Throughout the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus has challenged us to examine our hearts and consider what it means to follow Him. In Matthew 7:1–6, Jesus addresses our tendency to judge others while overlooking the struggles in our own lives. We often make assumptions about people without knowing their entire story. Using the memorable illustration of a speck and a plank, Jesus teaches us to examine ourselves before attempting to correct someone else. This doesn't mean we should ignore sin, but rather approach others with humility, love, and a desire for restoration. As we grow in our relationship with Jesus, the Holy Spirit shapes us into people who extend mercy, exercise godly discernment, and help others grow in their faith.

1. Pastor Neal shared how a coworker confronted him harshly before recognizing his own faults. Can you recall a time someone corrected you in a helpful or hurtful way? What made the difference in how you received their correction?

2. Read **Matthew 7:1–2** and **Romans 2:1–3**. What do these passages teach us about judging others? Why do you think it's sometimes easier to recognize the faults in others than to acknowledge our own?

3. Read **Matthew 5:7** and **James 2:12–13**. How should the mercy we've received from God influence the way we view and treat others? What might it look like to extend mercy toward someone you've been quick to judge?

4. Read **Matthew 7:3–5**. Why do you think Jesus uses such an exaggerated illustration of a speck and a plank? What does this teach us about the importance of examining ourselves before attempting to help someone else?

5. Read **Psalm 139:23–24** and **Galatians 6:1–2**. How can inviting the Holy Spirit to examine our hearts prepare us to correct others with humility and love? What practical steps can we take before having a difficult conversation?

6. Read **Proverbs 27:6** and **John 13:34–35**. Why do we need people who lovingly correct us? What makes someone trustworthy enough to speak into our lives, and how can your small group foster that kind of community?

7. Read **Matthew 7:6** and **7:15–20**. What is the difference between being judgmental and exercising godly discernment? How can we know when to speak truth, when to listen, and when to step away from an unproductive conversation?

8. Close your time praying you would be willing to examine your heart first.