

The Principle of Proportion

Luke 6:37–42 (ESV)

CONTEXT: Thus far, we have said that Jesus came as a conquering king to invade satanic enemy territory and establish His Lordship over the earth. As the kingdom of God progresses, we see that the kingdom of this world will not always treat the citizens of God's kingdom fairly, but instead, they will persecute us, attack us, slander us, and despise us. Makes no difference in the whole scheme of things - our King has already won, and we await His arrival with 1000's upon 1000's of those who have gone before us. Till then, the righteous will often suffer.

Thus, Jesus began with a pronouncement of a series of blessings and curses.

- He proclaimed blessings over those who were poor, hungry, sad, and unpopular. Why? Because in this world, that will often happen. God's people will often suffer terribly.
- He proclaimed woes over those who prosper under the satanic kingdom by being wealthy, having plenty, being happy, and popular. Jesus says, you have your reward now, but that will soon be taken away.

Last week, Jesus taught us how to relate to those who attack and malign us - he said we are to love and do good to them, pray for, and bless them. Why? Because we, of all people, can do so. The world can't do that. We can.

This week, He introduces us to one of the most subtle but powerful principles in all of the Bible—the **principle of proportion**.

Biblical principles are like the laws of science - you exist within them. They are operative in your life whether you know it or not.

- **Mendel's Law of Genetics** says that your DNA is the sum total of your two progenitors' genes, either recessive or dominant. That is TRUE whether you love your parents or hate them. That was true long before Mendel discovered it to be true.
- **Newton's Law of Gravity** - is true whether you believe it or not. If you don't believe that climb up on a tall building and jump, you will not break the law of gravity. You will be broken by the law of gravity.

In the same way - this **principle of proportion** has been at work in your life since the day you were born, but you may have never heard of it. Today, we will correct that for you.

TEXT: Luke 6:37–42 (ESV)

³⁷ “Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; ³⁸ give, and it will be (*proportionately*) given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”

I call this the Principle of Proportion - God treats you as if He assumes you believe in and live according to the Golden Rule. In other words, you dictate how much grace and generosity God shows you by showing the same grace and generosity toward others. God responds to you proportionately.

In a sense, ***you control the throttle of God's goodness and grace in your life.***

I don't know about you, but I want to get all the goodness of God I can experience.

- I want full access to the storehouse of God's grace.
- I want my sins cast into that sea of forgetfulness that we read about in **Micah 7:19**.
- I want those windows of Heaven we read about in Malachi swung open wide so that my family can experience the absolute fullness of God's provision.

All of that was made possible by the cross of Jesus Christ. You see when I trusted Jesus Christ as my King and Savior, I was adopted into the family of God. I was made a citizen of heaven with all of the rights and privileges incumbent thereunto. I was made a son and a direct heir of all that belongs to my Father.

However, the PRINCIPLE OF PROPORTION is a spiritual reality that determines the function of those benefits in my life. There is no way around it.

Jesus speaks of it in both the negative and the positive:

- **First the negative** - ³⁷ "Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned;"

The statistician, George Barna, has determined that the first two words of that verse are now the most recognizable and quoted verses in all of the Bible...two words, "Judge not."

It is shouted at Christians who attempt to speak truth in a world of lies. Any time we try to hold up a righteous standard. Any time we call evil by its name. The world quotes that verse. But they never quote the whole verse. You see....

- **There is a type of judgment you are commanded to make.**

In Matthew's account of this same sermon, Jesus says in **Matthew 7:6 (ESV)**,
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."

In order to obey that verse, you have to be able to discern a spiritual **hog** from a spiritual **dog**, right? So, discernment is good. We are called to be discerning. How about this, "the companion of fools will suffer harm." Well you have to be able to discern the foolish man from the sage? You see?

BUT,

- **There is a judgment we are NOT to make - in fact scripture forbids it.**

a. We are NOT to judge heart motive.

- **1 Corinthians 2:11 (ESV)** ¹¹ “For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him...”
- **1 Samuel 16:7**, “...man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.”
- **Jeremiah 17:9-10**, “The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick; who can understand it?”

*If the Bible says you can’t even know your own heart motives fully, then how in the world are you going to know mine or anyone else's???

ILLUSTRATIONS: “That man singing...he wasn’t sincere”. You have absolutely no way of knowing that. Listen, folks - you are NOT the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 4:5

“Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.”

There are some things God wants you to do, but figuring out the heart motives of others is not one of them.

Don't judge heart motives...

b. We are NOT to judge in a way that we would not want to be judged.

HOW DO YOU WANT TO BE JUDGED? When I’m judged, I want them to consider ALL of the facts. Do you think when you stand before Jesus, that is how he will judge you? **CONSIDERING:** How you were raised. That incident in 4th grade. The fact that God didn’t make you athletic, so you had to hang out with the band kids. Then, you were called into the ministry - that in itself deserves a few rounds of therapy. Zach - I’m just glad you made it, man. Well done. We want God and people to give us EVERY benefit of the doubt. We want people to take ALL the facts into consideration.

c. We are NOT to judge areas that we would not want to be judged.

- I don’t want to be judged for certain things. Hey, I know I don’t have the healthiest eating habits and I don’t work out enough. Life is short; get over it. I don’t want to be judged for that. That’s why you cross fitters make me nervous. Haha.

- But if I am doing something that will destroy my family - help me, save me, judge me.
- If I am doing something that is detrimental to my soul, please speak into my life.

If I love you, I will do the same.

