

Stage IV. The Great Galilean Ministry

E. The Appointment of the Twelve Apostles and Teaching on the Mount

11. Teaching on the Mount, Part X:

Loving God Means Judging Ourselves, Not Others

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #077

Base Text: MT 7:1-6 (Parallel Text: LK 6:37-42)

¹ *"I command you to stop judging, so that you ^Lwill be never--ever-- be judged. I command you to likewise stop condemning, so that you will never--ever--be condemned. I command you to keep on forgiving, and you will be forgiven. I command you to keep on giving, and will be given t you, in full measure, permanently pressed down and shaken together, and overflowing into your own lap. ² ^{MT}For in the same way you judge others, you too will be judged, and with the same standard of measure that you are measuring, it will be measured back to you."*

^LThen he told them this parable: *"Can a blind man lead a blind man? Won't both of them fall down into a pit? A disciple is not above his Teacher, but everyone who has been completely, permanently trained will be like their Teacher."*

³ *"Why then are you looking at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye, and paying no attention to the plank in your own eye? ⁴ How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when ^Lall the time you are failing to see ^{MT}there is a plank in your own eye? ⁵ You hypocrite, I command you to first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."*

⁶ *"I command you not to give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces."*

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *the words of Jesus are italicized in red*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	On a Mountain in Galilee
Timeline	May, 31 AD (Month Sixteen)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage IV: The Great Galilean Ministry
	E. The Appointment of the Twelve Apostles and "Teaching on the Mount"
Title	11. Teaching on the Mount, Part X Loving God Means Judging Ourselves, Not Others

COMMENT:

In today's reading Jesus began to move toward the conclusion of his Teaching on the Mount with a series of three practical warnings. Each addressed issues in discipleship we all tend to struggle with. They are:

- (1) Judging and comparing ourselves to others, rather than Jesus (MT 7:1-5, DJN #077)
- (2) Persisting in daily prayer (7:7-12; DJN #078)
- (3) Failure to make an irreversible commitment to Jesus (7:13- 23; DJN #079)

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As we consider Jesus' warnings in these areas over the next three days we will see how practical they are. Our sinful nature is constantly pushing us to succumb to these pitfalls in discipleship, so the battle with them never ends. Jesus' choice of these three issues shows us how fully he understands our inner thoughts and feelings. It also shows us how love speaks the truth—even when it is hard to hear—because love will not accept less than the long-term best interests of those we love. Love says and does only what is right.

Jesus' first warning to the form of commands to stop judging and condemning other people. Jesus used tenses of the verbs ("*stop judging and condemning*") that assumed that we are already in the habit of judging and condemning others, and therefore we need to make a permanent, decisive change in our attitude and behavior. Jesus went to the heart of the matter by relating this command to his singular goal for discipleship.

Luke included Jesus' goal for discipleship in his abbreviated record of this teaching: **"A disciple is not above his Teacher, but everyone who has been completely, permanently trained will be like their Teacher."** (LK 6.40) Jesus plans to constantly work in each us to change us into his likeness. This is his goal for calling us into a relationship with him—to make us like himself.

This statement is one of the most important things Jesus ever said. It was repeated in Jesus' training of the Twelve before sending them out, two by two, as part of his 3rd and final tour of Galilee (MT 10.25A), and again in his "Farewell Discourse" (JN 13-17) in his last teaching session with his disciples, the night before he was crucified. These three teaching sessions of Jesus were crucial compilations of his most important commands and instructions for his disciples. Every believer should memorize Jesus' clearly stated goal for discipleship.

Since the whole point of following Jesus is to become like him, Jesus had just given the command for us to constantly seek for his reign—his unrivaled command and control over our lives (MT 6.33). This means keeping our focus on Jesus, and adjusting everything we discover about ourselves that is different from him to HIM as our sole standard of measurement. He alone is the "the light"—the standard by which we see and measure all things. We are blind apart from seeing him, for our goal is to become like him alone.

This is where the powerful influence of our sinful nature comes in. We so quickly compare ourselves to other people, and take the superior position of judging and condemning their motivations, efforts, and agendas. Judgmental, condemning attitudes toward other people are deeply ingrained in our need to elevate and feel good about ourselves, even at the expense of others.

There are two intractable problems with judging and condemning others. First, the moment we look at others to examine them, we have taken our eyes off of Jesus. Our sole responsibility is to compare ourselves to Jesus, so that we can adjust ourselves in repentance and become like him. When we compare ourselves to others we are already dead wrong in our own practice of discipleship. We become blind when shift our focus from Jesus to others. Secondly, only God knows the the inner motivations and attitudes of other people. Only God can judge justly, for only he has the necessary information. We are blind regarding what other people really think and feel on the inside. So we are doubly blind when we begin to judge and condemn others.

Knowing these two problems we cannot escape from, Jesus asked a troubling question. **"Can a blind man lead a blind man? Won't both of them fall down into a pit?"** Yes. We fall into the pit every time. There is no way around it without falling in, and dragging others with us.

Jesus hates hypocrisy. There is no way to avoid it when we judge and condemn others, and are blind and bound in the pit of darkness regarding our own sinfulness in failing to follow Jesus while we do so. Judging and condemning others turns us into hypocrites every time we do it. This is why Jesus spoke in hyperbole of having a huge beam of wood in our own eye, while we attempt to see a tiny speck of dust in someone else's eye. This colorful use of language was making a terribly serious point about how ridiculous we appear to God when we judge others—for he sees the truth of our situation. Yet he loves us anyway, even as he loves those we judge and condemn.

We should be sensitive to the ever present danger of judging others because it was this sin that Jesus endured more than other. We have seen that the Pharisees have already judged him to be worthy of death. They have already condemned him to die—just 15 months into his ministry. Jesus was the greatest victim of wrongful

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judgement and condemnation in history. If we love him, we should honor him by keeping our eyes on him, and refraining from judging and condemning others.

APPLICATION:

Jesus' warning and command is clear. We have to stop judging and condemning others.

We can leave ALL the judging up to Jesus. We cannot know what motivates others. We are called to passionately and unceasingly follow Jesus alone. He is more than enough to fully occupy our attention and devotion.

How will you redouble your commitment to permanently abandon the practice of judging and condemning others?