

See Clearly

Matthew 7:1-12



If you have ever watched a mystery show with courtroom scenes, you understand how difficult it can be to sit in the jury box. The lawyers try to sway the jurors with character witnesses and contradictory evidence. They play on the juror's biases and use doubt and fear to confuse the issues. Fortunately, God is never swayed, never biased, and never confused. He alone can clearly see the truth.

If only we could see the world and other people as clearly as He can. Jesus wants us to see others and ourselves as clearly as God does—and then act accordingly.

Judgment

Read Matthew 7:1-5.

The Greek word translated here as “judge” is *krino*. In addition to meaning to judge, it also means to avenge, to condemn, to damn, or to call into question.

- Discuss ways in which we “judge” others. What internal and external measurements, influences, and biases can affect our judgment?
- Since we will be judged by the same standards that we use to evaluate others, how should we approach passing judgment on other people?
- What are some planks/beams that prevent us from seeing others clearly? How can we remove them?
- What are some situations where we need to use judgment?

Pigs and Pearls

Read Matthew 7:6.

At the time of Jesus dogs were not pets—they were dangerous and opportunistic. Pigs/swine were unclean, wild, and dangerous, too. The word translated as “trample” in this verse is *katapateo* in Greek. It does mean to trample down, but it also means to reject with disdain. Notice that the pigs not only trample what is holy, but they also turn on the gift giver and tear him to pieces.

- In this metaphor, what do the dogs, swine, and pearls represent?
- How are those who reject the word of God dangerous to those who share the word of God?

Good Father

Read Matthew 7:7-11.

The Greek verbs used in these verses are in the present imperative tense. This grammar tense is used in Greek to indicate an action that is constant and persistent. An example of this type of action can be found in the parable of the persistent widow (Luke 18:1-8).

- What is Jesus telling us about God's character in these verses?
- What is Jesus encouraging us to do in these verses? How are we to do it?

Golden Rule

Read Matthew 7:12.

According to the *NIV Study Bible* other religions, like rabbinical Judaism, Hinduism, Confucianism, Buddhism, as well as Greek ethics writers and philosophers, have rules and statements similar to the Golden Rule. But there is one BIG difference. The others all address the issue from a negative point of view: Don't do to others what you don't want done to you. Jesus is the only one who turns it into a positive statement: Do to others what you want them to do to you.

- What is the problem with thinking of the Golden Rule from a negative perspective?
- If you never treat anyone badly, does that make you a good person? Why or why not?
- Why do you think Jesus focuses on what we should do rather than what we shouldn't do?

Living It

Share with your group what strategies helped you to feel less anxious last week.

This week:

Journal about the things in your life that are affecting your way of seeing others. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you find a new way to see the truth about other people, situations, and yourself. Jot down ways that you find helpful in clearing out preconceived notions so you can better see and evaluate both people and situations. Be prepared to share your results with the group next week.