Then Jesus gives a series of **positive** areas where the Principle of Proportion comes into play:

37b. “forgive, and you will be forgiven; ³⁸ give, and it will be proportionately given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”

Jesus says the principle of proportion is at play in two areas: **forgiveness and finances.**

- **Forgiveness** - He says forgive, and you will be forgiven. The inverse is true: fail to forgive; there will always be something between you and God. Your prayers will be hindered, your worship will be weak, and the Bible won't come alive like it once did. Why? Because you haven't forgiven someone.
- **Finances** - He says, give generously to others, and I'll do the same to you.

Proverbs 22:9 (ESV)

⁹ “Whoever has a bountiful eye will be blessed, for he shares his bread with the poor.”

ILLUSTRATION: People tend to frame questions about giving in order to see what the bare acceptable minimum is that they have to give in order for God to be happy.. Do I tithe on the net or the gross? God flips the script and says, you control the throttle. You give in the proportion you wish to be blessed.

NOW - WHY DOES GOD ATTACH THE PRINCIPLE OF PROPORTION TO NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE THINGS?

1. It keeps our discipleship in check.

³⁹ He also told them a parable: “Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? ⁴⁰ A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.”

The **principle of proportion** causes us to make sure we keep it real. Without direct proportional effect to our walk, we might be tempted to preach things we don't even try to live out.

The problem is that, as John Maxwell has said - **We teach what we know; we reproduce what we are.**

We can't take a person where we have not gone ourselves.

By connecting our obedience directly to our experience, God gives us an incentive to make sure we practice what we preach.

There is a word here for those of you who are younger men and women. Choose your teachers wisely.

Proverbs 13:20 (ESV)

²⁰ "Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm."

This is very tricky in our culture. You see, you often don't know who you are following. We choose our influences based on a **curated social media feed**. We don't know that the people with the airbrushed skin in the pictures are living a nightmare.

That is one of the reasons that the community of a local church is so important. You get to know people. You know their reputations. You know their mistakes. You know what they regret.

Ask yourself - At your absolute best, what is it that you want in life?

- I want a family that sticks together. I want a happy Christmas. I want a wife who doesn't regret our journey together. I want kids who love and respect mom and dad. I want the grandkids to tell stories about me to their grandkids. I want my life to count for eternity. I want to sleep well at night. I want to take the gifts and opportunities I'm given and leverage them for King Jesus. **SO I MUST FOLLOW SUCH PEOPLE.**

This doesn't mean that you hold people to an impossible standard of perfection.

When I was younger, I always hesitated to get close to people I idolized because I didn't want to be let down. I'll get close to them today so I don't idolize them.

Get close to people. Find people you respect and buy them lunch. Success leaves clues and winning rubs off. But so does losing.

We become like that which we surround ourselves with.

It keeps our discipleship in check...

2. It keeps the heart in check.

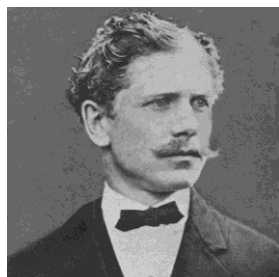
⁴¹ "Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴² How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye, 'when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye."

There is one person on the planet who you should judge, whose motives you should question, whose heart you should be concerned about - YOURS.

In just a moment, we will celebrate the Lord's table. Before we do, we are commanded to judge ourselves, not our neighbor.

1 Corinthians 11:31, *“But if we judged ourselves, we would not be judged.”*

But when you start to worry about specks in your brother's eye, you lose the ability to see the log in your own.



Ambrose Bierce, a critic of the faith, once defined a Christian as “one who believes that the New Testament is a divinely inspired book admirably suited to the spiritual needs of his neighbor.”

Do you know how to raise an atheist? You raise your kids in church every Sunday and live like the devil during the week.

ILLUSTRATION: I remember when I was a kid, and I would get something in my eye. I didn't go to Dad - Dad worked in construction. I went to Mom. She had soft hands. She would typically take a soft towel, wet it, and gently remove the spec. That's how it's done. The eyes are the most sensitive part of your body.

It's good to remove irritations from a person's eye, but not everyone is cut out for it. So before you go about checking for specs... make sure your heart is in check.

WHY? Because the standard of measure you use with them will be used on you, the **principle of proportion**.

It keeps our discipleship in check...It keeps our heart in check...

3. It keeps our mouth in check.

⁴³ “For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, ⁴⁴ for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. ⁴⁵ The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.”

When a person fails to take their walk with the Lord seriously, you don't always see it on the outside. But deep inside, their heart starts to rot, and the mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart.

I can't always know what's going on in my heart, but I can know what's happening with my mouth. When my mouth begins to get ugly... I know my mouth is downstream of my heart. The problem is the heart.

ILLUSTRATION: Growing up, we loved going to the creek near our home after a major storm. We would see the giant trees lying over the creek's banks, creating a bridge we could walk across. I often wondered why some trees fell, but others didn't. As I looked closely at the cross-section of the tree, I noticed that the fallen tree had been rotting from the center.

CONCLUSION/INVITATION: The principle of proportion is an unmistakable, unavoidable principle of life.

As you do to others, it will be done to you.

- **Let's try to err on the side of generosity.** You will probably get it wrong sometimes. You will probably give it to someone who doesn't deserve it. But remember **Proverbs 19:17** (ESV) ¹⁷ "Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed."
- **Let's err on the side of grace.** Let's be people of the 70 X 7 forgiveness. Why? We may need it ourselves one day.

Mother Teresa of Calcutta said it so well...

"Do It Anyway"

People are often unreasonable, illogical and self-centered;

Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives;

Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies;

Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you;

Be honest and frank anyway.

What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight;

Build anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous;

Be happy anyway.

The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow;

Do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough;

Give the world the best you've got anyway.

You see, in the final analysis, it is between you and your God; It was never between you and them anyway.