



SERMON BASED | SMALL GROUP NOTES FALL 2017

Message Series: Unlearning Religion
Message Title: Q & A – Do Not Judge
Speaker: Pastor Kevin Myers
Date: November 12, 2017

Icebreaker

Coming out of the “Unlearning Religion” series, what are some of the biggest questions you found yourself asking?

Message Overview

This series has focused on the section of the Sermon on the Mount beginning with “Do not judge. . .” PK has been unpacking Matthew 7:1-12 over the past three weeks. In week one, he used the illustration of a high jump bar. By adding to the law, the Pharisees raised the bar, which is condemning. The world wants to remove the bar, doing away with the law, which is condoning. But Jesus lifts you over the bar, which is transforming (vs. 1-2). In week two, we heard that God is asking us to aim higher. We don’t learn from the Bible for information, so that we can hold it up as a standard that is unreachable, but we desire to learn more about God and grow in our relationship with him because we know that God wishes to transform us as a blessing. We learned that religion about God implies arrival, but a relationship with God is in flight—a process of being transformed (vs. 3-5).

This week, PK opens up another town hall “Q & A” setting to address some of the practical questions that have come up through this series.

Discussion

PK revisits the contrast between the Pharisees and the world. The Pharisees took what God set as “righteous” and raised the bar from righteous to “religious” and imposed a critical spirit when others couldn’t perform to their bar. The world, on the other hand, would like to remove the bar and say that each person has the ability to define their own right and wrong. Jesus – however – sets the bar of truth for us, and through his love for us, lifts us over the bar when we allow him to work in us.

PK then opens up the floor to the big questions that have been asked throughout the series.

- **Sometimes even Christians can define the bar in different ways – how do we walk through that? (the example given is that some Christians choose to not drink at all, while others are okay with social drinking)**

All through Scripture, Jesus has instances where he is incredibly CLEAR about what is righteous. When Scripture is clear (ie: The Ten Commandments) – it is true for everyone. When Scripture is NOT clear, this is where Christians have to wrestle down their own lifestyle choices. Within the topic of drinking, the Bible sets the bar as not

drinking to the point of drunkenness – but does not define drinking itself as a sin. If drunkenness is the lowest bar set, then for specific people God can call you ABOVE the standard of righteousness (ie: for PK, he has chosen to not even drink socially) – but the bar never drops below the righteous standard that God has set out for everyone.

- **ASK IN YOUR GROUP: *What are other areas in life where you see Christians interpret the same topic differently? How can you navigate those differences and help each other understand where scripture IS clear? (Keep in mind PK's comment that assessing each other UP TO the bar is discernment, but anywhere ABOVE the bar is judgement)***

- **What is the true definition of discernment? What does that really mean for us as Christians?**
At its core, the ability to discern is the ability to separate a truth from a lie. Scripture tells us to ask for wisdom, and to lean into the voice of the Holy Spirit that God has given us.
In big part – discernment is leaning into the voice of wisdom and truth from the Holy Spirit in our life.

- **In marriage (or in any key relationship) – how do you reconcile differences that aren't necessarily "below the bar" issues – but are just clashes in personality or preference in how you manage conflict, parenting, finances, etc?**
 - Put healthy habits into your marriage that will pay dividends over time – keep an honest, healthy dialogue always open. (ie: set a weekly date night and stick by it)
 - Attend church together and invest in your growth as a couple
 - Practice putting yourself in the other person's shoes before starting with yourself – give them the benefit of the doubt and take a step back to discern what might actually be happening under the surface.
 - As you commit to individually grow closer to God – you also grow closer together. Bring your issues before God in prayer before you bring it to the other person.
 - Learn to slow down enough to LISTEN. Not to jump to conclusions – but to hear both sides of the story.

Wrap Up / Close

Think back to the story that the girl shared about her journey of being the “prodigal daughter” and having to turn from feeling judged by people around her to feeling convicted. **What would you say is the difference in judgment and conviction?**

How can we communicate LOVE and TRUTH to those around us as opposed to judgment?

If you have been the one that sat in the seat of needing to get “back on track” in life – how have you experienced the difference in genuine love and conviction as opposed to judgment?

Throughout the Week (Optional)

Take a real inventory of your own life in two areas:

1. If I am a follower of Christ, where have I excused myself to live below the bar where God has not? Where am I letting myself miss out on the best that God has for me – where do I need to AIM HIGHER?
2. When it comes to the world, where am I holding those around me to a “religious” standard that is condemning and judging and not loving?

Based on your answers to the two questions above – what are some practical changes you need to make in your life to truly begin to live out the principles of “Judge Not”?