



RIDGEPOINT CHURCH • GROW GROUPS GUIDE

A Better Way to Judge

A Better Way

WEEK 6

MATTHEW 7:1-12

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LEADER PREPARATION

Leader Announcements

- **Thank you for investing in your Grow Group each week!** If you have questions, need help, or are looking for additional resources, visit our Grow Group Leader page: ridgepointwichita.com/growleaders
- **Looking for an easy icebreaker? Grab the NOT JUST SUNDAYS card game** we handed out. Try just a few cards each week—have everyone answer one card, or let people choose between two. It's a simple way to keep building relationships!
- **This discussion guide is exactly that—a guide.** Skip questions, add your own, spend longer on a verse, or adjust it to fit your group. You know your group best! And if you have feedback on these guides, please let us know.

Opening (10 min)

OPENING QUESTION

Where do you catch yourself judging people the fastest: behind the wheel, in the checkout line, scrolling social media, or somewhere else? Share a recent (and harmless) example.

MESSAGE SUMMARY

Being judgmental might be America's least admirable pastime. A Pew Research study found Americans are more critical of their fellow citizens than people in any other country, and Barna research shows that over 87% of Americans view Christians as judgmental. In Matthew 7:1–12, Jesus says, "Judge not," and uses a hilarious picture to make His point: someone with a log in their own eye trying to pull a speck out of a friend's. Psychologists call this the fundamental attribution error; we blame other people's failures on their character and excuse our own because of our circumstances. But Jesus doesn't stop at "don't judge." He says that once the log is out, "then you will see clearly," and elsewhere He tells us to "judge with right judgment" (John 7:24). There is a wrong way to judge (superficial, hypocritical, unforgiving, and self-righteous) and a better way. Pastor Andy offered three steps toward that better way: check your heart, ask God for wisdom, and treat others as you want to be treated. Because of the cross, we are not judged as our sins deserve, so we can stand with people instead of over them.

KEY POINTS

- ◆ Jesus forbids a certain **way** of judging: superficial, hypocritical, unforgiving, and self-righteous. **Matthew 7:1–5**
- ◆ Jesus also calls us to wise discernment between right and wrong. **Matthew 7:6; John 7:24**
- ◆ **Check your heart.** Deal with your own log before pointing out someone else's speck. **Matthew 7:5; Psalm 139:23–24**
- ◆ **Ask God for wisdom,** and pray for the person in front of you. **Matthew 7:7–8; James 1:5**
- ◆ **Treat others the way you want to be treated,** speaking the truth in love like Jesus did. **Matthew 7:12; Ephesians 4:15; John 8:10–11**



UP • 20 MIN

A Daily Relationship with God

BIG IDEA

Judging rightly starts with God, not with other people. Before we can see anyone else clearly, we need Him to search our hearts, give us wisdom we don't have on our own, and remind us how much mercy we have already received. Condemnation and contempt grow out of pride; good discernment and restoration grow out of love.

SCRIPTURE AT THE CENTER

Matthew 7:1–2 (ESV)

"Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you."

Jesus isn't banning every kind of evaluation here; He is warning against a particular way of judging. The measuring stick we use on other people is the same one that will be used on us, so harsh, superficial judgment eventually comes back around.

Matthew 7:3–5 (ESV)

"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? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye."

Jesus uses humor on purpose: picture someone with a two-by-four in their eye offering to remove your splinter. Notice the phrase "then you will see clearly." Jesus assumes we will still help each other; He just insists we deal with our own log first. Like the windshield in Pastor Andy's story, the film we're trying to scrub off the outside is often on the inside.

Matthew 7:6 (ESV)

“Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.”

Right after saying “judge not,” Jesus says something that sounds pretty judgy. This verse shows that followers of Jesus still need discernment about what we share and how we relate to others. “Don’t judge” is not the end of the story.

John 7:24 (ESV)

“Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.”

The Greek word for “judge” carries a range of meanings, just like it does in English. Judging by appearances is wrong, but a world with no judgment of good and evil would quickly fall apart. The goal is not to stop discerning; it’s to judge correctly.

Psalms 139:23–24 (ESV)

“Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!”

This is what “take the log out of your own eye” sounds like as a prayer. Hypocrites avoid looking inward and feel better by comparison. A humble heart invites God to reveal its blind spots and motives before it responds to anyone else.

Matthew 7:7–8 (ESV)

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.”

It’s no coincidence that Jesus moves straight from judging to prayer. Being merciful and forgiving while still wisely discerning is hard, and James 1:5 promises that God gives wisdom generously to those who ask. While we’re praying, we can pray for the other person too, because it’s hard to judge someone wrongly when you are praying for them.

Matthew 7:12 (ESV)

“So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”

The Roman emperor Alexander Severus was so inspired by this teaching that he had it inscribed in gold, which is how it became known as the Golden Rule. Before responding to someone, ask how you would want to be treated in their situation. The question shifts from “What does this person deserve?” to “How can I show kindness?”

