



## WEEK 6 DEVOTIONALS

### READ

Scripture: Matthew 7:1-5

Jesus' imagery here may seem like a ridiculous picture of hypocrisy: someone with a huge log stuck in their eye trying to remove a speck of sawdust from someone else's face! But this is closer to home than we may realize. When we judge others, we have forgotten that we too—every day—need grace, mercy, and forgiveness from God. This often happens because we feel like we've "arrived," so we begin to act as the judge of anyone else who isn't as far along as we are. The tragic irony is that in this earthly life, we never arrive: we continue to struggle through our own brokenness, mistakes, and sin. Only as we remind ourselves of our own need for mercy can we extend that mercy, rather than judgment, to others.

### REFLECT

Which specific people or groups of people do you tend to judge?

What are the "planks of wood" in your own eye when you judge others?

### RESPOND

In this weekend's sermon, we were challenged to seek forgiveness from someone we've judged. First confess your acts of judgmentalism to God and ask him to reveal the root causes of judgmentalism in your heart.

## **READ**

Scripture: Matthew 7:1-2, 12

You may not have made the connection before, but the Golden Rule can be an antidote for our judgmentalism. When we see someone else struggling or sinning, before we respond we can pause and consider how we like others to react to our own moments of struggle. There may not be a one-size-fits-all answer to that question, but most of us strongly prefer for others to respond to our sin and failures with patience, forgiveness, and gentleness. In that sense, Jesus' instruction in verse 12 spurs us to show the same mercy when it's someone else who messes up. When we do, we are embodying the teaching of all "the Law and the Prophets."

## **REFLECT**

How do you prefer for people to treat you in the aftermath of a sin, mistake, or failure?

How do you tend to react to other people's sin, mistakes, or failures?

## **RESPOND**

Think of someone who has extended kindness to you when you have sinned or failed in some way. Reach out to them this week to thank them.

## **READ**

Scripture: Luke 18:9-14

Part of human beings' judgmentalism, if we're really honest with ourselves, is that we feel better when we can look down on other people. This tendency is true of nearly everyone, including devout religious people. Even as we seek to please God, we are tempted to make ourselves feel better in our devotion if we convince ourselves we're more devoted than the next person. Jesus is asking us to unlearn this habit. Look at the parable in today's passage: the hated, wicked tax collector is the hero because he owns his sinfulness before God and asks for mercy. He is the one justified in this story, while the Pharisee continues to trust in his own righteousness.

## **REFLECT**

Have you ever had private thoughts like this Pharisee's, i.e. "Thank God I'm not like \_\_\_\_\_"?

Why is it so harmful and inaccurate to think this way about others?

Make a list of all the areas of your life in which you currently need God's mercy.

## **RESPOND**

Take time to thank God for his mercy in each area you listed above.