

YOU+ | Week 9 - Follow the Golden Rule**Message Big Idea**

Disciples of Jesus treat others the way they want to be treated.

Scripture

Matthew 7:1-12

Opening Questions

1. How have you been able to B.L.E.S.S. someone this week?
2. When you are home alone, do you need the stereo, radio, or TV turned on? Or do you prefer the quiet? Explain.
3. There are two ways to understand Jesus' statement about "not judging." It can mean discerning between things, as in, 'I judged the red car to be in better condition than the blue one.' Jesus isn't telling us we should never practice discernment. What Jesus is addressing in his words about planks and specks is the second meaning of the word 'judge,' which is to sit in a place of superiority to condemn. He's talking about our tendency to observe the actions of others and make judgments about them while often ignoring our shortcomings.

Bible Discussion

4. Read Matthew 7:1-6. Look at verses 3-5. Imagine someone with a 2x4 sticking out of their eye trying to pinpoint a speck of sawdust in someone else's eye. What does someone need to do to get a plank out of their own eye?
5. Look at verse 6. The point here isn't that some people are dogs or pigs; the point is that those animals can't eat pearls. Giving our pearls of advice can be another way of judging, condemning, or controlling others. Dallas Willard put it this way, "What a picture this is of our efforts to correct and control others by pouring our good things, often truly precious things, upon them—things that they nevertheless simply cannot ingest and use to nourish themselves. Often we do not even listen to them. We 'know' without listening. Jesus saw it going on around him all the time, as we do today. And the outcome is usually exactly the same as with the pig and the dog. Our good intentions make little difference. The needy person will finally become angry and attack us. The point is not the waste of the 'pearl' but that the person given the pearl is not helped." What do you think of Willard's thoughts on this verse? Where have you seen this relational dynamic?
6. Read Matthew 7:7-12. The way of the Kingdom is to ask, seek, and knock. Rather than condemning and controlling others, we ask, seek, and knock to understand and engage with someone we love who might need our help. We can understand Jesus' words to apply to our relationships with each other. He also means for us to see them in our relationship with God. When we relate to others and God with an attitude of seeking and asking, we form a community of prayerful love. How does "asking" help us connect to others when we seek to help them? (For more info, see the Leader's Guide)

Life Application

7. Henri Nouwen said, "What makes the temptation of power so seemingly irresistible? Maybe it is that power offers an easy substitute for the hard task of love. It seems easier to be God than to love God, easier to control people than to love people, easier to own life than to love life." How have you experienced the above reality in your relationships?
8. As we reflect on these three sections of teaching from Jesus (plank, pearls, asking). Which one is most relevant to you? How is it challenging you?
9. How can you/we be a community of prayerful love? How can we be helpful to one another in that effort?