

## CHRISTIAN LIFE SERIES VII: A JUDGE’S MIRROR

Judge others as you would judge yourself, or as you would wish others to judge you.

### KEY POINTS

- ❖ Many people quote Matthew 7:1 to say we should never judge the actions of others. However, this shows an incomplete understanding of the meaning of this verse (and of this passage as a whole). Jesus is not speaking about any and all judgment. In fact:
  - He instructed us to judge righteously (John 7:24)
  - We must understand how to discern (judge) between good and evil (Hebrews 5:14)
  - If we are spiritual, we are expected to “judge all things” (1 Corinthians 2:15)
  - In fact, we will even judge angels, so we must be able to judge matters on Earth (1 Cor. 6:3-4).
- ❖ The Lord is not at all saying we can never engage in judging people or situations, but He is *very* concerned about (and opposed to) *hypocritical* and *self-righteous* judgment!
- ❖ He said to the Pharisees: “Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness” (Matt. 23:28). He is very concerned when we judge others harshly, while we are doing the same things, or even worse.
- ❖ The first item a judge needs to acquire when he or she is setting up shop is a good-sized hand mirror to place on their desk!
- ❖ As they are about to render a verdict and sentence an offender, they need to pick up the mirror, take a long, hard look at themselves, and ask the question: “What have I done, or what am I doing right now that is every bit as bad as what this offender has done?”
- ❖ The judge then needs to mentally superimpose his or her own face onto the offender’s face and render judgment and penalty as if they were judging themselves!
- ❖ What would our judgments look like if we adopted this strategy? Fortunately, the scriptures provide an answer to this question in John 8:2-11.
- ❖ This story illustrates why our love for the Lord grows day by day. He knows everything about us, “good, bad and indifferent,” yet He paid the penalty for our sins (see 1Cor. 15:3). Paul was right to echo the psalmist David who said, “There is none who does good, no, not one” (see Romans 3:12; Psalm 14:3, 53:1, 3).
- ❖ This understanding needs to underpin all of our judgments against others (and maybe even ourselves at times). We were all ‘born in sin and shaped in iniquity’, so we need to exhibit a very high degree of love, understanding and empathy when we judge others.

### KEY SCRIPTURES:

Matthew 7:1-5, 23:28;  
2 Samuel 11:1–12:14; John 8:2-11

- ❖ Judges—take a look into the mirror! Our mirror is the Word of God. If our lives are in perfect alignment with His word, then we are free to judge harshly, to the full extent of the law.
- ❖ If not, we need to let God’s grace and mercy flow through us to those who have done wrong.
- ❖ You may already have noticed that the people we honour most as being very close to God are almost universally *mercy*-full. Not *judgment*-full.
- ❖ The closer we get to Jesus, the more like Him we become—full of His love, His grace, and full of His mercy.
- ❖ The closer we get to Him, the more the mirror of His word shows us how imperfect we are and how much we need Him to break us, shape us, and re-make us according to His perfect will and pleasure.
- ❖ It is indeed amazing how many times we give ourselves a ‘free pass’ for the things we so easily condemn in others. We go after someone else’s speck instead of dealing with our own plank (see Matt. 7:3).
- ❖ Mercy in the place of judgment is a characteristic Jesus displayed throughout His ministry. We cannot go wrong by following His example.
- ❖ Let’s buy a judge’s mirror and get to work—on ourselves first of all.

### DISCUSSION/REFLECTION TOOLS

1. Are you one to judge quickly and condemn easily? Are you the type to pass light/harsh sentences?
2. After you have passed judgement, can a person who has offended you gain any chance of parole, or is it a life sentence?
3. What does one have to do to obtain the mercy of *your* court? What do you have to change in yourself to become *mercy-full*?
4. Hold up the mirror of God’s Word, finding scriptures similar to Matt. 7:1, 23:28, etc. See if your life is in perfect alignment with it. Pray for God’s help—and strength—in attaining a life that is aligned with His.

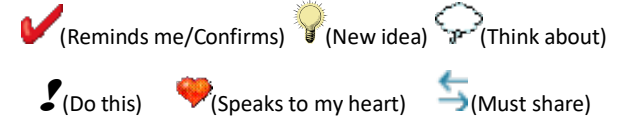
### Prayer Time

Change me, Oh, Lord. Help me to be more like You, so that my life trends toward perfect alignment with the mirror of Your word.

## WEEK OF SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2018

### NOTES

Meditate as you read through/listen to this week’s message. If it helps, use symbols for your notes.



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### PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS

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L.G. Ice-Breaker: Do you have any “buttons” that are easy/hard for people to press? What happens when anybody does so?