

Overcoming a Critical & Judgmental Spirit

Small Group Discussion Questions

Join our congregation for worship in-person or online at 10:30 am each Sunday via our [Grantham Church YouTube Channel](#). If you ever miss a message, the sermons are always posted to the [recent sermons page](#) at our website and at the [Grantham Church Podcast](#) the following day, along with the sermon slides and small group discussion questions under Worship Resources. Thank you for staying connected with us!

Sunday, February 4th, 2024



Sermon Title: Overcoming a Critical and Judgmental Spirit

Scripture Reading: Matthew 7:1-5; 1 Corinthians 4:3-5; James 4:11-12

Sermon Focus: It's not just our upbringing and experiences that make us critical and judgmental of others. The inclination to accuse and assume the worst about others, and to judge them in your heart, is rooted in our fallen human nature. So, as disciples of Jesus, we're called to resist those evil impulses and choose love over judgment. Because you can't love people and judge them at the same time. In today's message, Pastor David shares how we can overcome a critical and judgmental spirit with love.

Thank you for going deeper in conversation with your small group. Use the following questions to help *guide* your small group discussion:

1. Read Matthew 7:1-5. Notice, this admonition has a humility that says, "I love you enough to want to help you, and tomorrow you will need to correct me." There is no sense of superiority, no desire to make yourself look good at the expense of another. Jesus clearly wants our hearts (and our lives) to be in the right place when we try to help others, lest we act as judge over them. How have you personally applied this to your life? How do you know when you are helping and not judging someone? What does "judging" someone look like in our day-to-day lives? Give specific examples of what it looks like to be judgmental.
2. Pastor David pointed out that there is a difference in "judging" people and discerning good vs. evil, or good fruit vs. bad fruit. We're called to discern, but we're not called to be the judge over people. To be clear, these words of Jesus are quite radical, in his day and in our own. We are being called to let God be the judge of people. Our job is simply to love our neighbors and our enemies. Why do you think we struggle to love like this and let God be the judge?
3. Read 1 Timothy 1:15. The Apostle Paul saw himself as the worst of sinners, and he encourages us to do the same. Some folks today might accuse Paul of promoting self-loathing or self-hatred. But for Paul, this is the place to begin when following Jesus. Why does the New Testament emphasize the need for us to see ourselves as sinners? What good comes from Paul's perspective?
4. Pastor David shared the following as steps to overcoming a critical and judgmental spirit. Talk about each step with your group. What does this look like in your own life? How have you seen these work? Where can you grow?
 1. **Get in touch with your own sinfulness and belovedness.**
Regularly confess your sins and receive God's grace and forgiveness.
 2. **Get in tune with God's heart for your neighbors and enemies.**
Pray for the one you're upset with, critical of, and judging in your heart.
 3. **Get going with discernment, but leave judgment with God.**
Take your thoughts captive; separate things, not people; and trust the Lord.
5. As you reflect on the Scriptures and the sermon, how is God inviting you to choose love over judgment? Are you a critical person? Do you struggle with being critical or judgmental of someone in your life? Be honest and share where you're at with your group. Finally, close in prayer for each other.