



DATE	May 22, 2016
SPEAKER	David Smith
TITLE	Judge Not
SERIES	The Bible is full of wisdom, and many of us have favorite verses. But many of the sayings hanging on our walls and wrapped around our coffee cups are taken out of context. They may inspire or encourage us, but their meaning is distorted. Let's clarify some of the most misused verses in the Bible.

“Do not judge, or you too will be judged.” Matthew 7:1 (NIV)

Warm-up Questions (pick one):

1. If our contemporary society has a favorite Bible verse, Matthew 7:1 is probably it. Even people who otherwise may know little that the Bible says are found quoting this verse to justify tolerance about something. How would you respond to someone who says that Jesus told us to be tolerant? How would you try to show someone that the Bible does not say we should never judge?
2. Share a time you were guilty of judging someone else superficially, or maybe you were judged superficially by someone.
3. Psalm 23:1 (KJV) says, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." Someone said that as a child she couldn't understand why we were supposed to love God but not want him as our shepherd. Can you think of any other scripture verse that is frequently distorted?
4. Pastor David said you should not look at the Bible through the lens of your experience, but look at your life through the lens of scripture. If you were to explain these two concepts to a non-believer, how would you go about doing so? Can you think of examples that differentiate the two?

Into the Bible:

5. Pastor David said that if we read only Matthew 7:1, we may get the wrong message. However, if we read on through a more complete picture emerges. He called this “zooming out” to discover the context surrounding a verse. How do the next verses (Matthew 7:2-6) clarify what Jesus meant in verse 1?
6. For even more context, refer to these passages: Luke 6:37, John 7:24, Romans 2:1-3 and James 4:11-12. What do these add to our understanding about judging others?
7. Pastor David explained that the word for “judge” in Matthew 7:1 means to decide, to call into question, to determine a standard. How could these definitions help you think through the idea of tolerance that represents so much of today’s worldview?
8. Pastor David said that Matthew 6 & 7 repeatedly warns against hypocrisy. He added that hypocrisy is different from being a sinner. How do you define hypocrisy?
9. Can you think of other occasions where Jesus spoke on hypocrisy? (See Matthew 23.) Why do you think he was so harsh in how he addressed it?
10. Matthew 18:21-35 tells a story of a king who forgives his servant's large debt, but the servant later fails to forgive a much smaller debt. What makes it hard sometime to give grace to others?
11. Pastor David said, “You can’t hold someone to a standard that isn’t theirs.” He referenced 1 Corinthians 5:12, where Paul says to not judge those outside the church for not living up to God’s standards. Do you completely agree with this or is there an amendment you would like to add? Do

you think it is productive to promote Christian values in the public square? (For example, should the church speak to the debate over same-sex marriage, or the debate about transgender and public restrooms?) Why or why not?

12. 1 Corinthians 5:12 says to not judge those who are NOT part of the church, what does the context of 1 Corinthians 5:10-13 say about dealing with people who are in the church? (See also Matt. 18:15-17.)

Application:

13. This series is designed to encourage us to spend time reading the Bible. How has this sermon encouraged you to spend more time in the Bible? What one thing can you do differently this week?
14. Hypocrisy is when we focus on the sins of others but fail to examine our own life for sinful actions or attitudes. How seriously should we take this issue of hypocrisy? Discuss some ways to do healthy self-examination.
15. Share some of ideas for studying Scripture on your own. What do you do to put the verse in context, how do you find other relevant passages to help you interpret a difficult verse, how do you apply what you have learned, etc.? Do you journal?