

# LIVING THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT: CAREFUL CONSIDERATIONS

SERMON DISCUSSION FOR SUNDAY AUGUST 23, 2015 | SPEAKER: PASTOR BRIAN SCRAMLIN

## SERMON DISCUSSION

**Ice Breaker (Everyone):** What is something unique about you others don't usually expect?

## INTRO

The message began with a video portraying people from many backgrounds, races, situations, and appearances. A little girl took a picture of each person and gave them a card, inviting them to an unknown event at specific place and time. Upon arriving, the people were overwhelmed by a gallery of the printed photographs. Old and young, rich and poor, black and white took time to look at the faces of those not like them, enjoy some refreshments, and connect.

**The song in the background of the video declared “When I look into the face of my enemy, I see my brother.” What is this song trying to communicate?**

## LOOKS CAN BE DECEIVING



After the video was over, Pastor Brian explained that humans have developed an instinct to judge others due to the fallen nature of this world. Even Jesus called His disciples to be as wise as serpents as they go out as lambs among wolves. But what humans have difficulty doing is clearly seeing another person's soul. From the sermon: *But what cannot be true is the ability for a human being to fully assess the worth, intentions, pain, or promise of another's soul.*

Next, Pastor Brian shared a picture of himself when he was about fourteen years old. He reflected on how lost he was—smoking pot, drinking, and chasing girls. Within earshot a parent told their son they don't want him hanging out with “that Scramlin kid” Teachers asked Pastor Brian to turn his shirts inside-out because they were inappropriate for school. All of this weighed heavy on his heart. Finally, the High School football coach reached out to him and saw potential where others saw disappointment and Pastor Brian's life was never the same.

**Pastor Brian asks the question at this point “How good is your eyesight? Can you see and hope for the human soul the way God does?” Share how you feel your ability to see another person's soul clearly is.**

## SCRIPTURE; MATTHEW 7:1-6 ESV

We are now moving toward the end of Jesus' famous Sermon. He has already spelled out what the Kingdom of God ought to look like here on Earth in Chapter 5. In Chapter 6, Jesus has begun giving us tips on maintaining this righteous life as it relates to giving, prayer, fasting, anxiety, and money. These tips continue into the most important area of a Believer's life, that of relationships here in chapter seven:

*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. 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. 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.*

## THE COMMAND

Some are tempted to over-simplify Jesus' command and believe a Christian ought never to judge at all. Others fall on the opposite side and think this is an utterly naïve suggestion—once you've seen the evil in the world one can't be expected not to judge others. Let's look at this more closely.

1. What this command does **not** say is to withhold **all** judging and assessment. This is supported in three ways:
  - a. **Careful discrimination is viewed as essential in the personal life of the Christian throughout Scripture.** For instance, in 1 Corinthians 11:31 Paul says *...if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. He is calling for self-examination, of right judgement.*
  - b. **Jesus shares how to judge rightly.** In verse five He says clearly the end result of removing the log from your own eye *...then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.* Why would Jesus share the process of judging well if we aren't supposed to judge at all?
  - c. **The New Testament shows Christians have the right and responsibility to help others deal with their shortcomings.** Paul again makes a great point in 1 Corinthians, this time earlier in this letter: *For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge?* And also to his letter to the Galatians he writes, *Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness.*

**Do you agree Christians are not to withhold from all judging? Why or why not?**

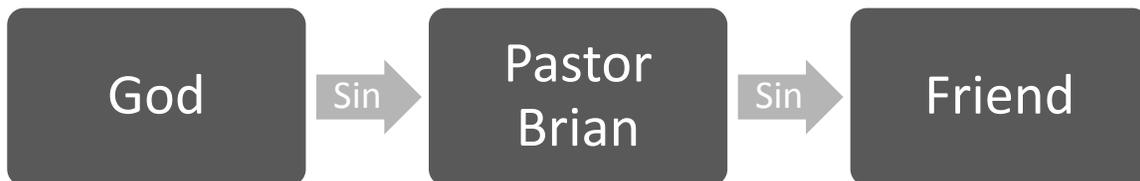
2. What the command **does** say is to consider others **carefully**. What does carefully mean?
  - a. **Consider others in humility.** Jesus' harshest rebukes fall upon the self-righteous. Those who puff themselves up while putting others down. Luke 18:9-14 records, "[Jesus] also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt..." What was the parable He told them? The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax collector. This is how we are to judge. Not as self-righteous, but in the knowledge of our unworthiness.
  - b. **Consider others with certitude.** In John 7:24 Jesus said "Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment." Just because someone is different than you doesn't make them wrong. Nor does having met one person of a particular group mean you know everyone from that group. Now, in just a few verses (v16) Jesus teaches we can judge a tree by its fruit, but we had better be very sure of a person's heart before making a judgment.

