



## **“Jury Duty”**

**Matthew 7  
Small Group Plan**

It was Jesus who said, *“If you do not forgive men their sins, your father will not forgive your sins.”* (Matthew 6:15).

It was this very scripture that occasioned a well-put statement by John Wesley. Wesley was having a difficult time with General Oglethorpe, who was known for his pride and rigid nature. In a particularly prideful moment, Oglethorpe said, *“I never forgive!”* To which Wesley replied, *“Then I hope, sir, that you never sin.”*

### **OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...**

- When you see someone fail, which response is easiest for you to give, forgiveness or judgment? Explain.
- On the other hand, when someone corrects you, or calls your action into question, how do you usually feel and how do you respond? Why?

### **LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...**

#### **THE PROBLEM WITH THE JUDGMENTAL PERSON IS THAT HE CAN'T SEE ...**

**— HE CAN'T SEE GOD ... THAT GOD IS JUDGE —**

**Matthew 7:1**

*Do not judge, or you too will be judged.*

- READ John 5:22; 1 Corinthians 4:3-4; James 4:11-12.
- Describe the kind of heart that steps into God's role as judge.
- How could this happen? What are the mistaken steps that would bring a person to such a place?

— HE CAN'T HIMSELF ... HIS OWN WEAKNESSES —

**Matthew 7:2-4**

<sup>2</sup> For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. <sup>3</sup> “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? <sup>4</sup> How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?”

- Why would someone ignore their own imperfections and instead focus on the mistakes of others?
- It has often been said that the traits in others that irritate us the most, are usually the same faults that exist in our own lives. Why is this the case?
- What are the “planks” (v. 3) that keep us from seeing clearly? Brainstorm as a group and list as many “planks” as you can think of.
- With your list in hand, describe how each plank can keep us from seeing clearly.
- In contrast, what might be the specks that are in the eyes of others?

— HE CAN'T SEE OTHERS – THEIR TRUE NEEDS —

**Matthew 7:5**

*You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.*

- Is there ever a time when we should focus on the faults of others? Explain.
- Why does Jesus want me to “see clearly”? What does He say is the purpose and goal of removing the plank from my own eye?
- How does my desire to remove my brother’s speck change, when I first work on my own heart and life?

**USE IT / APPLY IT ...**

- How would you advise someone who wants to change their judgmental style into a more forgiving style?
- What helps you to keep the judgmental spirit in check?
- Turning the story around, how should the person with the speck, respond to the person with the plank? Why?
- Close by asking God to show you your plank and how to remove it.