

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Nov 30th -0001

If you've ever been on a plane, the pre-flight announcements advise passengers to secure their own masks before assisting a neighbor with his or her oxygen mask as a best practice procedure. This instruction ties in perfectly to today's gospel reading from Matthew. We are reminded that removing the "beam" from our own eye first is essential and precedes our inclination to point or attend to our neighbors "beam."

Matthew 7 says, "You hypocrite, remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter from your brother's eye." We are so quick to judge others or react to the person across from us. Why is it so hard for us to look at ourselves? Is it because we want to avoid the tough questions? Is it because if we were really honest with ourselves, we would see that we need a lot of work and don't want to commit to make a change? Even if our heart is in the right place and we are honestly wanting to help someone, we often find ways to avoid looking at our own shortcomings.

Jesus wants us to look inward. If we are going to follow and obey Him, we have to be willing to look objectively at our lives and see where we're falling short; not to shame us and make us feel guilty, but to grow us closer into relationship with Him.

If we want to give others our best, we have to be our best. I recently became a mother and have a new appreciation for this concept of self-care and self-love. If I am happy, de-stressed, calm, and in overall harmony with God, my relationship with my daughter benefits. When I am tired, overwhelmed, or empty, my relationship with her suffers. In no way do I consider this an easy feat. Self-reflection takes practice and discipline, but the reward of an everlasting relationship with Jesus makes it worth the effort. Remember, "...and the measure with which you measure will be measured out to you."

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