



# SERMON BASED | SMALL GROUP NOTES

## FALL 2017

Message Series: Unlearning Religion

Message Title: Judge Not

Speaker: Pastor Kevin Myers

Date: October 22, 2017

### **Icebreaker**

What was your faith experience and view of God as a child? How has that played into your adult faith journey?

### **Message Overview**

Many people today would claim to be Christians, but they are living according to self, and not to God. In fact, too often we fall into patterns of religious rule-following rather than genuine relationship. What was intended to be a relationship *with* God has become a religion *about* God. Sometimes we have only *information*, when we need *transformation*.

In Sermon on the Mount, Christ is trying to move us from religious duty to genuine relationship with God. One primary focus of Sermon on the Mount is to unlearn what we think we know, and to embrace a life lived fully through Christ's transformational love. Our primary goal is not information, but transformation.

#### **The Pharisees: Raise the Bar (and condemns)**

Matthew 7: 1-6 speaks to judgement. The Pharisees were the religious leaders of their day, and they often walked in judgement of others who fell short. But Jesus called them out, saying this was not righteous. The Pharisees raised the bar, and then condemned. Jesus called them hypocrites.

Jesus points out that the love of God must trump the law.

#### **The World: Removes the Bar (and condones)**

The nature of the world removes the bar and condones the actions of the world. The world says there is no standard of truth or righteousness. We can ignore any standards of righteousness and live according to our own rules.

#### **Jesus: Lifts us over the bar (and transforms)**

It's not in the heart of God to condemn, He is slow to anger, rich in love and compassionate. This is only possible for us through relationship with Him. When we are open to being gently taught by the Holy Spirit how to unlearn lifelong bad habits, and to learn Godly ones, we begin to transform.

### *How to Beat Judging*

Unlearn judging, and learn how to love. A critical spirit kills relationships. So when you treat others the way you want to be treated, this becomes the practical application of God's call to righteousness. And if you fall short, ask God to lead you in *His* righteousness and transform your heart.

### **Discussion**

*Read Matthew 7: 1-6 and Matthew 23: 23-24 aloud.*

1. As believers, we are called not to judge, but we are expected to have sound discernment. What is the difference in judgment and discernment concerning others?
2. As a believer, how do you set strong boundaries while still demonstrating love? Can you think of an example in your own life when you've had to do that?

PK said "When you move something from God's righteousness to man-made rules, it doesn't become more righteous, it becomes more religious."

3. What are some examples of humans adding man-made rules to faith that changed the standards of God's love?
4. Share an instance in your own life where you have had a critical or judgmental spirit toward a person, and then later realized you had judged too harshly. Were you able to correct the situation?

We are called to move from critical in spirit, to poor in spirit. This means we are to humble ourselves before God in order to grow in relationship with Him. The role of the church is not to judge the world, but to introduce them to Jesus. We are not above others, we are alongside them.

Read aloud Matthew 7:12. *"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."*

5. What are some areas of your life where you need Jesus to help lift you over the bar of righteousness? (Examples might be anger, negative attitude, critical spirit, pride, applying faith principles to business, trusting God fully in a situation, compassion and mercy, struggles with selfishness, etc.)
6. In Matthew 5:3, Jesus tells us "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." How would you define "poor in spirit" in your own life? What do you think Jesus means when he says of the poor in spirit, "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven?"
7. Is pride and personal independence something you personally struggle with? In what ways?

### Wrap Up / Close

Judgement of others and a critical spirit is one area that always seems to be at the forefront of our faith walk. We have probably both felt judged at times, and also been guilty of judging others. But with Jesus' transforming love, we can learn to treat others with kindness and walk in humility, rather than judgement. It's futile to try to live in our own strength, when as believers we are wholly dependent upon Jesus strength. Close in prayer, asking God to transform you to be poor in spirit, and to come alongside those who need to be loved and uplifted, rather than judging them.

### Throughout the Week (Optional)

1. Go to [www.12stone.com/watch](http://www.12stone.com/watch) and view the supplemental teaching on Sermon on the Mount presented by Buford Pastor Sean Meyers. This teaching is about a 15 minute teaching that dives deeper into Jesus' teaching. Complete the study questions at the bottom of the page on the video clip.
2. Read the Sermon on the Mount in its entirety – Matthew 5-7. Jot down your impressions of Jesus teaching, and pray over the points Holy Spirit lays on your heart. Journal about the qualities you would most like God to guide you in, in your personal walk of faith.