

REAL or RELIGIOUS?

“And why worry about a speck in your friend’s eye when you have a log in your own?”

Matthew 7:3



If you were given a “judgement gavel” for one day, what silly thing would you make illegal? (e.g., socks with sandals, pineapple on pizza)

1. **Read Matthew 7:1-2.** What is Jesus commanding here? Why do you think so many people outside the church see Christians as judgmental and how might it hurt our witness? How can we live out our faith in a way that is different without coming across as condemning or condescending?
2. **Read Matthew 7:1–5.** What’s the difference between being discerning and being judgmental? Consider Paul’s instructions in **Galatians 6:1-3**. Jesus isn’t saying “don’t help”—He’s saying, “start with yourself.” How can we live that out?
3. **Read: 2 Samuel 11:1-15 & 12:1-7.** This account of King David, the writer of the Psalms and “a man after God’s own heart”, has a lot to teach us about our own fallibility. Why do you suppose it is easier to see the “speck” in someone else than the “log” in our own? What are some practical ways we can improve our own self-awareness and strive to become more like Jesus?

4. **Read Matthew 7:6 and Proverbs 9:7–10.** While Jesus was not calling people ‘pigs’, he was using an illustration his Jewish listeners would understand. Pigs need useful food not costly pearls. Think about people you know who have limited understanding or exposure to the Gospel, or worse yet, their exposure to Christianity has been negative or hurtful. How do you know when someone is ready to receive correction or spiritual truth? Why does Jesus warn against pushing pearls (truth) on those who are not ready? What role does prayer and the Holy Spirit play in our witness to others?
5. **Read Matthew 7:12.** Why do you think Jesus ended His teaching with the Golden Rule? This principle begins with us taking the high road of choosing to do the right thing—treating others as we’d like to be treated. However, sometimes this becomes difficult when we are being mistreated or taken advantage of. This is where “turning the other cheek” and exercising forgiveness comes in. If everyone practiced the “Platinum Rule” principle of Jesus’ teaching, how might it change the world around us?
6. **Read John 8:1–11.** What is happening in this passage? How does Jesus disarm the angry, judgmental crowd who were really trying to entrap him? What does His response teach us about grace and truth? Thinking of situations in your own life where you know someone is doing the wrong thing, how might remembering your own imperfect (sinful) condition prevent you from “throwing stones”? How can we be sure our motives are right when we feel led to lovingly confront sin and help with “speck removal” from someone else’s eye?
7. **Read Romans 8:1-4 & Psalm 139:23–24.** What’s personal “log” God might be inviting you to work on right now? What do you need to lay down... and what mirror do you need to pick up?

CONSIDER... There are plenty of critics out there who shamelessly condemn others (think of the many online platforms). Considering the teaching of Jesus here, why might it be a good idea to steer clear of these “stone throwers”?

