

FBC Small-Group Materials

Week of April 2nd, 2006
Matthew 7:1-12; The Golden Rule

“To sum up, the command to judge not is not a requirement to be blind, but rather a plea to be generous. Jesus does not tell us to cease to be men (by suspending our critical powers which help to distinguish us from animals), but to renounce the presumptuous ambition to be God.” John Stott – The Sermon on the Mount

For Small-Group Leaders

Dear Leaders,

I remember one night as a teenager watching the television news report and making a gross error in judgment. The on-the-spot reporter was interviewing a young man with long blond hair. Before he even spoke a word, I looked at the young man and sized him up as a rebellious young teen. How wrong I was. As he began to answer the reporter's question, the young man proceeded to thank and praise God for his great blessing. Wow! What an error in judgment I had made! God used that mistake to teach me a lesson about judgment. I wasn't very good at it. Specifically, I'm not very good at playing God and knowing what is in the heart of a person. Never have been. Never will be. This week's study reminds us why this is an important issue to Jesus. May it help us to avoid the mistake of playing God and passing judgment on others.

Blessings to you and your group,

Scott

These small group materials are available at the info table each Sunday and at www.fbcdavis.org.

Discussion Starters:

- **Error in Judgment:** Have you ever made an error in judgment (like the one mentioned above)?
- **Tempted to Judge:** What do you think are some of the reasons that we as human beings are tempted to judge others?

Discussion Questions:

Introduction: Read Matthew 7:1-12.

1. Why do you think Jesus objects so emphatically to those who choose a judgmental/critical spirit?
2. In what ways is a judgmental spirit counterproductive to healthy relationships and community?
3. How does this command relate to the beatitude we find in Matthew 5:7?
4. What is the point of verses 3-5?
5. Some have taken Jesus' words as forbidding all judgment, even in the court of law. What is your response to that? (Leaders note: see John Stott quote above).
6. How do we go about helping our brother or sister (verse 5)?
7. Verse 12 sums up the manner in which we are to relate to people. Today in our culture, we preach a gospel of "tolerance." In history, we find Confucius saying, "Do not do to others what you would not like them to do to you." Socrates declared, "Do not do to others that which would anger you if others did it to you." How do Jesus' words call us beyond these other philosophies?

Getting Personal:

(Leader's note: You may want group members to answer this last question in pairs or groups of 3-4). Is there a relationship in your life that is broken or strained? What do you sense the Lord is leading you to do about this relationship?

Living it this Week:

Close your group time in prayer for one another and the relationships we find ourselves in.