What's the difference between judging someone's heart and wisely discerning a person or situation?



HANDS LEVEL: *What does it mean to me? These questions help us commit to live out the truth in our everyday lives and commit to potential next steps.*

1. Is there a relationship in your life right now where you've been quick to name someone else's flaws but slow to examine your own? What would it practically look like to reverse that order this week — plank before speck?
2. Verse 6 reminds us that discernment still matters. Where in your life right now do you need God's wisdom to discern well — rather than either judging harshly or avoiding the issue by staying silent?
3. Verse 7 promises that those who ask will receive. Is there something you've quietly stopped asking God for because you assumed the answer was already no? What would it look like to bring that request back to Him this week?



MEMORY VERSE: Matthew 7:5

You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

(Please remember that these requests are confidential and need to stay within the group.)