

The Power to Change, Part 7

Log-jam!

John Botha, IT & Technical Director at Willows Methodist, 2026-06-30

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Preamble

Hi, I am John from Willows, and thank you for joining me for today's devotion on this Tuesday, the 30th of June, 2026. A full PDF including study resources is available from our web site, willows.org.za/devotions. This is part seven of a series called 'The Power to Change'. Part one was on 24 March, if you want to look for it on our web site.

Introduction

In my previous devotion (of 4 June) we looked at 1 Corinthians 6:1–8, which addresses the quite serious case of Christians taking each other to court. Today we are looking at the famous parable of Jesus as recorded in Luke 6:41-42, which reads as follows:

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? 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.

It is quite clear what the primary meaning of this passage is, but there are a few deeper points that we will be addressing today as well.

Before we continue, however, let us pray.

Thank You, Jesus, that You gave us this teaching in Your Word about how we are to live and interact with others. Please help us, O Lord, to open ourselves to Your Spirit so that we may learn from You in this regard.

Amen.

Devotion

It is important to understand whom Jesus was addressing here. The way He framed it, Jesus addressed *fellow believers* wanting to help each other. But why only fellow believers; why not everyone in general? Surely we should be free to help anyone?

That is a valid question, so consider that while we can certainly *explain* our beliefs to non-Christians, because they do not believe the whole Truth, we cannot expect them to conform to what we believe. In other words, we cannot correct non-Christians on points where they believe differently. If we do so, they may — quite rightly — see us as judgemental of them, and that is why this is addressed to fellow believers, because we believe the same, and part of that means helping one another to maintain the faith.

So why does Jesus say *not* to help the other person? Well ... He doesn't actually say that, but what He does say is under which circumstances *not* to help and when it *is* fine to help.

The immediate application here is clear: correction and assistance cannot be from the place of hypocrisy. Thus you need to sort yourself out urgently.

Spurgeon put it well:

The judging faculty is best employed at home. Our tendency is to spy out splinters in other men's eyes, and not to see the beam in our own. Instead of beholding, with gratified gaze, the small fault of another, we should act reasonably if we penitently considered the greater fault of ourselves. It is the beam in our own eye which blinds us to our own wrong doing, but such blindness does not suffice to excuse us, since it evidently does not shut our eyes to the little error of our brother. ...

Our reformation must begin with ourselves, or they are not true, and do not spring from a right motive. Sin we may rebuke, but not if we indulge it. We may protest against evil, but not if we wilfully practice it. The Pharisees were great at censuring, but slow at amending. Our Lord will not have His kingdom made up of hypocritical theorists, He calls for practical obedience to the rules of holiness.

It is tempting to stop here, having come to the obvious conclusion that we are not to be hypocrites by addressing some shortcoming in another Christian's life while having grave issues of our own, but there is more to this.

Firstly, the impact on our witness when we are hypocrites. How can we expect our words about the transforming power of Christ in our lives to be believed when the charge of hypocrite will stick?

Secondly, it *is possible* to remove the log from your own eye — Jesus says so. He also labels the person in mind as a hypocrite, so while criticism, correction, or offers of help might be valid, being hypocritical pretty much invalidates it at worst and waters it down at best. So there definitely is something (and it is big) that needs to be sorted out before you can help the person with the speck, which brings us to the next point.

While we need to make our own changes — others cannot change your life for you — we are not alone, and when it is a big thing we will definitely benefit from the help of others. (The first part of Galatians 6 is a prime example here.) It seems to me that this is a very neglected part of most Christian communities: seldom are those who are drifting away given warning and offered help. And sadly when it *is* done, it is often misconstrued and the person offering the correction and help becomes targeted for meddling in the other's life, being judgemental, not being accommodating, etc., etc.

Galatians 6:1 is a command; here it is: "Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted." So yes, you are your brother's keeper. What kind of family would you have if, when you were in mortal danger, your siblings would not come to your aid if they knew about it? That is what being caught in sin *is* — it is *mortal danger*, for the wages of sin is death! I believe that this is clear enough to leave it here, other than to say that if you do believe that someone is caught in a transgression, then you need to pray for guidance and gentleness, then confirm before stepping in to help. Also, be sure that you don't have a log in your own eye.

