MESSAGE SUMMARY

Jesus teaches you to be careful about how you judge others because your own heart needs attention, too. Instead of pointing out someone else's faults while ignoring your own, you should first examine your heart and seek God's help. Jesus does not forbid all correction but calls you to correct others with humility, wisdom, and love. He invites you to ask, seek, and knock, trusting your Heavenly Father to give what is good. As you depend on God in prayer, you can treat others with the same love, grace, and kindness you desire for yourself.

MAIN POINTS

1. Judging wrongly harms. Judging rightly helps and heals. (Matthew 7:1–6) Be careful how you judge others because God holds you accountable for how you judge (vv. 1–2). Examine your own heart before pointing out someone else's sin (vv. 3–5). Approach others with humility, truth, and love so your correction can help them grow (vv. 5–6). Remember: You need God's grace just as much as the person you are tempted to judge (Romans 2:1–4; Galatians 6:1).

2. Ask. Seek. Knock. (Matthew 7:7–12) Ask God for wisdom, help, and a heart that reflects His character (v. 7; James 1:5). Trust your Heavenly Father to give what is good to His children (vv. 8–11). Treat others the way you want to be treated, showing the grace and kindness you hope to receive (v. 12). Remember: Prayer changes how you see others and how you respond to them (Philippians 4:6–7).

Big Idea: Be slow to judge and quick to pray.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Does Jesus forbid all judgment, or is He warning you against a certain kind of judgment? (Matthew 7:1–5; John 7:24) *Possible answer:* Jesus warns against hypocritical, prideful, and harsh judgment. You should examine your own heart first, but you can still recognize sin and lovingly help others follow God's truth.

2. What does Jesus teach you about God's character when He tells you to ask, seek, and knock? (Matthew 7:7–11; James 1:5–6) *Possible answer:* God is a loving Father who hears His children and gives what is good. You can approach Him with confidence, trusting His wisdom even when His answer is different from what you expected.

3. When are you most tempted to judge someone else without examining your own heart? (Matthew 7:3–5; Psalm 139:23–24) *Possible answer:* I am most tempted when someone frustrates me or behaves in a way I dislike. I need to ask God to reveal my own sin and help me respond with humility and grace.

4. Who do you need to pray for before you speak to them about a problem? (Matthew 7:7–8; Galatians 6:1) *Possible answer:* I need to pray for my boss, neighbor or spouse, ask God to check my motives, and seek wisdom so that any conversation I have is loving, gentle, and helpful.

5. How would your relationships change if you treated others the way you want to be treated? (Matthew 7:12; Ephesians 4:32) *Possible answer:* I would listen more, assume less, speak kindlier, and offer the same patience and forgiveness I hope others will show me.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

The good news is that Jesus offers you more than a command to behave better; He offers you forgiveness and a changed heart. Every one of us has sinned and needs God's grace (Romans 3:23–24). Jesus died for our sins and rose again so that everyone who trusts in Him can receive forgiveness and new life…a heart that can be shaped by God to be like His! (1 Corinthians 15:3–4).

If you have not trusted in Jesus: acknowledge your sin, ask God to forgive you, and believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord. You cannot earn God's forgiveness by being good; you must receive His grace through faith (Mark 1:15; Ephesians 2:8–9). If you already follow Jesus: keep repenting of pride, hypocrisy, and a judgmental spirit. Remember that you have already received God's grace, and ask Him to help you grow in humility, love, and holiness (1 John 1:9; Colossians 3:12–13).

This week's challenge: Before you criticize someone, pause and pray. Ask God, "Lord, what do You want to change in me?" Then ask Him to help you respond with truth, grace, and love.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Monday — Examine Your Own Heart First
Key Verse: "For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you." (Matthew 7:2)
Reflection: It is easy to see the faults of others while overlooking your own. Jesus calls you to examine your heart before criticizing someone else. When you remember how much you need God's grace, you can approach others with humility, patience, and love instead of pride.
Application Question: Who are you tempted to judge, and what might God want to change in your own heart? *Possible Answer:* I am tempted to criticize someone who frustrates me. Before I speak, I need to ask God to reveal my own faults and help me respond with grace.
Prayer Response: Heavenly Father, help me see my own heart clearly before I focus on the faults of others. Forgive me for the times I have been prideful or judgmental. Help me show that same grace to others today. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Tuesday — Correct with Humility and Love
Key Verse: "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." (Matthew 7:5)
Reflection: Jesus does not tell you to ignore sin or avoid helping others grow. He calls you to deal honestly with your own sin first so that you can help others with humility and love. Your goal should never be to prove that you are right or make someone feel small, but to help that person grow in Christlikeness.
Application Question: How can you approach someone about a problem in a way that helps rather than hurts? *Possible Answer:* I can examine my motives, pray first, and speak privately with kindness and gentleness, seeking the person's growth rather than trying to win an argument.
Prayer Response: Lord Jesus, give me a humble heart that is willing to receive correction as well as offer it. Help me speak truth with love and never use Your Word to put others down. Give me wisdom to know when to speak and how to encourage others toward You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Wednesday — Ask, Seek, and Knock
Key Verse: "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." (Matthew 7:7)
Reflection: When you face a difficult relationship or feel tempted to judge someone, your first response should be prayer, not criticism. Jesus invites you to keep asking, seeking, and knocking as you depend on your Heavenly Father for wisdom and help. You may not receive the answer you expect, but you can trust God's goodness and His perfect wisdom.
Application Question: What situation or relationship do you need to bring to God in prayer before taking action? *Possible Answer:* I need to pray about a difficult relationship and ask God to show me my own blind spots, give me wisdom, and help me know the right way to respond.
Prayer Response: Heavenly Father, thank You for inviting me to come to You in prayer. When I feel frustrated or uncertain, remind me to seek Your wisdom before reacting. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Thursday — Trust Your Heavenly Father
Key Verse: "How much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!" (Matthew 7:11)
Reflection: Your Heavenly Father knows what you need and cares deeply for you. Because He is good, you can bring Him your fears, frustrations, and difficult relationships instead of trying to control everything yourself. As you trust Him, He can replace your anger with patience, your pride with humility, and your harsh judgments with compassion.
Application Question: Where do you need to trust God instead of trying to control a situation or change someone else? *Possible Answer:* I need to trust God with a difficult person in my life. Rather than trying to force a change, I can pray for that person, ask God to change my heart, and respond in a way that honors Him.
Prayer Response: Father, help me trust You when relationships are difficult and answers do not come quickly. Teach me to release my need for control and depend on Your wisdom, timing, and grace. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Friday — Treat Others the Way You Want to Be Treated
Key Verse: "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them." (Matthew 7:12)
Reflection: Jesus calls you to take the love and grace you have received from God and extend them to others. Before you speak or act, consider how you would want someone to treat you in the same situation. Living this way does not mean ignoring truth or excusing sin; it means standing for what is right while showing the kindness, patience, and love of Christ.
Application Question: What is one practical way you can show grace and kindness to someone today? *Possible Answer:* I can listen without interrupting, avoid assuming the worst, offer encouragement, or forgive someone who has frustrated me. I can ask God to help me treat that person as I would want to be treated.
Prayer Response: Lord, thank You for the grace and forgiveness You have shown me through Jesus. Help me treat others with the same patience, kindness, and love that I desire from them. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Sources: The ESV Study Bible, Crossway, study notes on Matthew 7:1–12; The MacArthur Study Bible, Thomas Nelson, study notes on Matthew 7:1–12.