

## **DO NOT JUDGE..."**

**Intro:** Throughout our study of the Sermon on the Mount we have pointed out that Jesus addresses himself to the features of the scribes and Pharisees and points out the need to rise above their standards of righteousness. Luke observes concerning the Pharisees, "Lk. 18:9". That is not a problem unique to the Pharisees.

If we are right in our views of a matter and we know we are right, we forget the struggle that we had in discerning the truth and quickly condemn all who do not immediately agree with us. Thinking that we're right in a single area grows into generalized thinking about ourselves. "We are righteous" we think, though there may be much that needs to be corrected. We can easily become blind to our own shortcomings. We may give lipservice to our imperfections only to deal with others as if we have none! And that leads us to view others with a contemptuous and critical view, the practice of which turns us into hypocrites deserving of the disgust we're likely to receive from those who see our inconsistency!

If we are to avoid that we must learn to practice what we preach and view people fairly. So Jesus teaches in Mt. 6:1-5. These have been some of the most abused words in the sermon of Jesus. What do they mean?

### **JUDGE NOT...THAT YOU BE NOT JUDGED**

*To judge another is to reach a decision about his spiritual condition that leads to either approving him or condemning him. Often the word "judge" takes on this latter sense of condemning another, to be "judgmental". Is Jesus saying that it wrong to reach a decision about the spiritual condition of another? Many think so and often press this verse into service to say we cannot say whether another is right with God or to say that such a person is lost!*

**How could we practice the rest of what this chapter teaches? v. 6, 15 Could we obey these verses without judging?**

**Note the commands to judge (Jn. 7:24; 1 Cor. 5:, Rev. 2:2)**

*If the it is clear that we ought to decide about the spiritual condition of others and act accordingly, approving, teaching, etc. then in what sense are we not to judge? Jesus illustration makes that clear!*

**Why behold the mote (speck), when you have a beam (log).**

**This illustration makes it clear what kind of judging Jesus is forbidding. It is judging that is inconsistent and hypocritical!**

*A man who condemns others for small errors while large errors loom in his own life is a hypocrite. He is pretending that he is concerned about what he has no concern about at all! If he did, he would start with his own life!*

*Note that Jesus does not say we ought not correct others (v. 5). We may take the speck out, but only after we have removed the log ourselves!*

*What we may find is that how we treat others will come back to us.*

**That is true with others. We may expect to be treated reciprocally by others. Often Jesus made his appeal to that tendency in man. Lk. 6:37-38**

**That is also true with God. Though God's judgment will never be unfair, He has promised to refuse mercy to those who grant no mercy (Cf. Jas. 2:13).**

*So then, this part of the paragraph discusses the tendency to be self-righteous and thus contemptuous of others who are wrong. It often leads to this sin of condemning others, while we practice the very thing they condemn. Cf. the Pharisees! Lk. 18:9*

## **APPLICATION**

*The tendency to be judgmental is easy to practice in every relationship of life.*

**What about gossip? Is it not true that most of the time the discussion of others centers on their faults? Often we seek to improve our image by cutting others down.**

**How about in our homes? We can easily see the faults of our children, our spouses. Can we see our own errors?**

**We know what is wrong with our boss. Have we considered the work we give?**

**The church can often be filled with carping critics; but where are we when the work is being done? Don't like church decisions; but where are we when the decisions are made. Need more friendliness? Are you friendly? Need more love; do you show it? Need more enthusiasm; are you enthusiastic?**

**Conclusion: Take a hard look today at your attitude toward others. Do you find it easy to be critical and contemptuous of those around you? Are you willing to live by the rules you impose upon others or do you see yourself as exceptional to the things you condemn in others? Are we practicing what we preach? If not, then, know dear friend that God will bring us to judgment for our inconsistency and those around us will return our unfair conduct upon us! If your conscience is clear, then may God bless you for treating others with love and justice! But...be careful; for even in self-approval the seeds are planted to sprout contempt of others.**

**If you are not a Christian, have you sought to justify your disobedience by the misconduct of others? If so, are you not being as hypocritical as the people you condemn? The Lord's answer is to do right ourselves first! Then, look for opportunity to correct others.**