

Firm Foundations

Following the way of Jesus

Do Not Judge

Date: Sunday 15th August
Key Verses: Matthew 7:1-6

Speaker: Abbi Wells

Talk Summary:

In our society to are frequently judging others, whether it's people's lives on social media, our leaders in government or people's life choices, like their choice of partner, education or employment.

Jesus warns us against the kind of judgement where we condemn others and think we know better. He warns us against this for three reasons:

1. When we judge like this it means we're trying to play God

Our own sin and mess is like a plank in our eye, it stops us from seeing and judging clearly. Only God can see and judge well. When we judge others we're trying to be like God and decide of our accord what's right and wrong. We don't have a right to do this.

2. It puts a wedge between us and others

When we judge others, we don't know all the facts. Instead, we fill in the blanks ourselves and define someone solely by that "wrong" action and condemn for it. We forget that the person is of infinite value to God. We can't have life giving and supportive friendships in this kind of environment, instead it creates an environment of shame and fear where we aren't willing to be honest and vulnerable with each other.

3. We miss out on grace filled relationships.

We need to model God's approach to us. His approach is full of grace and gentleness. What if in our relationships, instead of being quick to judge we were as quick to show grace?

Grace filled relationships means we are able to do approach one another about our "speck", our sin and mess. Before we approach one another:

- **We bring our sin before God** – we bring our plank of sin before God and receive his grace. This changes our attitude towards another person's speck.

- **We come humbly** – we don't know all the facts and we sin and need grace too.
- **We act gracefully** – we are on the same level, there's no superiority or judgement, we're all supporting one another to grow together.

We can cultivate this environment of grace over judgement by:

- Listening well – don't offer an opinion, just listen.
- Practicing empathy – how would you feel in their situation?
- Speaking encouragement and blessing – remind them who they are. Then pray for them as a reminder to you that this person is loved and valued by God.

Worship

Worship is not just singing, it is thanking God for who he is and what he has done and is lived out through a life of trusting obedience. Discussing this together is an act of worship.

(Small group worship resources can be found at bvc.so/sgworship)

- What are you thankful for this week?
- Where has God been at work in your life?
- When have you taken risks in faith and obedience this week?

If you have a time of singing you can skip the above questions but please do ask this question each week:

- What has God been speaking to you about this week? *(Go around the group quickly don't spend a long time on it)*

Discussion Questions (choose some which are most relevant to your group)

- Is there a time when you have been wrongly judged or have wrongly judged others?
- Do you fear other people's judgement and how has this effected your life and your decisions?
- Do you think the picture of grace filled relationships is possible? Where and how in our life could you cultivate a habit, and an environment of grace over judgement? In your family? At work? In your small group?

Witness

We want to be investing in authentic relationships with those who don't know Jesus yet and inviting them to anything where they might meet other Christians and Jesus. Pick one of the below each week:

- How would you share what you have learned with a non-church friend?
- What church events coming up would your friends appreciate an invite to?