Lesson 7: Motes & Beams

“The church is a family. When we are family, we belong to one another. As a church family we are equally responsible and accountable to one another. Effective discipline takes place in the context of these relationships.”

“Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.”
(Proverbs 27:6, NASB95)

**Focal Passages**

Matthew 7:1-5

Matthew 7:3–5 (NASB95) “Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? “Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ and behold, the log is in your own eye? “You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.”

Leviticus 19:17 (NASB95) “You shall not hate your fellow countryman in your heart; you may surely reprove your neighbor, but shall not incur sin because of him.”

Galatians 6:1 (NASB95) “Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.”

Hebrews 10:24–25 (NASB95) “and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”

(Read 2 Samuel 12 where Nathan confronts David.)

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Definitions

Speck - A small discoloration or spot esp. from stain or decay; a very small amount (Webster’s)

Plank - A heavy thick board; esp. one 2 to 4 inches thick and at least 8 inches wide (Webster’s)

Plank - dokós; A beam or rafter used in building, a joist (Matt. 7:3–5; Luke 6:41, 42; Sept.: Gen. 19:8). ²

Speck - kárphos; Anything that is dry and light, such as straw, stubble, chaff, a little splinter of wood, a mote (Matt. 7:3–5; Luke 6:41, 42) as opposed to dokós, beam. ³

“A mote means in the Greek a little splinter, whereas a beam means a rafter. ” (Roy Hession, “The Calvary Road”)

Discussion

Jesus made a statement that may be one of the most misquoted sentences you will find, “do not judge.” In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus condemns a critical spirit, which judges others from manmade, misguided standards. However, he does encourage us to be discerning and judicious. Literally, “to judge” means to separate, to choose, pronounce judgment, and in this context it means to assume the office of the judge. Jesus does not remove the responsibility we have to be wise and discerning, but He does challenge the hypocritical self-righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. In order to understand the challenge in Matthew 7:1–5, we must keep within the context of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus is comparing and contrasting the self-righteous hypocritical religious leaders of His day with true followers of God. Throughout the Sermon on the Mount, we hear frequently about God’s family. God is our Father; fellow believers are our brothers and sisters. The Sermon on the Mount teaches us God’s standards for kingdom living, especially in relationship with God’s family. Belonging to a spiritual family includes mutual accountability.

The Calvary road is not one traveled in isolation, but in community. In community, we have the responsibility to care enough to confront. Roy Hession explains it as follows:

“it seems clear that the real point of the well-known passage in Matthew 7: 3-5 about the beam and the mote is not the forbidding of our trying to remove the fault in the other person, but rather the reverse. It is the injunction that at all costs

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we should do this service for one another. True, its first emphasis seems to be a condemnation of censoriousness, but when the censoriousness in us is removed, the passage ends by saying, "Then shalt thou see clearly to cast the mote out of thy brother's eye." According to the New Testament, we are meant to care so much for the other man, that we are willing to do all we can to remove from his eye the mote which is marring his vision and hindering his blessing. "

When we neglect a confrontation, we may be actually contributing to our brother’s downfall. We may actually be causing serious injury to the other person and also the church. In “Calvary Road”, Hession stresses the importance of mutual accountability in the body of Christ. Notice the process:

1. Recognize your own sin.
2. Repent of your sin.
3. Restore the sinful brother or sister in Christ by caring enough to confront.

“When God is leading us to challenge another, let not fear hold us back. Let us not argue or press our point. Let us just say what God has told us to and leave it there. It is God's work, not ours, to cause the other to see it. It takes time to be willing to bend the proud stiff-necked I. When we in turn are challenged, let us not defend ourselves and explain ourselves. Let us take it in silence, thanking the other; and then go to God about it and ask Him. If he was right, let us be humble enough to go and tell him, and praise God together.”

Remember, according to Hession, our biggest “beam” may be the self-righteous, hyper-spiritual attitude we have toward a brother or sister who has sinned.

**Spiritual Truths and Thoughts**

Mutual accountability requires a humble and teachable spirit among fellow believers.

Mutual accountability is motivated by love one for another and the glory of God.

Mutual accountability is focused on redemption and restoration.

**Repentance and Discernment Prayer**

“Dear Jesus, please give me a teachable and humble spirit. I ask that I will not have a critical and hyper-spiritual attitude toward others. Please give me the courage to lovingly approach fellow believers when sin becomes apparent in their lives. Oh God, help me to be willing to examine myself first and to approach an erring believer with a heart motive for redemption and restoration.”

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5 Excerpt From: Revel Hession. “The Calvary Road.”