

YOU+ | Week 9 - Follow the Golden Rule**Message Big Idea**

Disciples of Jesus treat others the way they want to be treated.

Scripture

Matthew 7:1-12

Points to Keep In Mind

1. Jesus challenges us to stop focusing so much on what other people are doing in life, which we often can't do anything to change, and causes us much stress when we try to change others. Instead, Jesus calls us to pay attention to ourselves, our behavior, and how we can get it wrong, even when we have good intentions. We can do a lot about changing ourselves with God's help. If we can identify our contribution to relational breakdowns, that is a huge step toward bringing relational restoration. Even if we carry less blame, admitting where we are at fault and adjusting relationally can make a big difference.
2. [Jesus] doesn't mean that we shouldn't have high standards of behavior for ourselves and our world, but that the temptation to look down on each other for moral failures is a temptation to play God. And, since we aren't God, that means it's a temptation to play a part, to act, to be a 'hypocrite' (which means a playactor, one who wears a mask as a disguise)."¹
3. "In short, the unnoticed log is often the critical spirit itself. Jesus' purpose in this summary is to make disciples conscious that "in our own cause we are apt to be partial." The tragicomic feature in this story is a log-eyed reformer saving a speck-eyed sinner, a redwood teaching a shrub to be low profile. Thus this saying of Jesus turns in upon itself: "Judge not" comes to mean "judge yourselves" and "get rid of your own wood first."²
4. Finally, in verses 7-12, Dallas Willard writes, "As long as I am condemning my friends or relatives, or pushing my "pearls" on them, I am their problem. They have to respond to me, and that usually leads to their "judging" me right back, or "biting" me, as Jesus said. But once I back away, maintaining a sensitive and nonmanipulative presence, I am no longer their problem. As I listen, they do not have to protect themselves from me, and they begin to open up. I may quickly begin to appear to them as a possible ally and resource. Now they begin to sense their problem to be the situation they have created, or possibly themselves. Because I am no longer trying to drive them, genuine communication, real sharing of hearts, becomes an attractive possibility. The healing dynamic of the request comes naturally into play. And this is the final illustration, the positive one, of how to really be of help to those near us (7:7-11). When we stand thus in the kingdom, our approach to influencing others, for their good as well as ours, will be simply to ask: to ask them to change, and to help them in any way they ask of us. It is a natural extension of this dynamic when we turn to ask God to work in their lives and hearts to bring about changes."³

Next Steps

1. Where do you see God at work in your life right now?
2. What next steps do you feel called to take in your faith journey?
3. Have you considered getting baptized? communitychristian.org/baptism
4. Have you read the Community Daily recently? How is it encouraging you and challenging you? You can sign up at communitychristian.org/daily
5. If anyone in your small group is seeking professional counseling, you can always refer them to our resource page: communitychristian.org/mentalhealth
6. Start your pre-work and sign up to have a YOU+ Conversation by visiting: youplus.info

¹ Tom Wright, *Matthew for Everyone, Part 1: Chapters 1-15* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2004), 69-70.

² Frederick Dale Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary: The Christbook, Matthew 1-12, Revised and Expanded Edition, vol. 1* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 338-339.

³ Willard, Dallas. *The Divine Conspiracy* (p. 255). HarperCollins. Kindle Edition.