

Take This Step Before You Judge

“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you” (Matt. 7:1-2, NIV).

We see this theme repeated time and again in God’s Word: We cannot judge truth until we know and apply truth. Therefore, when we encounter truth, our purpose is not to judge others but to judge ourselves.

So often it is easy to listen to a sermon and apply it to someone sitting next to us, or to read a book with someone else in mind. I have done it. I’ll read a book and think, *“This is great! Boy, I know some people who really need to read this!”* My mind begins to race as I scheme how I’ll get each person a copy of the book or how I’ll find a way to read passages of it aloud to them.

Now, that’s all right if I just want to share something that has *already* helped me. The only problem is I usually skip the “helped me” step and leap right into the process of helping or changing others. I become so busy learning for others that I fail to apply truth to my own life. Can you relate?

It is all right to help another when our eyes are clear. Jesus said to first remove the plank from our own eye, then take care of the speck in our brother’s eye (see Matt. 7:3–5). When the planks in our own eyes are removed, we will be able to see clearly again, and our motives will be pure.

Take some time to think of anyone you feel a pressure to change. Think about those you have passed judgment on. Let your mind travel as far as national leaders, circle back to pastors and local leaders, and then come as close as your own home. Are you ready to submit this judgmental outlook to God

so that you can walk in His mercy? When you have searched your heart, let's join together in prayer.

Father, Your Word is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our paths. It is so important that we see that light. We repent of any tendency to judge others. Father, remove the measure of judgment against us as we show mercy to others. Portion Your mercy to us as we now extend it to others.

Open our eyes and remove the planks that obstruct our vision. We know it is Your truth that makes us free. We realize that the discomfort we have experienced is because we felt it was our responsibility to change or judge our brothers and sisters. Father, You alone know the secrets of our hearts, and we release them into Your care. Amen.

*Adapted from The True Measure of a Woman: Discover Your Intrinsic Value and See Yourself as God Does (Charisma House) by **Lisa Bevere**.*