

TEACHER / FACILITATOR DISCUSSION GUIDE

Sermon on the Mount – Session 5

How Do We Live Without Fear or Judgment?

Matthew 6:25–7:12

SESSION OVERVIEW (FOR THE TEACHER)

Big Idea

Jesus addresses two deeply rooted human struggles—**worry about our own lives and judgment toward others**. Both flow from fear and insecurity, and both reveal a deeper issue of trust in God. Jesus teaches that **prayer becomes the turning point** that transforms fear into trust, judgment into humility, and leads His followers to live out the Golden Rule.

Teaching Goal

By the end of this session, participants should:

- Recognize how fear fuels both anxiety and judgment
- Understand Jesus' teaching on trust, self-examination, and discernment
- See prayer as the heart-level shift that reshapes how we relate to God and others
- Reflect personally on where fear is shaping their attitudes and actions

Time Guide (Suggested – 60–75 minutes)

- Opening & Scripture reading: 10 minutes
 - Teaching & discussion (four movements): 40–50 minutes
 - Personal reflection & closing prayer: 10–15 minutes
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OPENING (10 MINUTES)

Opening Question (Icebreaker)

“Which comes more naturally for you when life feels uncertain—worrying about yourself or becoming critical of others?”

Teacher Notes

- Keep the tone honest and non-threatening.
- Avoid correcting responses.



- This question introduces the session’s central tension without moral pressure.

Opening Prayer

Ask God to reveal hidden fears, soften defensive hearts, and help the group hear Jesus’ words with humility and openness.

SCRIPTURE CONTEXT (FOR THE TEACHER)

Before reading, explain briefly:

“Jesus has been teaching about life in God’s Kingdom—prayer, trust, generosity, relationships, and humility. In this section of the Sermon on the Mount, He addresses how fear distorts both **how we see our own lives** and **how we treat other people**.”

Emphasize:

- These teachings are not disconnected ideas
- They form **one movement** centered on trust in the Father

Read **Matthew 6:25–7:12** aloud (or assign readers).

TEACHING MOVEMENT 1: FEAR EXPRESSED AS WORRY

(Matthew 6:25–34)

Key Teaching Point

Worry reveals where we struggle to trust God with our lives.

Teacher Explanation

Jesus addresses anxiety about food, clothing, and the future—not because these things are unimportant, but because they can dominate the heart. He reminds His listeners that life is more than material security and that worry, though it feels productive, cannot actually secure the future.

Jesus points to birds and flowers as examples of dependence—not passivity, but trust. The deeper issue beneath worry is not circumstances, but **how we view the Father**.

Discussion Questions

1. Why does worry feel responsible or even virtuous in our culture?
2. What does Jesus reveal about God’s care through creation?
3. How does focusing on tomorrow rob us of faithfulness today?

Teacher Notes



- Avoid minimizing real struggles.
 - Emphasize that Jesus is not condemning concern, but **inviting trust**.
 - Redirect any “try harder” responses toward relationship with God.
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TEACHING MOVEMENT 2: FEAR EXPRESSED AS JUDGMENT

(Matthew 7:1–5)

Key Teaching Point

Judgment toward others often flows from insecurity within ourselves.

Teacher Explanation

Jesus uses exaggerated imagery—a speck and a log—to expose hypocrisy. His point is not that sin should be ignored, but that **self-examination must come first**. Pride blinds us to our own brokenness, while humility restores clarity.

Fear turns outward as criticism when we try to protect ourselves by comparing or elevating ourselves over others.

Discussion Questions

1. Why is it easier to see faults in others than in ourselves?
2. How does self-examination change the way we help others?
3. What damage is done when correction lacks humility?

Teacher Notes

- Be careful not to let discussion drift into judging absent people.
 - Gently redirect toward personal reflection.
 - Reinforce that humility, not perfection, is the goal.
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TEACHING MOVEMENT 3: HUMILITY WITH DISCERNMENT

(Matthew 7:6)

Key Teaching Point

Jesus does not eliminate discernment—He transforms the heart behind it.

Teacher Explanation



Immediately after warning against judgment, Jesus speaks about wisdom and discernment. Not every situation is the same, and not every conversation will be fruitful. Jesus teaches that humility and discernment must work together.

This teaching guards against two extremes:

- Harsh judgment without love
- Naïve acceptance without wisdom

Discussion Questions

1. How can discernment exist without becoming judgmental?
2. Why does humility make wisdom more effective?
3. What helps us recognize when a conversation may not be fruitful?

Teacher Notes

- Emphasize posture, not superiority.
- Discernment is about stewardship, not control.

TEACHING MOVEMENT 4: PRAYER AS THE TURNING POINT

(Matthew 7:7-11)

Key Teaching Point

Prayer reshapes fear into trust and judgment into compassion.

Teacher Explanation

After addressing worry and judgment, Jesus points His followers to prayer. Asking, seeking, and knocking describe persistent dependence. Prayer moves us away from control and toward relationship.

Jesus emphasizes the goodness of the Father. God is not distant, reluctant, or stingy—He delights in giving good gifts to His children.

As prayer deepens:

- Worry gives way to trust
- Pride gives way to humility
- Judgment gives way to compassion

Discussion Questions

1. How does prayer change how we face fear?



2. Why does judgment lose its grip when prayer increases?
3. What keeps people from praying honestly or persistently?

Teacher Notes

- Encourage honesty about prayer struggles.
 - Avoid presenting prayer as a technique; emphasize relationship.
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THE GOLDEN RULE: THE FRUIT OF A TRANSFORMED HEART

(Matthew 7:12)

Key Teaching Point

The Golden Rule flows naturally from a heart shaped by trust in God.

Teacher Explanation

Jesus concludes this section by summarizing the Law and the Prophets. The Golden Rule is not mere behavior management—it is the outcome of a life transformed by trust, humility, and prayer.

When fear loosens its grip, people are freed to treat others with grace.

Discussion Questions

1. Why is the Golden Rule difficult without trusting God?
 2. How does fear prevent us from loving others well?
 3. Where might God be inviting you to live this out right now?
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PERSONAL REFLECTION (10 MINUTES)

Invite quiet reflection. You may read aloud:

“Where fear rules, worry and judgment grow. Where trust grows, prayer reshapes the heart.”

Reflection Prompts:

- Where do I struggle more—worry about my life or judgment toward others?
- What fears am I being invited to surrender to God?
- What step of trust or prayer is God inviting me into?

(Allow silence.)



CLOSING (PRAYER & ENCOURAGEMENT)

Closing Prayer

Pray for:

- Deeper trust in the Father
- Humility in relationships
- Freedom from fear and judgment
- Hearts shaped by prayer and love

Optional Take-Home Practice

Encourage participants to:

- Pray intentionally each day this week about one fear or relationship
 - Practice treating one person with intentional grace
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FINAL TEACHER REMINDER

This session is not meant to produce guilt, but **freedom**.

Jesus does not shame His listeners for fear—He invites them into trust.

And through prayer, He transforms anxious and judgmental hearts into lives shaped by love.

