

## Relationships

### Scripture and Background Information for Matthew 7:1-5.

To prepare for your group discussion each week, group members should use the **Community Group Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD'S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scripture below.

This week we'll be looking at **Matthew 7: 1-5**. Matthew writes his account about Jesus' life, focusing on Christ as the fulfillment of Old Testament promises of "God with men." To show Christ as the fulfillment of Old Testament promises, Matthew describes Jesus as the superior teacher. Our text today is the closing of Jesus' first teaching section.

#### Background for Matthew 7:1-5

In Matthew 5-7, we find the sermon on the mount, Jesus' first prominent teaching session. In the sermon on the mount, Jesus speaks about the kingdom of God and the members of that kingdom. Jesus speaks about the people of the kingdom of God and their new way of life. The descriptions Jesus gives are so contrary to human nature that it becomes evident that the members of the kingdom are a new type of people, driven by the king of the kingdom. Through repentance and following Jesus, everyone is invited to become a member of the kingdom (7:24-27).

The majority of the sermon of the mount deals with internal, unseen actions of the members of God's kingdom. In Matthew 5-6, Jesus speaks about giving, worrying, fasting, prayer, hate, lust, and other things. Now, in Matthew 7:1-5, Jesus transitions to a seeable outward action of how kingdom-citizen ought to act toward other people. The funny picture of verses 3-5 dramatizes Jesus' concern with how we treat other people.

- Why does Jesus transition to seeable outer actions toward other people? What do the previous internal treatments have to do with outer actions? Is there a correlation between those two?
- When reading verses 15-20, does Jesus contradict himself when speaking of evaluating other people's fruits? What does "not judging" imply when evaluating is recommended? Think hate/love relationship (Love the... hate the...)! Can we love people, if we see one of their weak points, or if we disagree with them?

*Note: "Do not judge so that you will not be judged" is not an immoral free card to silence everyone opposing my actions. Although Jesus transitions in 7:1-5 to outer actions toward others, He still includes deep personal convictions. We ought not to judge hypocritically and do not hate people because of one weak point we found in them! We honestly discern behavior but love people, knowing our weakness!*