

JESUS ON JUDGEMENTALISM (MATTHEW 7:1-12)

Video 2

We've seen Jesus warn us that we're to be **very careful as we're involved in one another's lives**.

But we also see him call us to **be involved in each other's lives anyway**.

This is clear in one of his most famous teachings. Verse 12:

In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

Jesus is referring to a teaching that was already established. It said:

Do not do to others that which you would not have them do to you.

We might call this principle the Silver Rule. The Silver Rule fits well within 21st Century culture today – for two reasons. It is both passive and individualistic.

It is passive in the sense that – so long as no-one's rights are being violated and everyone consents – everyone can be left to get along. That's why it's also individualistic. The Silver Rule allows people to get on with their lives as they choose.

Following the Silver Rule is helpful when it comes to conflict. It prevents us from showing vengeance or wanting to get our own back. It can prevent situations from escalating.

But Jesus' teaching – known as the Golden Rule – goes much further.

It's not passive, but active – it encourages us to proactively **do to others what we would have them do us**. And it's not individualistic, but communal. It calls us to recognise our responsibility to do good to other people – even those who may have annoyed us or hurt us.

It calls us to recognise that we need other people to experience life most fully, and they need us.

This includes being shown our blind spots, or the times in which we ourselves have gone wrong.

A good friend is willing to gently confront what's wrong in our lives.

Jesus uses the image of having a speck removed from your eye. Perhaps you've had that experience. As a carpenter, Jesus would have known what it was like to get sawdust in his eye, and the need for Joseph his father to tenderly remove it.

There are times we can't help ourselves. We need others.

And there are times when friends around us have specks in *their* eyes. They may be painfully aware of them. Often, they're unaware. Jesus calls us to remove the speck from each other's eyes – not because we're better, but because we love them.

This is a tender thing. We'll need wisdom from God to do this rightly – which is why, in this section, Jesus calls us to **ask**, **seek** and **knock**. God is committed to giving his people all they need to live for him, even in situations of conflict.

And as we serve those around us – and love even our enemies – we mirror the kind of God he is. To each other within our Christian communities, and to the watching world.