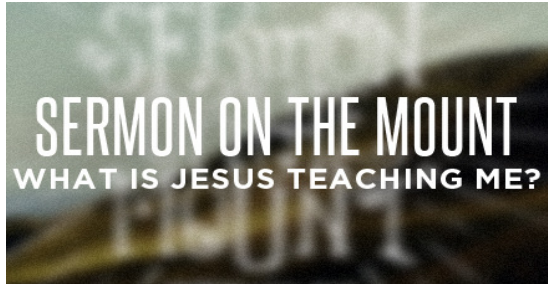


# Lessons for Life



## Week 8

These weekly studies are loosely based on the previous Sunday's sermon. If you missed it, you will find a recording on our website ([www.knaphillbaptist.org.uk](http://www.knaphillbaptist.org.uk)). They are designed for both Home Group discussion and/or personal reflection. Don't necessarily try to cover all the questions and discussion topics in your group at one sitting. You may like to think about them later in your own time.

### THE ATTITUDE CHALLENGE



#### Read Matthew 7:1-6

This is the eighth in our series of studies based on the Sermon on the Mount, (Matthew 5-7) entitled *Lessons for Life*. These chapters contain various sayings of Jesus that together form a coherent body of teaching. If we are to be true and authentic followers of Jesus we need to model our lives on what Jesus says here and allow it to shape, inform and define our identity. God does not look at our outward appearance (1 Samuel 16:7), he is more interested in our hearts i.e. what goes on with us on the inside. In this passage, Jesus challenges our attitudes to other people, to ourselves and to the Gospel in the way we make judgements.

### Questions and pointers for discussion/reflection

1. At the recent SEBA conference reference was made to a distinction between being merely admirers of Jesus and true disciples? Is this a valid distinction and what is the difference?
2. The teaching of the Sermon on the Mount is so challenging precisely because it confronts and undermines our attitudes, our thoughts and well-worn behaviour patterns (see Hebrews 4:12). So often the message is simple, yet profound and challenging to our attitudes because it runs contrary to our natural instincts and inclinations and to our human nature. Read Isaiah 55:8,9; Jeremiah 17:9,10 and Romans 8:1-11. What have you found the most challenging so far and why?
3. In verses 1 and 2, 'judge' here means 'condemn, pass a strong opinion on' and it smacks of being hyper-critical. Jesus is not speaking about discerning, weighing things up or making informed judgments (see 1 Thessalonians 5:21, Psalm 119:66). If he were then verse 5 could not be made operational. See also Matthew 18:23-35; Romans 2:1-5; James 4:11,12.
4. Why does Jesus advise us not to judge others? If we do, what will happen to us? Is he only speaking of harsh, critical condemnation of others or is he also referring to ordinary gossip or any kind of behaviour motivated by unloving or unkind attitudes? What is the antidote to this?
5. Discuss what is the difference between being judgmental and making necessary and legitimate assessments of, for example, whether or not an individual is a genuine Christian, or whether or not a particular Christian's lifestyle is unbecoming for a believer (which we may have to do sometime as Church). On what basis or principles should we make this distinction, if you think it is a legitimate distinction? Why is judgmentalism wrong for us, and for those against whom such attitudes are directed? In what ways do we customarily try to justify our judgmentalism?
6. Scripture tells us that one day we will all be judged by God (see Hebrews 9:27 and Romans 14:10). How does this make you feel?
7. Jesus states clearly in verse 2 that in the same way we judge others so we will be judged. What difference should this make to how we live, what choices we make and how we deal with people?

Read Psalm 139:23,24, Lamentations 3:40 and Galatians 6:3,4 and take time to let God examine your heart.