

discussion guide for July 15th

Your "Critical" Problem

Mt. 7:1-5 (p. 1256-DSB*)

GRIND IT
BREW IT
DRINK IT
SAVOR IT



"Yes, I try to find **common ground** with everyone." 1 Corinthians 9:22b NLT

➤ **GRIND IT** (11:00 am)

Followers of Christ in our society are often portrayed as intolerant, narrow-minded, and judgmental. (Wasn't Jesus all about love? Isn't love full of acceptance, tolerance, and forbearance?) Here are two or three questions to get the ball rolling. Your group might want to choose just one as a starter:

- Is the representation of Christians in modern media usually fair and accurate, or unfair and skewed. Explain your answer.
- Is it possible to have firm beliefs in absolute truth, hold to biblical moral imperatives, and still love, accept, and connect with those who believe truth is relative and morality is purely personal? How?
- Can you differentiate between criticism and critique? Explain.

*"DSB"=Discovery Study Bibles on common ground tables.

➤ **BREW IT** (11:10 am)

In our culture, we are often judged for how non-judgmental we are! The truth is, we need to be more discerning and less judgmental. In Mt. 7:1-6 (p. 1256-DSB*), Jesus calls us to moral insight with real compassion. It's a tough balance.

1. Some of us need to work on our tendency to be critical
 - A. Our Need for Mercy Makes Criticism Dangerous
 - Read Mt. 7:1-2 (p. 1256-DSB*). The word translated "judge" is "krino" meaning "to habitually deliver a verdict, to condemn." Is this a dangerous habit? Why?
 - What level of mercy does any sinner receive when they accept the gift of forgiveness available in Christ? Should this moderate your condemnation of non-believers? How?
 - What level of mercy will you desire from God when your life as a Christian is measured? Does this moderate your condemnation of other believers? How?
 - B. Our Need for Improvement Makes Criticism Ridiculous
 - Read Mt. 7:3-5, (p. 1256 – DSB*). Where should we focus most of our critical attention?
 - Should we ignore the speck in another's eye and focus only on our own shortcomings? Why/Why not?
 - Why do you think Jesus used the exaggerated picture of a speck and a plank? (Think balance)
2. Some of us need to work on our reluctance to critique
 - Read Mt. 7:6, (p. 1256 – DSB*). Why did Jesus use dogs and swine as things to avoid in this passage? Would determination of who would qualify as "dogs and swine" require a level of discernment? Explain.
 - Read John 7:24, (p. 1404-DSB*) Does this verse indicate a need and a place for discerning critique? Explain.
 - Why is it difficult to balance between exercising judgment and being judgmental?

*"DSB"=Discovery Study Bibles on common ground tables.

C
O
M
M
O
N
G
R
O
U
N
D

➤ DRINK IT (11:40 am)

- Jesus never moderated truth, nor was He miserly with mercy. He exemplified absolute love and absolute justice in perfect balance. There are no planks or specks in His eye. Though a person's faults are clearly evident to Him, He never focuses on what a person is or has done, but rather on what a person can become.
- We don't need to embrace ungodliness to show mercy. Intolerance of sin is not a sin, but a virtue. Recognition of dogs and swine requires discernment, but habitual condemnation of others invites rigid self-condemnation.

Will you adopt the attitude of Paul in 1 Tim. 1:15-16
"Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners-- of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life."

Prayer Time: (11:45 am)

- Prayer needs of people outside the group.
-
- Prayer needs of members in the group.
-
- Pray for absentees by name. Consider giving _____ a call this afternoon.

Go Deeper: Use the "Savor" section in your daily quiet time. If you would prefer a daily e-mail, Sign up for "The Daily Cup" at herb@hbcaustin.org

C
O
M
M
O
N
G
R
O
U
N
D

➤ SAVOR IT (all week long)**

You examined the need to avoid being critical while being willing to critique. It is a delicate balance. These passages should reinforce this balance: Monday, July 16: Read Luke 17:3-5, (p. 1372-DSB*).

To follow the instructions of these verses, aren't both the ability to show mercy and the ability to judge or critique involved? What part does discernment play in forgiveness? What is the goal?

Tuesday, July 17: Read Galatians 6:1-5, (p. 1556-DSB*). What is the goal of removing a speck from someone's eye? What is the danger? Is ego a problem? What does the passage say about comparing ourselves to someone else?

Wednesday, July 18: Read Romans 8:1-2, (p. 1496-DSB*). What judgment have you been freed of? Who is no longer condemned? Who is condemned already? How can you help the condemned?

Thursday, July 19: Read 1 Corinthians 2:11-16, (p. 1513-DSB*). What qualifies any of us to make judgments about what is right and what is wrong? Why can't someone who does not have a personal relationship with Christ discern or judge accurately? What is the source of discernment?

Friday, July 20: Read Philippians 4:8, (p. 1572-DSB*). What is required to decide what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, or admirable? How can we know what is excellent or praiseworthy. Does the Bible teach us to critique the world around us?

**DSB*=Discovery Study Bibles on common ground tables.

**To subscribe to "The Daily Cup" email devotions, use the card on common ground tables, or e-mail herb@hbcaustin.org.