

JESUS^{AT THE} CENTER OF THE KINGDOM

GROUP GUIDE

This guide is designed to help you study the Scriptures and deepen your relationship with God. Use this guide by yourself or with others.

To find a group, visit brookwoodchurch.org/groups.

Message Title: *Judgment*

June 28, 2026

CONNECT

If new people have joined your group, take time to introduce yourselves to each other.

1. What's something you've changed your mind about in the last few years?
2. What's something you've been learning about yourself lately?

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

This is the third part in a message series titled *Jesus at the Center of the Kingdom*, which covers the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5-7. In the summer of 2024, we looked at Matthew 5. In the summer of 2025, we studied Matthew 6. We're concluding the series this summer, studying Matthew 7.

Matthew 5-7 is most commonly referred to as *The Sermon on the Mount* because Jesus gave this powerful teaching from a mountainside (*Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain...* Matthew 5:1a ESV). The name simply points to where it happened, but the message is much more than a location. It's an invitation to another way of life. It's a call to a life of humility that restores and strengthens relationships, to a life of prayer that draws us closer to God, and into a relationship with God that realigns us with His purpose for our lives. It provides us a way to know what is true and who we can really trust. It's a call to build our lives on the foundation of Jesus so we can stand firm when the storms of life come crashing in. Ultimately, *The Sermon on the Mount* is Jesus' announcement of what His kingdom is like and what kind of people His grace is forming us to become. *May we be these kind of people.*

PRAY

Take a few minutes to quiet your heart and release the cares of the day. Take a couple of deep breaths and allow any tightness you feel in your neck and shoulders to relax. Then pray together, asking God to meet each of you right where you are. Ask Him to show you more of His beauty, His truth and His direction. Invite others to voice their prayers as they feel led.

GROUP TIPS

- If your group has eight or more people, it might be helpful to break into circles of four or five for greater participation and deeper discussion. When you come back together, invite each group to share a few takeaways from their conversation.
- Don't worry if you don't get to all the questions. Spend time reading and really thinking about what the Bible is saying and what God is revealing to you personally.

STUDY AND DISCUSSION

Matthew 7:1-6 (ESV)

¹“Judge not, that you be not judged. ²For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. ³Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your

own eye? ⁵You 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.

⁶“Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.”

1. What imagery does Jesus use in this passage? Why do you think He chose those?
2. Why might unexamined sin make us poor judges of others?
3. What tone do you hear in Jesus' words: warning, invitation, rebuke, mercy, wisdom or something else? Explain.
4. How do we hold together Jesus' warning against judgment and His call for us to challenge each other? For further insight, see Proverbs 27:5-6, Luke 17:3 and Galatians 6:1.
5. What does a healthy, humble conversation about sin or weakness look like? Do you have an example?
6. Are you more likely to avoid addressing problems altogether, or to address them too quickly and harshly? Share an example.
7. What does verse 6 mean, and how is that connected to judgment and repentance?
8. When you feel judgmental or critical, which of these might be the most common cause: control, superiority, safety, being right, avoiding shame?
9. Jesus doesn't say there is no speck in the other person's eye. Why is that important?

10. What does the image of an eye suggest about vulnerability, tenderness, perception and trust? And how is this related to the command to not judge?
11. How might Jesus be protecting both the person with the speck and the person with the log?
12. What does it feel like to be judged? What does it feel like to be gently helped?
13. How might this passage change the way you talk about people in private?
14. Who in your life helps you see your own blind spots without shaming you?
15. These passages are directly related to being judgmental, having humility and the way we talk to each other. Read these and jot down some notes of what you see:
 - a. Proverbs 12:18
 - b. Luke 18:9-14
 - c. Psalm 139:23-24
 - d. Galatians 6:1-2
 - e. Romans 2:1-4

Take time this week to reflect on these passages from The Message* version of the Bible:

James 4:11-12 (MSG)

Don't bad-mouth each other, friends. It's God's Word, his Message, that takes a beating in that kind of talk. You're supposed to be honoring the Message, not writing graffiti all over it. God is in charge of deciding human destiny. Who do you think you are to meddle in the destiny of others?

Romans 2:1-2 (MSG)

Those people are on a dark spiral downward. But if you think that leaves you on the high ground where you can point your finger at others, think again. Every time you criticize someone, you condemn yourself. It takes one to know one. Judgmental criticism of others is a well-known way of escaping detection in your own crimes and misdemeanors. But God isn't so easily diverted. He sees right through all such smoke screens and holds you to what you've done.

* The Message is commonly understood as a paraphrase rather than a formal translation. NavPress explains, *Eugene Peterson renders the meaning, tone, and force of the biblical text in fresh, idiomatic English rather than closely following the original wording.* It can help familiar passages sound fresh again, especially for devotional reading. But for study, doctrine and memorization, a more formal or balanced translation such as NIV, ESV, NASB, CSB or NLT is safer.

LIVE IT OUT

Ask God what He wants to say to you, then spend a few minutes quietly listening for Him to speak. This could be a word or phrase from the passage that stands out to you, or a simple thought He brings to mind.

Based on this week's lesson, God is calling me to _____ .

PRAY

Share what you sensed God saying to you and pray for each other.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Here's a great verse to memorize based on this week's teaching. Read it every day until you know it by heart. Trust God to bring it back to mind at just the right time!

Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.

Galatians 6:1 (NIV)