

Kingdom Living

Matthew 7:1-12

April 2, 2006

I. Judge Not

“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? 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? 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.” Matthew 7:1-5

Why do we judge others?

- Self-righteous criticism helps us feel better about ourselves
- Criticizing others feeds our narcissistic needs
- Finding fault in others deflects attention from our own failings
- We are especially good at detecting the deficits in others that we ourselves share – a projection of our own unwanted and unacknowledged problems

How can we prevent self-righteous judgment?

- Judge yourself and know yourself
“The word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.” Hebrews 4:12-13
- Return to initial awareness – blessed are the poor in spirit
- God is the ultimate judge – Genesis 18:25
“You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. Now we know that God’s judgment against those who do such things is based on truth.” Romans 2:1-2
- Pray for others first
“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.” Matthew 7:7-8
- Feedback to others given out of love is not the same as self-righteous judgment – spiritual discernment whose purpose is to help the other will “remove the speck from your brother’s eye.”

II. The Golden Rule

“In everything do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.” Matthew 7:12

Contrast with other ethical statements:

Confucius: “Do not do to others what you would not like them to do to you.”

Socrates: “Do not do to others that which would anger you if others did it to you.”

Epictetus: “What you would avoid suffering yourself, seek not to impose on others.”

Buddha: “Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.”

Rabbi Hillel: “What is hateful to you do not to your fellow man. That is the whole law, all the rest is commentary.”

Hinduism: “One should not behave towards others in a way which is disagreeable to oneself.”

Jesus teaching about kingdom living takes it up a notch, to another level – the Everest of Ethics!

- Positive, not negative
- Active, not passive
- The opposite of legalism, which is living by rules, regulations and restrictions which are negative and passive
- Jesus gives us the secret of sanctified selfishness – reverse selfishness - using our natural state of self centeredness to get outside ourselves and serve others

Take that selfishness and use it – sanctify it - the power of positive Christianity!