

## Judging others

### Luke 6:37-42 – Leaders version

**Check in** – with the group sitting in a semi-circle go round and ask everyone, including leaders, how they are and how they're feeling about studying the Bible today.

### What does the passage say and mean?

30 minutes

Read Luke 6:37-42

1. In one sentence, what do you think this passage is about?

*Brainstorm, but don't try to come to a conclusion yet.*

Explain that Jesus is talking to his followers here (a continuation from 5:20) so he's talking about how believers should behave.

2. Why do you think Jesus says believers shouldn't judge or condemn people?

*Let the group brainstorm and then read Romans 2:1-3 to them. Ask the question again, in light of this passage.*

*When we judge someone we are making a decision about them in view of the facts that we have, which may be biased or incomplete. Our judgements tend to put other people down and make ourselves look comparatively good, which is a form of pride. Only God has all the facts and only God has knowledge of all the truth, so only God is equipped to judge justly.*

*When we look at who Jesus hung around with, and how other religious people felt about it, it turns out that Jesus (the Judge of all) is the one who didn't judge other people, e.g. Luke 5:30.*

*Having said this, we will see in Luke 6:43-45, Jesus does expect his followers to be discerning and able to tell right from wrong, and stand against false teaching. It's our unjust and hypocritical judgement of other people that he is condemning.*

3. Why do you think Jesus tells us to forgive?

*Not forgiving someone means that you continue to hold a grudge against them, which in turn means you are judging them and trying to punish them (whether you recognise that is what you are doing or not). In the end however, it's you who is most likely to get hurt, because it is you that is being eaten up inside.*

Here, Jesus tells us to forgive as a continuation of the teaching on judging and condemning others. Elsewhere we are told to 'Forgive as the Lord forgave you.' Colossians 3:13. When we understand how much God has forgiven us, how can we withhold forgiveness from someone who has hurt us? (They may have hurt us deeply, but no-one can hurt us as much as our sin hurts God).

**?**

We tend to think of judging, condemning and forgiving other people. Do you think Jesus might also be talking about judging, condemning and forgiving yourself? What difference would it make in your life if you took this command seriously?

4. Read Luke 6:38. What do you think Jesus means?

*He's talking about treating others the way we want to be treated ourselves, a similar message to Mark 12:31, 'Love your neighbour as yourself'.*

5. Read Luke 6:39-40. What does Jesus mean?

*Jesus is speaking to his followers, so these verses may warn against people who are spiritually immature being in a position of leadership in the local fellowship, v39, and against people in leadership thinking that they are important. We are to be like Jesus, but we must never think that we can exceed him. (This is in contrast with other Rabbis of the day. It was normal for disciples of Rabbis to aim to become more than their teacher. This can never be the case when Jesus is your teacher).*

6. Read Luke 6:41-42. What makes us want to take specks out of other people's eyes?

*If they're stuck, suggest: genuine concern, because it's annoying me, a critical spirit etc.*

7. What does Jesus say we should do before looking to help with someone else's speck?

*Remove the plank from our own eye. Encourage the group to picture the scene and see the comedy element that Jesus is considering. A man with a piece of 4x2 sticking out of his eye is trying to look at a speck of dust, something tiny, in his mate's eye. Every time he tries to get close he smacks his mate with his piece of 4x2! There's no way the man can get anywhere near his mate to be able to see someone else's problems properly with a piece of timber in his eye! Our own perspective and judgement are affected by our plank.*

8. What does Jesus say we can do when we have taken the plank out of our eye?

*We can help someone else remove the speck from their eye! Jesus isn't saying we shouldn't help other people to recognise, address and deal with their issues, when appropriate and without being critical or*

*judgemental. He's saying that we need to deal with our own issues first, so that we are in a fit state to help others.*

**?**

Be honest with yourself, is there a plank in your eye that you need to remove before you can help other people with their specks?

**Check out** – with the group sitting in a semi-circle go round and ask everyone, including leaders, how they found the study and if they are safe to go back to the cell.

**Judging others**

**Luke 6:37-42**

**What does the passage say and mean?**

Read Luke 6:37-42

1. In one sentence, what do you think this passage is about?
2. Why do you think Jesus says believers shouldn't judge or condemn people?
3. Why do you think Jesus tells us to forgive?

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