

NEW CITY DAILY DEVOTIONAL FOR WEEK OF 7/27/2020-7/31/2020

The following content is based on the message on 7/26/20 at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. It is not meant to be a full synopsis, but rather a resource to help you analyze and apply the main ideas. To use this devotional effectively, please listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

MONDAY // "JUDGE" NOT

Read Matthew 7:1-6. When Jesus is talking about judgment, He is saying that we should not analyze someone else's behavior in such a way that we condemn or avenge. The warning here for Christians is about condemning the behavior of others by passing a final judgment upon them. Oftentimes, we take Jesus' words to mean that we should not point out sin in the life of another brother or sister. However, that idea misses the fact that Jesus actually calls us to take the speck out of our brother or sister's eye. But how do we do that? Jesus gives us a model for how we should point out sin in someone else's life. What Jesus wants from us is that we examine our own hearts. When we approach a brother or sister, we should first ask ourselves a question like this: "From what spirit am I operating?"

Don't offer a word of correction without self-reflection.

- *How do you usually handle situations when you see sin in someone else's life? Do you avoid the issue? Do you attack?*
- *Reflect on a time when you pointed out sin in someone else's life, but didn't reflect on your own heart first. Why would self-reflection have been a better place to start?*

TUESDAY // STANDARDS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Read Matthew 18:15-20. Jesus wants us to analyze ourselves before we start looking at other people's lives. Jesus commands us not to judge. Yet at the same time, Jesus wants us to live in a community that keeps each other accountable. For the Christian, there is a standard of accountability. We should be using the same standard of measurement for others as we do in our own life. If we expect others to meet our standard, but we fail to meet it ourselves, then we are acting as a hypocrite. Time and time again, we fall short of our own standards. This is why Jesus came to earth to give us new standards — which are Jesus and his Word. They are higher than our own personal standards. Jesus met the standard on our behalf. We are free to live without condemnation.

Stop condemning yourself with a standard that will ultimately let you down.

- *Where do you know that you don't even live up to your own standard?*
- *Reflect on the ways that you condemn yourself. Set a timer for five minutes. Tell God how you condemn yourself, then sit in silence and allow Him to speak to you instead.*

WEDNESDAY // CONFRONTED WITH OUR SIN

We often think about the passages this week through the lens of correcting others. However, we also need to receive correction ourselves. We need to surround ourselves with people who are willing to tell us the truth. That means we need to be people who are safe enough for someone to "pull the speck out of our eye." Ask yourself: "Am I safe for people to correct?" What do you do when someone brings a loving correction to you? Read this example of King David hearing correction from the prophet Nathan. **Read 2 Samuel 12:1-15.** When confronted with his sin, David said, "I have sinned against the Lord."

When confronted with his own sin, David did not bite. He bowed.

- *When was the last time someone pointed out something in your life? How did you handle it? (Or, if no one has pointed anything out to you, then why isn't there anyone in your life who could say difficult things to you?)*
- *David had committed adultery and murdered a man. Clearly he was sinful. Yet, he humbled himself before God and before Nathan. In what area of your life is God calling you to humble yourself?*

THURSDAY // THE VALUE OF THE KINGDOM

Read Matthew 7:6 and Matthew 13:44-46. The kingdom of God is valuable. God wants to give us the good gifts of the kingdom. Jesus compares it to a hidden pearl. But not everyone receives that pearl. In our natural state of being, we will reject the pearl of the gospel. As a pig looks at a pearl, so the natural man looks at the kingdom of God. This means that we can't expect non-Christians to conform to Christian behavior. Too often, Christians try to keep the world accountable to our standards. Instead, we should seek to bring them into the kingdom.

The value of the kingdom has to become yours.

- *How do you expect those outside the kingdom to conform to kingdom standards?*
- *Instead, what could you do to help those outside the kingdom see the value of the kingdom?*

FRIDAY // JESUS IS THE ULTIMATE JUDGE

Read Romans 14:7-12. In this passage, Paul reminds us that everything we do is for the Lord. But this doesn't mean that anything we do is okay as long as we think about Jesus when we do it. We will face Jesus as judge. If you believe in Jesus, you have nothing to fear. Jesus paid for your sin. But maybe for you, it may feel difficult to see other people not living up to the standard of God. You may feel like people are getting off easy. But ultimately, even if we don't see justice in this life, God's character of justice will be seen.

Jesus will have the final say and every knee will bow to Him.

- *Reflect on some reasons why you can trust Jesus as the ultimate judge.*
- *In what specific area of life should the justice of God motivate you to seek justice?*