



“Judge not...”!?

Devotional Thoughts for the Week of
November 8, 2020
by Matt Fleck

This is week 10 of our series on Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount and we are focusing on Matthew 7:1-6 and 5:33-37. Jesus tackles the universal human need for security. Our devotional author this week is Matt Fleck. Matt writes these in the hope of inspiring people of faith to be doers of God’s word.

Week 10 Day 1

We use measuring devices in daily life to measure in cooking, carpentry, weighing vegetables at the grocery store check-out lane, and a scale for weight loss. We measure to know “how much.” The unit we use is chosen in relation to the object we wish to measure (e.g. pounds, ounces, inches, feet, etc.).

So it is with the things of God. Read Matthew 7:2 – “with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” Grain dealers in Bible times would shake the grain bushel baskets down hard onto the table to stomp the grain into the basket; Why? To ensure the grain was compactly in that basket so they would be able to say: “you got a full basket of grain.” That’s integrity! What if that person had chosen a sloppy method to weigh the grain? Would you buy from them again?

Read Matthew 7:1 – Why are we measuring? Judgment. I recall a biker dude entering onto I-675 next to me as I was riding along in my automobile. He was covered in tattoos, had a long beard, the motorcycle was loud, and he seemed scary to me. As I was praying along my journey, God said to me: that is a mother’s child, someone who is loved, gives love, and is my creation. Suddenly I looked at the man differently than when I first ‘judged’ him. Do you see how quickly the perspective changed? God had to show me that judging others is none of my business.



Pause for a moment and reflect about someone whom you have judged and more importantly how that happened? Then consider the role of how we measure interacts with that. Make a phone call today, or write a note, and tell someone you’re sorry for what you’ve done, and then thank them for being God’s creation. At a minimum, pray and thank God that He instructs us.

Week 10 Day 2

Ken Sande in his book *Peace Making* taught me two valuable lessons in life, which came in handy when we found ourselves helping people after the civil war in Côte d’Ivoire was over. The first life lesson is this: there is a difference between peace keeping and peace making. The former is reactionary (keep the peace of fighting children) and the latter is proactive (make the peace) – “Why don’t you kids share the candy, and then let’s play a game.” See the difference? The second life lesson is this: be willing to overlook an offense. This is the idea of just looking past a moment when someone personally offends you. Why? Maybe they had a bad day, perhaps they judged you and need a moment to realize it, or...who knows why, and you can be the bigger person by overlooking the offense.

There is one more big reason to overlook an offense. Read Matthew 7:3 – how easy it is for us in life to have a perspective on things and not realize our own condition? I used to be overweight because of over-eating and a lack of exercise. The trouble is that I didn’t think that I was ‘that fat.’ My mind measured myself against other people around me (e.g. “Well I am not as overweight as that person”— I was judging them). The truth was that I needed to learn the discipline of healthy eating, exercise, actually managing my daily caloric intake, and frankly, learning the ability to ‘just say NO’! You see, I had a plank in my mind’s eye. I was quick to see specks of dust in others, but unwilling to recognize my own hypocrisy. It was necessary for me to learn, to address my own condition, and remove the plank (pounds) from my waistline. Read Matthew 7:4-5 and reflect on the idea of a plank in your own life.





Week 10 Day 3

I grew up in a rural farming community. If you take feed out to an animal and set it down, they will instinctively come to it and eat it (a Pavlovian response). However, if you were to try and reach into a pen of

pigs and attempt to remove the feed from them while they are actively feeding, then they will likely bite you. It's the animalistic response in the heat of the moment that they are so focused on what is in front of them and how your untimely attempt is foreseen.

Read Matthew 7:6 – “do not throw your pearls to the pigs!” If you do, what might happen? Pigs today come in all different sizes, shapes, and imaginations. A pig could be an ungodly idea, a movement that is not founded on biblical principles, or someone of the world who looks at life through a pagan set of glasses. After all, it might be the only perspective they have; like a guy named Shawn who once said to me: I have never stepped foot into a church except for a wedding. If we really love people (John 15:13), then we will be patient with them, just as God was patient with us when He first loved us.

So back to the pigs, would it make sense to throw expensive pearls to pigs? Sometimes in life it makes sense to pause and pray in the moment: “God, how do you want me to handle this situation, this person, and what should I say?” God is rarely early, never late, and always shows up at just the right time when we pray! Pause right now to think of a difficult situation and then pray to ask God: how should I proceed? After all, isn't prayer and biblical guidance a better approach than being ‘torn to pieces’ (Matthew 7:6c – “If you do, they may trample them (pearls) under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces”)! Be wise among mankind as you handle the truths of God's word.

Week 10 Day 4

The Golden Rule – “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

This week's theme reminds us as believers to truly do unto others what you would want done to you. We live in a cancel culture these days that wants to so quickly ‘cancel’ a person because of what they said, what they did, and who they are in life. What if ... what if you led your life with so much love that people couldn't really find a reason to cancel you? When someone does you wrong, love them anyway. Be willing to overlook an offense. Be the one who prays and is willing to go the second mile to do what is right. In doing so, we will be like an eye doctor who puts cleansing eye drops into our eyes to clear them of any specks. This is a snapshot of integrity

Compare Matthew 7:3, “specks in eyes” to this passage: 1 John 3:16-20, putting love into action! Think about someone right now who is hard to love. Make an intentional action this week to love them (v. 18) unconditionally. Would you be surprised if God showed up at just the right moment and helped you do this? Faith – it is believing in the things unseen.

Week 10 Day 5

Happy Friday! We like our Fridays in the work-a-day world. We get to take a break from our labor and do something relaxing, something we enjoy, and just spend time to reflect and be well. God used to do that with Adam. In Genesis we are reminded that God would walk and talk with Adam in the cool of the day (morning) and spend time with him. Friends, God is wanting to take a walk with you today, to spend time with you, and talk about some things together. Today's devotional is to put on some tennis shoes and go for a walk ... with God and spend some time alone with Him. Abide with the Father as you take a walk in the vineyard. Talk to him in prayer, reflection, and most importantly: listening. Go and see what God has in store for you today! Faith – it is hoping for the things of tomorrow.