## FIVE LOGICAL REASONS FOR CAREFUL CONSIDERATIONS

1. We will be **judged**. *Judge not, that you be not judged. (v.1)* The tense of the verb **judged** signified a once-for-all final judgement. Jesus reminds us that we will all stand before the throne of God Himself.
2. We set out own **measure** of judgement. *For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. (v.2)* This parallels Jesus teaching in Luke 6:37-38 which says *Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you...For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.* In other words, we reap what we sow.

At this point Pastor Brian asks volunteers to come onto the stage. One person represented a friend, and the other God. As Pastor Brian looked through a piece of plexiglass at his friend, you could see many sins and judgements such as “lazy”, “Asian”, “poor”, “rich”, “white”, and “stupid” He explained that this is how we measure others through our “soul lens” But there begins to be a problem when we see Jesus’ third logical reason for careful considerations.

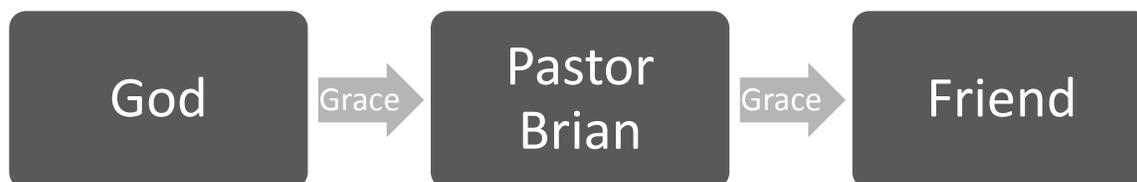
3. We aren’t without **faults**. *Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? (vv.3-4)* The second and third reasons Jesus gives go hand in hand. As Pastor Brian looked behind him, he could see God viewing him through a lens of sin: “gluttony”, “gossip”, “laziness”, “adultery”, and “murder” If we can look at our own soul and see potential, hope, and a future—see the image of God, we must be able to see the same in others.



**What did you think about the illustration? Did it connect any dots for you? When you look at others throughout your day, do you think you will consider yourself more carefully, or do you think this will fade away in your mind?**

4. We cannot **help others** if we have a condemning spirit—a distorted lens. *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. (v.5)* Bible Scholar W.W. Wiersbe says, *When we do not judge ourselves, we not only hurt ourselves, but we also hurt those to whom we could minister.* Once we come to grips that God has wiped our slate clean

through Christ's unmerited favor, we can wipe the slate of others. This allows us clearly to see the image of God in another, and allows us to interact with them out of love instead of condemnation.



**Do you believe this is true—that dealing with our own sin helps us deal with the sin of others? How does this actually look in real life?**

5. Do not helping others who aren't **ready**. *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. (v.6)* Pastor Brian tells a story of his wife being bothered endlessly by a saleswomen trying to help her find the right Bible at the bookstore. This can be frustrating because nobody like the answer to an unasked question. Even if the information is good, sometimes people are not at a place to receive it. Pastor Brian shares two kinds of people not ready to receive right judgement (careful consideration):
- Quarrelsome** People. Proverbs 26:21 says *As charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, so is a quarrelsome man for kindling strife*. Some people are just asking for trouble. Swine in Ancient Near-Eastern Palestine were half-tamed at best. Seed-pearls, which scholars believe Jesus referred to here, resemble maize which swine fed on and they wouldn't know what to do with the precious item. They would choke, feel offended, and turn on the one who gave the pearls.
  - Immature** People. Dogs of Jesus' day were not domesticated whatsoever and often fed on trash and dead animals. The picture Jesus alludes to is that of a priest taking the burnt sacrifice meant for God and giving it to a dog. The animal would have no way to appreciate or comprehend that which it had been given. It doesn't have the capacity. In 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 Paul sees some people were not ready for "solid food" and also the writer of Hebrews explains that his recipients need again the basic principles of God before they move on to deeper things.

**Have you ever experienced helping someone who was either quarrelsome or immature? What was that like? Do you have a friend who you feel you need to help get spiritual milk and the first principles of God?**

#### APPLICATION AND RESPONSE

Let's sum all of this up. The way we move forward is this: One, assess others with the **right spirit**, which comes from the right perspective (Matthew 7:1-6). And second, be as careful as a surgeon, which comes from **spiritual maturity** (Galatians 6:1). Think of eye surgery. You can do great damage if you are impatient or insensitive.

As you go today, consider carefully **yourself**—the sin of your past or present, consider carefully **God**—the grace He has shown you, and consider carefully **others**—how you might help them. Let's stand and sing together. **Any final comments?**