

## The plank and the splinter

Luke 6:39-45 is part of Jesus' teachings in the "Sermon on the Plain," where He instructs His disciples about living as true followers of God. This section consists of three key metaphors that highlight self-awareness, spiritual integrity, and the importance of bearing good fruit:

- **The Blind Leading the Blind (6:39-40):** Jesus warns against following spiritually blind leaders. A disciple must be well-trained and guided by wisdom to avoid falling into error.
- **Removing the Plank from Your Own Eye (6:41-42):** Jesus uses hyperbole to teach the importance of self-examination before criticizing others. Hypocrisy blinds us to our own faults, making it impossible to help others properly.
- **A Tree and Its Fruit (6:43-45):** Jesus emphasizes that our actions and words reveal the true state of our hearts. A good heart produces good fruit, while an evil heart bears bad fruit.

In this passage, Jesus invites His followers to reflect on their own lives, avoid hypocrisy, and cultivate a heart that reflects God's goodness. We are to stop focusing on others' faults and instead examine our own lives. The condition of our hearts will be evident in the "fruit" we produce—our words, actions, and relationships.

In practice, it means we must be careful who we follow. Avoid blindly following others, especially leaders who are not spiritually grounded. In our modern world, this applies to whom we allow to influence us—whether it is social media personalities, public figures, or even friends. Before adopting someone's advice or lifestyle, ask yourself if this person's life reflects godly wisdom, humility, and truth? Surround yourself with mentors and role models who live out Christlike values.

Before we judge or criticize others, we must first look inward and address our own shortcomings. This is not a call to ignore sin or wrongdoing in others' lives, but rather to approach such situations with humility and love. For example, if you are frustrated with someone's behavior at work or in your family, pause and ask yourself whether you are demonstrating the patience, kindness, or forgiveness that you expect from them, and pray for God to reveal areas in your life where you might need growth and repentance.

The metaphor of the tree and its fruit reminds us that our actions, words, and attitudes reveal the state of our inner lives. If our hearts are filled with love, integrity, and gratitude, our lives will naturally reflect those qualities. Conversely, if bitterness, anger, or pride dominate our hearts, it will be evident in how we treat others. Reflect

on the "fruit" of your life. Are your relationships marked by love, forgiveness, and generosity? Make time for spiritual practices (like prayer, scripture reading, worship) that nurture a heart aligned with God's will.

Finally, Jesus' teaching invites us to use our words to build others up rather than tear them down. Luke 6:45 reminds us that "the mouth speaks what the heart is full of." If our hearts are full of grace, our speech will reflect it. Choose to encourage someone this week instead of pointing out their flaws. Speak words of affirmation to a family member, friend, or coworker, and notice how it impacts your relationship.

In conclusion, Jesus' words in Luke 6:39-45 are a call to personal integrity and spiritual growth. Let us strive to examine our own hearts regularly, seek God's guidance, and bear good fruit that glorifies Him. As we reflect on this teaching, may we grow in humility, self-awareness, and love, becoming true disciples of Christ who reflect His goodness to the world. Amen!

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