Ephesians 4:15 (ESV)

“Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.”

Judging rightly doesn't mean pretending sin doesn't matter. It means truth and love travel together. As we grow more like Christ, we learn to say hard things with a heart that wants the other person restored, not shamed.

John 8:10–11 (ESV)

“Jesus stood up and said to her, ‘Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?’ She said, ‘No one, Lord.’ And Jesus said, ‘Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.’”

The religious leaders expected Jesus to condemn a woman caught in adultery. Instead, He exposed their proud hearts, and her accusers walked away. Jesus refused to condemn her, yet He still spoke the truth: “sin no more.” That is what judging rightly looks like.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ◆ We tend to blame other people's failures on their character and our own on our circumstances. Where do you notice yourself doing this most: at work, at home, on the road, or online?
- ◆ The film on Pastor Andy's windshield was on the inside. What's one “log” or blind spot you might need to ask God to show you before you can see someone else clearly (Psalm 139:23–24)?
- ◆ Jesus says not to judge by appearances but to judge with right judgment (John 7:24). How can you tell the difference between healthy discernment and a judgmental spirit in yourself?
- ◆ “At the cross, I discover I am more sinful than I want to admit and more loved than I could ever imagine.” Which half of that sentence is harder for you to believe right now? Why?



IN • 15 MIN

A Shared Life Together**WHY THIS MATTERS**

Judging is easy from a distance; love gets tested up close. The people we see every week are the ones whose specks we notice most, and the ones who notice ours. A Grow Group is where the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12) stops being a nice idea and becomes a daily choice: giving each other the benefit of the doubt, praying for one another, and speaking the truth in love when it's needed (Ephesians 4:15).

GROWING TOGETHER

The longer a group meets, the more we learn each other's quirks, and the easier it is for the fundamental attribution error to creep in. Someone shows up late, goes quiet, misses a few weeks, or doesn't reply to the group text, and we quietly fill in the blanks about their character. The better way is to assume the best, ask before we conclude, and pray for each other by name. Our goal is a group where people can be honest about their own logs without fear of condemnation, because everyone in the room has received the same mercy from Jesus.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ◆ In Pastor Andy's story, a driver in a white Mustang made room instead of holding a grudge. Think of a time someone gave you the benefit of the doubt when you didn't deserve it. How did that affect you?
- ◆ In a group like ours, what small things are easiest to judge each other for? What would practicing the Golden Rule with one another look like instead?
- ◆ "It's hard to judge someone wrongly when you are praying for them." How might praying for each other by name change the way we see each other?
- ◆ What would help this group be a place where someone could admit their own "log" without fearing judgment?



OUT • 10 MIN

An Outward-Focused Faith**LIVING IT OUT**

If most people see Christians as judgmental, every interaction this week is a chance to change that reputation. In his closing story, Pastor Andy shared about a couple who came to him nervous and expecting condemnation for how they'd been living. Instead, he spent months getting to know them. When he shared that Jesus doesn't condemn us but gives us a fresh start, the young woman began crying and asked, "Please tell me how to do that," and both committed their lives to Christ.

John Wesley once said, "I have often repented of judging too severely, but very seldom of being too merciful." This week, practice the better way: check your heart, ask God for wisdom, and treat others the way you want to be treated.

Closing challenge: We have been loved by Jesus; now let's go love people like Jesus. Who is one person you've been quick to judge that you can pray for and show kindness to this week?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ◆ Why do you think so many people see Christians as judgmental? What would it look like for our neighbors to know us by our love instead?
- ◆ Is there someone in your life who might be expecting judgment from you? How could you meet them where they are this week?
- ◆ Speaking the truth in love takes both truth and love. Which way do you tend to lean when you talk with people outside the church? What would bring you back into balance?

FOCUS ON GROUP PROJECT

OUT PROJECT Update

- **Depending on your group's OUT PROJECT**, there may not be much to report each week, and that's okay! The biggest thing is simply keeping us in the loop.
- If you haven't already: **Please let us know what your group has chosen for your OUT PROJECT.**
- As you go: Keep us updated on any significant changes, needs, or progress with your project.
- Need ideas, resources, or guidance? Visit our [Grow Group Leaders page](#) for more help.

CLOSING PRAYER

Close your time together by inviting the group to share prayer requests. Then lead the group in prayer, drawing from these prompts from Sunday's sermon:

PRAYER PROMPTS

- Pray that God would search each heart and gently reveal any "log" that keeps us from seeing others clearly (Psalm 139:23–24).
- Pray for wisdom to discern right from wrong without condemning people (Matthew 7:7–8; James 1:5).
- Pray by name for the people each person mentioned tonight, asking God for kindness and patience toward them (Matthew 7:12).
- Thank Jesus that at the cross we are not judged as our sins deserve, and ask Him to help us stand with people instead of over them (John 8:10–11).



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