



## **Week 3**

# ***Be Curious, Not Judgmental***

## ***Check-in***

How are you? Where have you seen Christ working in your life in the last week? And... what's your experience with soccer? Did you play as a kid? Are you a hooligan that paints your face and stays up 'til 2 am to watch matches in England? Or is your soccer knowledge limited to the last two weeks of this series. It's okay, you're among friends.

## ***Opening Prayer***

God of Mercy, help us to put aside our tendency to judge, and to look past our prejudices to the beloved child of yours underneath.

## **Introduction**

Welcome to week 3 of our series, “Coach,” where we have been looking at the parallel wisdom of Ted Lasso and Jesus, both exceptional coaches with a desire to build a unified team. Week 1, we looked at their notion of worry... and how they encouraged us to, “be a goldfish.” That is, we shouldn’t focus on our past mistakes or let our failures define us. Then last week, we looked at the steps to build relationships and get through tough times through community, investment of time, and vulnerability. This week, we move on to a practical bit o’ wisdom... One pervasive theme with our coaches is the concept of judgment. Ted challenges his team’s tendency to judge and condemn one another, and Jesus challenges his followers with the same struggle. Today, we’ll dive a little deeper into this topic of what not to do. But first...

**Review: Last time, we talked about investing time and being vulnerable with others in order to build team togetherness. How did you do this week being vulnerable? Did you invest in others? If not, that’s okay... this is a life change, not a week change.**

## **Scripture**

The people of Israel had a long history of setting themselves apart from anyone who was different. In fact, they had laws about it. The initial intent was to prevent them from falling into the idol worship of their “pagan neighbors,” but Jesus saw them using this elitism to judge others, to separate themselves out, to view themselves as better. The problem? This attitude began to divide the people, and

not just Jews from outsiders, but Jews from Jews. They weren't a team. They were creating division. And judgment was at the root. So, Jesus, in the same sermon we looked at week 1, (in fact, the very next verses,) says this...

**Read Matthew, chapter 7, verses 1-2.**

Jesus makes a difficult turn here. He's just been talking about ending worry, and how God will care for us like the flowers of the field. And then, boom, "stop judging!" It's a little jarring. But Jesus goes back and forth to keep the people on their toes... if it were all fluff, they'd never be challenged. If it were all challenge, they'd quit listening. So, Jesus gets a little convicting.

**Question 1: Anyone recoil when they hear the word, "judgment"? It makes us hesitate. So, discuss this verse. What's your reaction? What does it bring up in you? Do you have a natural aversion to this type of scripture, or is it merely a challenge?**

## **Reflection**

The Greek word that Jesus uses here is, "krino," which literally translated means to pick or choose by separating something out. Over time, it became a term used to pass judgment in a court, separating out the good from the bad. Jesus is suggesting that we have a tendency to pick and choose what we think is good and bad. We have a tendency to separate out things we like or don't like... or

worse, the people we like or don't like. And if that wasn't convicting enough, Jesus goes even further. He says the measure you choose to judge what's good and bad is the measure that will be used against you. The Greek word for "standard" here is 'metron', where we get the word, "meter," and literally was a stick that measured length. So, Jesus is saying the measuring stick you use to judge on others, is the one that you will also have to stand up against.

**Question 2: Take a moment to consider what are the "measuring sticks" we use to judge others? What are the standards we use to separate out what we've determined to be good or bad, right or wrong, worthy or unworthy?**

Jesus simply says, "cut it out." But in the TV show, this becomes quite a recurring theme. Ted gives us a little insight into our tendency to judge and then a possible solution. First, Ted suggests that we judge others based on their...

## **Actions**

If someone cuts us off in traffic, we pass judgment on them with the strategic use of colorful words and "sign language." If someone hurts us, or offends us, or believes differently than we do, or chooses a different political party than we do, or God forbid, is a Packers fan... we've judged them six-ways to Sunday. We judge others based on their actions and separate ourselves from them based on choices. Second, Ted hints at something a little deeper and requires a little

more self-reflection to uncover. Ted suggests that it's also in our nature to judge someone based on their...

## **Identity**

It's one thing to think, "okay, I may not agree with you. I may not like your actions, but I'm not going to judge you for it." But it's another to look within ourselves at our deep-seated biases, and ask, what are the things a person cannot change about themselves that we use to judge? What truly are our tendencies regarding race, age, gender, or appearance? Not quite as easy, is it?

**Question 3: Do a little self-reflection. Which of these two areas do you have a greater difficulty with? Which do you judge by more, actions or identity? Do the two overlap? Then, maybe get a little specific... is there a category mentioned above that you have a particular struggle with? (Be honest with yourself, it's how we get better.)**

Deep breath. Don't be too hard on yourself. We all have biases, and judgment is a natural human tendency. But Jesus calls us to do better and be better than our impulses, so let's look to the wisdom of Ted Lasso for how we might overcome our judgements. First, in a beautiful moment in season 3, Ted offers Coach Beard some advice on a judgment he has passed on kit-man, Nate. He says, "I hope that either all of us, or none of us, are judged by the actions of our weakest moments, but rather by the strength we show when and if

we're ever given a second chance." (That's good stuff, read it again.) Jesus said, "the measure we use is the measure we'll be judged by..." And Ted brings that line home here, suggesting that there isn't a one of us who would live up to that measure. So, when we're tempted to judge, we must ask, "would we pass that test ourselves?" Odds are, we'd fail it, too.

Then, in another cool scene, this time from season 1, Ted and Rebecca are confronting her husband, Rupert, who has weaseled his way back into a minority ownership of the team, promising to make her life miserable. Ted challenges Rupert to a game of darts, and if Ted wins, Rupert can't go near the owners' box during games. Rupert is being his normal jerk-self, so Ted gives him a speech on judgment. He says that people have been judging him all his life, but a quote from Walt Whitman set him straight. It said, "Be curious, not judgmental." And he realized, their judgment of him... who he was had nothing to do with it. It was all about their own insecurities, and not a one of them were curious. This is a great line and good advice when we're tempted to judge someone based on their identity... start with curiosity. Ask questions. Seek to learn about someone before judging them. Ask ourselves, "what is it within me that is causing me to judge that person that way?" And don't challenge Ted Lasso to a game of darts.

**Question 4: Discuss these two "solutions" to judgment... 1) asking ourselves, would we pass the test we're using to judge someone, and 2) be curious, ask questions to learn about someone's life**

**before separating ourselves from them. Which do you find more difficult? Is there a story where you've employed one or the other technique? How did it change your interaction with the person?**

## **Closing**

Ending judgment was important to our coaches, and not just because it breaks down our own biases and softens our approach to others. Yes, it improves who we are as humans. But, it was also important to Ted and Jesus because judgment creates opposition. Separating ourselves out only creates more opponents. When we eliminate the measuring sticks and get curious, we create teammates. We build the sense of unity we looked at last week. This world doesn't need more opposition, it needs more teammates. So, your challenge this week is to go out and make more teammates. Set aside the measure sticks we use to judge others, and instead, get curious. Ask questions of others, and break down the biases you may not even know you had. We are called to move beyond our judgment of others, and simply love.

**Take some time to share prayer requests or celebrations.**

**Close in prayer.**