

Class Objective: To refine our faith and understanding by dismantling misconceptions regarding God, the Bible and the Christian life.

Class Overview

1. Introduce *Urban Legends of Theology* by Michael Wittmer

2. Clarify the meaning of the term urban legend as used in this class

3. Understand the degree of personal impact connected with various misconceptions

4. Elevate the pursuit of truth as the ultimate goal of analyzing error

5. Emphasize edification as the primary purpose of this study

6. Explore the following misconceptions in light of biblical truth:

a. Theology puts God in a box.

b. Doctrine divides. Love unites.

c. Jews, Christians and Muslims worship the same God.

d. Jesus is more loving and compassionate than the God of the Old Testament.

e. You shouldn't waste your life on temporal things.

f. My body is a temporary residence for my immortal soul.

g. All sin is the same before God.

h. You're not supposed to judge.

i. The safest place to be is in the center of God's will.

j. God won't give you more than you can handle.

k. Christianity is not a religion—it is a relationship.

l. I don't need church to have a relationship with God.

Part 1

Part 2
- Notes
- Review
- I. Urban legend #8: **You're not supposed to judge.**

A. This concept is derived from Jesus words in the sermon on the mount.

1. ¹Judge not, that you be not judged. ²For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. ³Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? ⁵You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. Matthew 7:1-5

B. Helpful books

1. On on the sermon on the mount:

a) *Christian Counter-Culture: The Message of the Sermon on the Mount* by John Stott

b) *The Sermon on the Mount* by D. A. Carson

2. On the misuse of Scripture:

a) *The Most Misused Verses in the Bible* by Eric J. Bargerhuff

C. How this text is misused?

1. It is misused generally to suggest that Jesus was forbidding any judging of anyone.

1 | Page

D. What this passage **cannot** mean:

- a) It cannot mean there should be no law courts, a view Tolstoy took.
 - (1) The text addresses the relationship between two believing individuals not between individuals and the civil government.
- b) It cannot mean that sin in the life of the believer should never be addressed.
 - (1) This approach is commonly used by people defensively to support the idea that no one has a right to judge them.
 - (a) This use of the Jesus' words is actually a reversal of the clear context of the passage. The person being addressed by Jesus' is the person doing the judging not being judged.
- c) It cannot mean that we are not to exercise critical judgment.
 - (1) In the larger context Jesus presupposes the necessity of making assessments (judgments) regarding others in order to obey his commandments.
 - (a) Matthew 7:6 requires that we make a judgment regarding those he categorizes as "dogs" and "pigs."
 - (i) Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you. Matthew 7:6
 - (b) Matthew 7:15-20 requires Jesus' disciples to discern between true and false prophets.
 - (i) ¹⁵Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰Thus you will recognize them by their fruits. Matthew 7:15-20
 - (2) Many other examples of commands requiring believers to use critical judgment are evident in the teaching of Jesus and his Apostles. See Gal. 1:9; 1 Cor. 5:1, 2; Heb. 3:13; Rev. 2:2, 6, 14-16, 20-23

E. What does Matthew 7:1-5 **mean**?

- 1. It is addressed to Jesus' disciples (5:1) regarding their interpersonal relationships.
- 2. Its meaning is evident in the analogy of the speck and log (7:3-5).
- 3. It endorses the practice of one believer helping another believer overcome sin in their life.
 - a) You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. Matthew 7:5
 - (1) This is consistent with other New Testament teaching.

(a) ¹²Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. ¹³But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Hebrews 3:12, 13

(b) Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Colossians 3:16

4. It prescribes a protocol (procedure) for addressing the sins of others.

a) The proper protocol for addressing the sins of others begins with self-examination and repentance.

(1) ³Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? ⁵You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and **then** you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. Matthew 7:1-5

(2) We have a fatal tendency to exaggerate the faults of others and minimize the gravity of our own. We seem to find it impossible, when comparing ourselves with others, to be strictly objective and impartial. On the contrary, we have a rosy view of ourselves and a jaundiced view of others. Indeed, what we are often doing is seeing our own faults in others and judging them vicariously. That way we experience the pleasure of self-righteousness without the pain of penitence.” *Christian Counter-Culture*, John Stott

5. It forbids a spirit of censoriousness.

a) Jon Bloom notes, “Actually, when Jesus says, “Judge not,” he’s not really issuing a prohibition on judging others; he’s issuing a serious warning to take great care how we judge others.”

b) “What our Lord means to condemn is a . . . fault-finding spirit. A readiness to blame others for trifling offenses, or matters of indifference; a habit of passing rash and hasty judgments; a disposition to magnify the errors and infirmities of our neighbors, and make the worst of them.” J. C. Ryle

c) “Censoriousness is a Pharisaic vice, that of exalting ourselves by disparaging others, a very cheap way of attaining moral superiority.” A. B. Bruce

d) “Censoriousness is a compound sin consisting of several unpleasant ingredients. It does not mean to assess people critically, but to judge them harshly. The censorious critic is a fault-finder who is negative and destructive towards other people and enjoy actively seeking out their failings. He puts the worst possible construction on their motives, pours cold water on their schemes and is ungenerous towards their mistakes. Worse than that, to be censorious is to set oneself up as a censor, and so to claim the competence and authority to sit in judgment upon one’s fellow men. . . . No human being is qualified to be the judge of his fellow humans, for we cannot read each other’s hearts or assess each other’s motives. To be censorious is to presume arrogantly to anticipate the day of judgment, to usurp the prerogative of the divine Judge, in fact to try to play God.” *Christian Counter-Culture*, John Stott

6. It contains a warning regarding the judgment of God.
- a) ¹Judge not, that you be not judged. ²For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. Matthew 7:1, 2
- (1) We are to address the sin of others knowing that we also stand before God the righteous judge.
- (a) For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. 2 Corinthians 5:10
- (2) ¹⁰ Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; ¹¹ for it is written,
 “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,
 and every tongue shall confess to God.”
¹² So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.
¹³ Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.
 Romans 14:10-13
- F. The New Testament instruction for helping others overcome sin requires other virtues as well.
1. And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, **be patient with them all**. 1 Thessalonians 5:14
2. Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Galatians 6:1
- a) “Correct him but not as a foe, nor as an adversary exacting a penalty, but as a physician providing medicines.” Chrysostom (Fourth century church leader)
- b) Jon Bloom gives four suggestions for addressing sin in others:
- (1) Be quick to believe innocence.
- (2) Be thorough before pronouncing guilt.
- (3) Aim for restoration.
- (a) “Our goal is not punitive, but redemptive. We must vigilantly remain “kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave [us]” (Ephesians 4:32). Even if the guilty person is unrepentant and fellowship must be severed, the purpose remains redemptive for the offender (1 Corinthians 5:5) and for the church (1 Corinthians 5:6).”
- (b) If a spirit of restoration is absent, it is almost certain we are in violation of Jesus’ instruction in Matthew 7.
- (4) Keep quiet.