Conclusion

There is another aspect to this, however, and I am going to use myself as the example. Before I do so I want to say this to clear things up: In general, I don't want to use myself as positive example, because in no way do I want to elevate myself. Also, when I need to use a negative example and I believe it would be beneficial to do so, I use myself because a personal example can be far more powerful than a generic one. The following example is a blend of the two. So with that out of the way, here goes.

Some years ago someone told me "John, I know you well enough to know that your heart is good, but sometimes I really wish you could hear yourself." That was a wake-up call for me. I knew that I sometimes rubbed people up the wrong way, but in my mind it was not me, but them that led to that. I was unaware of the impact not so much of *what* I said, but of *how* I said it. So not only did someone have the guts to tell me, effectively, "John, take care how you speak.", but I listened, and I started changing.

The thing is, if I had not been told, I would have remained unaware of the incredibly negative impact I was having on others, and I would have continued with the log in my eye. My intentions were good, but my methods were not. Given where I was coming from, however, I had little idea, and I needed someone else's help.

My point is this: We *are* our brother's keeper, and we should bear one another's burdens as Galatians 6:2 commands. Part of that is gentle correction when required, and the correction might not be of an obvious sin, but of actions which impact the Christian community and the person's witness, for even that opens us up to the charge of hypocrite.

I want to close with this quote. I have no idea who said it, but it is so true: "Be patient with the faults of others; they have to be patient with yours."

Let us pray.

*Dear God, You give us such riches in Your Word. Help us to come to You with our shortcomings and to accept help from others, so that we may, in turn, help others from a position of holiness.
Amen.*

Specific Resources

Spurgeon: <https://www.spurgeongems.org/sermon/chs3096.pdf>. Also see <https://spurgeon.org>.

General Bible Resources

[Most of the original language information (including Strong's concordance) is via the Bible Hub site.]

This list is alive in that I update it as I go along — I just don't update all the instances of it, so see my latest devotion has the then-current one. At some point I'll probably put it on the web somewhere and update that, but for now this is it. Also note that I don't check each link for its continued existence... .

There are some points in these resources where you (and I) may think differently. Just don't throw the baby out with the bath water — consider what is said, read widely in The Word, and pray to God that He would keep you from heresy as you continue in your study of His Word. Though I find the following

resources useful in many ways, *each* has its points where at the very least I go, ‘Mmm. Not so sure about that. I need to look into that more deeply.’

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+1%3A1&version=ESVUK> is a brilliant collection of Bible translations. I tend to use the ESV-UK version: a solid translation in English.

<https://biblehub.com> is an enormous collection of resources. They have commentaries, concordances, Bible dictionaries, and more. Unless otherwise specified, this is where I get the information on the original languages. They have of late been encouraging people not to use ad blockers.

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/> packages of the same resources as biblehub.com, but has a completely different approach. They are also (currently) free.

<https://www.stepbible.org/> is an incredible resource if you want to look at the original language. When you use it on a PC and you hover over certain links you get more information without having to click.

<https://www.thebibleunpacked.net> is a rather unusual set of resources. At its core is a free book exploring core concepts of Christianity, but the book is available in seven editions. The smallest is just four ‘pages’ (each the size of a credit card) while the largest is 2,424 pages of A4 material. The two main areas are ‘What to Know’ and ‘What to Do’, which is an excellent balance. You can get an overview of the structure and topics at <https://www.thebibleunpacked.net/whats-inside>.

<https://www.preceptaustin.org/> is an enormous resource of commentaries by Dr. Bruce Hurt, a medical doctor. His work includes copious references, easing further study.

<https://soniclight.com/constable/> is the official site of the Bible commentary of theologian Dr. Thomas Constable, where that material is freely available.

<https://www.gotquestions.org> intends to provide answers to common questions about The Bible. While there is a core doctrinal point (predestination) on which I differ, there are many insightful answers.

These should be sufficient to get you going, but a word of warning: many ‘fringe’ sites (and some sects) go to great lengths to make their public / introductory material seem completely main-stream, so you really need to be on your guard.