

INTRODUCTION

Briefly review last 2 wks.: major barriers to love relationships

But even if don't exist/have overcome them, if you begin to build close relationship w/ someone (marriage or friend), you soon discover how fallen he/she really is:

- a. idiosyncrasies will annoy you; bad habits & sin problems will frustrate you
- b. he/she will disappoint you; what he/she says & does will sometimes embarrass you
- >> how we respond to these offences is just as crucial as how we deal w/ the barriers; unresolved, these pile up & kill relationships just as effectively as barriers prevent them
- >> Matt. 7:1-5 identifies the wrong response & explains the right response; if we learn to practice the contents of this passage, we will build strong, solid relationships

ONE RESPONSE (read vs 1,2): "judging"

Does not mean evaluating morality of the other person's actions (vs. 5)

Rather, means the attitude which writes off/condemns the person because of their offence; instead of separating the person from the offence, using the offence as an excuse to write him off, despise him, etc.

- a. manifested by anger, resentment, alienation, indignation, etc.
- b. this is our instinctive response - comes totally naturally
- c. we all do this a lot, just camouflage it; "I'm not judging him:
 - "...I don't don't understand how he can keep doing that!!"
 - "...I just give - she doesn't want to change."
 - "...it's what he does that makes me sick!"

Result: reciprocity ("...lest you be judged...it will be measured to you")

- a. may mean God's judgement (SDM to works-approach Jews); but may also mean human reciprocity as a maxim (true regardless of interp.)
- b. we know the cycle all too well: offence > judgement > defensiveness/hostility > offence > judgement > etc...
 - eventually erodes trust, respect, gratitude, love...& the relationship breaks apart or settles into parallel lives

RIGHT RESPONSE (vs 3 & 5): consists of 3 steps in proper order

(read vs 3): Instead of focusing your attention on the other person's sin, focus on your own sin! (PICTURE: "Agh! Look at that speck hanging out of his eye! I can't believe he lets it stay there! It totally grosses me out!" ...while you have a 2 x 4 in yours!!!)

>> what's the log??

a. judging the person (1st & foremost): KNOCKING BEV OUT ; Matt 5:22

b. especially when:

- I helped precipitate what he did (Cheryl W.)

- I tolerate similar kinds of sins in my own life (FAT FUNDY)

~~✗~~ I do the exact same thing!! (BETH Mc. neglecting family members)

>> truly, this is "hypocrisy" - imposing on others a standard I refuse to live by; we want others to deal w/ us under grace, but reserve the right to deal w/ them under law

>> therefore, the 1st step is always to focus on my own sin ("God, where have I wronged him/her?"); the LDC vs SPECK refers not only to the magnitude of my sin vs theirs, but also the priority in dealing w/ mine before theirs

(read vs 4, 5a): Instead of correcting the other person's sin first, correct your own first! (PICTURE: eye-doctor trying to extract splinter, but can't see clearly or get at it because of the 2 x 4)

>> is Jesus calling for sinless perfection? No!

a. acknowledge & repent of the above before God - *attitude*

b. acknowledge & apologize to the other person for the above

- "But he started it!" - always seems that way to both people; irrelevant; someone has to break the reciprocity chain first (EARLY MARRIAGE)

*go to parents
to ask for
forgiveness*

- "But he'll only use the apology to justify his own sin!" - that's his problem; step #3 is coming; usually untrue (reciprocity principle starts operating in reverse)

~~✗~~ God will make us decide: do we want to be right/come out on top - or do we want the relationship??

(you vs 5b): Now remove your brother's speck.

- a. now my attitude has changed from using the speck as an excuse to judge him to wanting to remove it to help him
- b. we may often find at this point that the "speck" either doesn't exist (I was just in the flesh & misinterpreted what he said/did) or so small that forbearance is needed instead of confrontation (young Xian smoking; minor habit which bugs me more than hindering his growth at this point) *Judging the motives*
- c. but usually, there is a speck which needs removed - how do I do it?
 - like an eye-surgeon removing a splinter - w/ care, sensitivity, & patience
- d. guidelines on "speck removal":
 - deal w/ concrete, specific issues & attitudes: not vague (won't know what you're talking about); don't judge motives (ask)
 - appeal to scripture: both under God's authority (not him under you); remember the power of the Word to convict (II Tim 3:16)
 - express empathy (Gal 6:1): verbalize legitimate understanding; identify w/ from your own life
 - if resistance, give him time: even though this is immature, insisting on admission now needlessly causes defensiveness; ask him to read the passage, think & pray about the issue - & you'll get back w/ him on it soon
 - be constructive: must have asked yourself "How can I help?"; have a plan that will help overcome the problem & replace it w/ biblical action & attitude; unless we're willing to do this, we're part of the problem, not part of the solution!

CONCLUSION - sound difficult??

Not to understand - this is exactly the way we want others to treat us (see vs 12; "therefore" sums up vs 1-11).

But impossible to do by our own power.

This is why Jesus says what He says in vs 7-11 (read). Often misinterpreted to be a "carte-blanc" promise (CADILLAC)

- a. in context, "it" & "what is good" is the ability to love others properly
 - humility to acknowledge own log; forgive their speck
 - wisdom to know how to help them
 - courage to do it
- b. the key to effectively loving others is having a personal ("father") & ongoing ("keep on asking...") relationship w/ God (GOSPEL)