



Exploring the Kingdom of God in Matthew

Judge Not Pt 2: Specks and Logs

Matthew 7:3-5

A QUICK REVIEW FROM LAST SUNDAY:

1. "Context is key."
2. "How can you help take the speck out of your brother's eye if you don't judge if there is or isn't a speck?" And I would add to his question, is there any indication that the speck in your brother's eye should NOT be removed? If so, how?
3. "Is it loving to see your brother or sister in error and leave them there?"
4. "If we are not able to judge each other how can we obey specific scriptures that admonish us to avoid a brother or sister guilty of certain offenses?" (ex. 1 Cor 5:11-13, 2 Thes 3:6; 1 Tim 6:20) Paul says, "Purge the evil person from among you."

OUR LORD'S CONDEMNATION

To be clear, this text is a direct attack on the Pharisees. Remember, who was in attendance at the Sermon on the Mount: The crowds and his disciples. It is safe to assume that the Pharisees were represented in the "crowd" because Luke's account of this passage references disciples and masters:

"... Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?" (Luke 6:39-41, ESV)

Beginning with chapter 6, Jesus transitions from comparing Old Testament Law with Kingdom life to comparing the Pharisaic lifestyle with Kingdom life:

*"Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. "Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, **as the hypocrites do** in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward." (Matthew 6:1-2, ESV)*

*"And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. **But when you pray**, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you." (Matthew 6:5-6, ESV)*

*"And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. **But when you fast**, anoint your*

head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” (Matthew 6:16–18, ESV)

ABOUT THE PHARISEES:

- They were zealous for the Law of Moses but most importantly the legalistic additions made to the law—613 additional laws (248 positive, 365 negative).
- They desired to maintain their position of religious authority.
- They desired outward recognition and honor.
- Most importantly, they desired to make converts.

Make no mistake, this short condemnation of judgment in our text was based on our Lord’s disdain for the Pharisees self-righteous, legalistic behavior. In the Lord’s righteousness, he called them MORE than just hypocrites. **Let’s read Matthew 23 together.**

It is this hypocrisy within the religious leaders that Jesus decries and condemns. It is THIS spirit of **self-righteousness** that leads to the hypocritical judging of others and leads to harm in the body of Christ. Jesus’ parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector illustrates this well.

*“He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. **The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’** But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, **‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’** I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”” (Luke 18:9–14, ESV)*

Our Lord’s disciples should NOT be like the Pharisees and think more highly of themselves than they ought. Rather, we see hints in our text of a more loving and humble way to judge each other.

OUR LORD’S CORRECTION

Four things jumped out at me in this text that lead us to proper corrective behavior:

1. **The judging Jesus is describing in our passage is self-righteous and hypocritical judging.** This was not a loving correction. Jesus was condemning the kind of judgment that made the Pharisees feel good about themselves, and brought harm to others.

2. **The use of the eye as an example was not an accident.**
 - The eye is important for the entire body. If the eye cannot see clearly, the rest of the body has to adjust. Jesus uses this example of the eye in Matthew 6:22, 23.
 - We can only see outward with our eyes and are never able to see ourselves completely without assistance. True self-examination is ALWAYS painful. The result is that we are quick to avoid self-examination and pretend that everything is fine, pointing out minute flaws in others while ignoring huge lapses in our own lives.
3. **It is important to note how many people in our text had a sin problem.** BOTH people had an issue—the man with the speck AND the man with the log.
 - a. The man with the speck clearly had his weaknesses.
 - b. The man with the log had his weaknesses, but in his self-righteousness was blind to them.
4. **It is important to note that BOTH people can benefit from each other!** If the person judging can remove the log from his eye, he is better off. Once removed, that person can help the one with the speck in his eye. BOTH people end up in a better position ultimately.

So, instead of the hypocritical judging Christ describes here, the ultimate goal is to apply loving correction for the betterment of the kingdom of God.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

1. **Consider your own shortcomings first. Doing so will always soften correction.** It also kills self-righteousness. The result is that both of you benefit; the Spirit convicts you to change while your gentle correction aids another in change. In perspective, our own sins should seem way greater than the sins of others (especially if they are the same).
 - a. We must see clearly to help others. The purpose of self-judgment is to prepare us to serve others. Christians are obligated to help each other grow in grace. When we do not judge ourselves, we not only hurt ourselves, but we also hurt those to whom we could minister. The Pharisees judged and criticized others to make themselves look good (Luke 18:9–14). But Christians should judge themselves so that they can help others look good.
 - b. While considering your shortcomings, avoid the shallow examination that happens when we are so sure of ourselves! Remember, self-examination does NOT come natural.

“And behold, a man came up to him, saying, “Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?” And he said to him, “Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments.” He said to him, “Which ones?” And Jesus said, “You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” The young

man said to him, **“All these I have kept. What do I still lack?”** Jesus said to him, “If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” (Matthew 19:16–21, ESV)

- c. On the other end of the spectrum, avoid the never-ending examination that results in nothing being done. This passage is not indicating that we do **not** correct because of our own shortcomings. Rather, we should look to Christ who forgives and heals and then apply that same healing spirit to our brother and sister.

2. **Exercise love and tenderness when you seek to help others.**

- a. “Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.” (Ephesians 4:15–16, ESV)
- b. Ask yourself, “Why do I desire to correct/judge this brother or sister? Why am I about to say, what I am about to say? What are my true motives?”

*“Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila [co-laborers with the Apostle Paul] heard him, **they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.** And when he wished to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed, for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus.”* (Acts 18:24–28, ESV)

3. **Open your heart to receive correction**

- a. Always have a circle of accountability around you. Not people who will tell you what you want to hear, but those who love God enough to help you.
- b. We are one body - Paul wrote: “... Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.” (Ephesians 4:15–16, ESV)
- c. Give your brother or sister the benefit of the doubt that they are not out to hurt you! Seeds of doubt are a breeding ground for the enemy.