

# Are You Contentiously Contending?

by Shane Idleman

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*We must strive for humility, gentleness, and love in our interactions with others, and check our motives and attitudes before confronting others.*

**Duration:** 36:03

**Scripture:** Matthew 7:1

**Topics:** "Humility", "Judgment"

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## Description

Shane Idleman addresses the issue of judgmental attitudes within the church in his sermon 'Are You Contentiously Contending?'. He emphasizes the importance of humility and self-reflection before critiquing others, urging believers to remove the 'plank' from their own eyes before addressing the 'speck' in their brothers'. Idleman warns against the dangers of a critical spirit and encourages a spirit of love and grace when confronting sin, reminding the congregation that true discernment is rooted in humility. He concludes with a call for repentance and a deeper relationship with God, highlighting the need for revival in personal and communal faith.

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## Transcript

As you'll see there in your notes, are you contentiously contending? And you probably received this on your way in. I came across a good booklet about six months ago. I know he's redoing the cover and he's actually going to put it on e-books.

A lot of you don't know this, but I've been working on another book for the last year. And we finally put that on e-books. And actually, thanks to Josh, he was the one that motivated me.

I see him here tonight to do an e-book. I've never even thought of that, never even crossed my mind. But now it's on Kindle, it'll be on Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble.

And different things. The ironic thing is, I actually dedicated it to the West Side Christian Fellowship, to you guys. So it's in the dedication acknowledgement that you guys kind of motivated me to put this together.

And what it is, it's all the sermons you've been hearing over the last few years, basically in a book. So you can, on chapters on absolute truth, on unity, on judging, on a chapter for men, on the work of the Holy Spirit. Everything that I've been preaching is now into the book.

The good thing about e-books is, when you're done with the chapter, if you're online, you can click and hear the sermon that goes along with that chapter. So you can actually watch the sermon video on truth. So this video that we gave last week or the week before, the links are in the book.

So when I'm talking about judging, boom, you can click the link at the end and there comes the video and you can watch the sermon. So it might be a good thing to give out to friends for Christmas and trying to get the message out there. And we're working on getting it printed, but right now it's just on the e-book version that I've been working ferociously on for the last three weeks.

And editing is not fun. It's a lot of work when you've got to look for every little misspelling and every little parentheses and quotations. So if you find errors, let me know because we have time to obviously go back and change it.

So that just hit the Kindle, I think, yesterday. Barnes & Noble and the other ones will be shortly. So anyway, it's dedicated to you guys.

You've motivated me to do it and I appreciate that. And thank you. So with that said, now let's turn our attention towards this book, this little book, Contentiously Contending.

I came across it probably a few months ago and I know Anton, some of you know he speaks here now and then when I'm gone or traveling. And he wrote this book and it was so powerful as I was going through it on this area of judging that I wanted to buy some copies and just give out to you. And I titled this message after this book because what we're seeing in the church and what we've talked about last week, we talked about judging, part one.

Can we judge a culture? Can the church make judgments? Absolutely. We're called to discern all things. The pulpits used to be beacons of light pointing people to the truth.

So we can proclaim the truth. We can judge our culture. We can judge certain things.

But what Jesus talked about here in Matthew 7-1 is first remove the big, huge plank out of your eye first and then you can see better to judge your brother. But the culture likes to use this verse, don't judge. Christians, shut your mouth, be quiet, don't say anything, judge not.

Didn't you read the Bible? Yeah, well keep reading. It says to remove this plank from your eye and that's what we talked about last week. So if you weren't here, the message is uploaded, it's online and that was judging part one.

But let's read that real quick. Do not judge, Matthew 7-1 in your Bibles. Do not judge or you too will be judged.

For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged. And with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, let me take out the speck out of your eye when all the time there's a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite.

First take out the plank out of your own eye and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. Now obviously you all know that he's not talking about literal sawdust, right? And a literal plank in our eye. The whole point of this is humility and gentleness and brokenness.

And Leonard Ravenhill used to say you better weep before you whip. And as Jesus walked into Jerusalem, he wept for the city before he built and instructed to whip and whip those people out of the temple. You weep before you whip.

It's an attitude of brokenness and humility and then from that right attitude, then you can rightly judge others. So it's not literal sawdust. It's not literal planks in your eye.

It's the hardness of the human heart. And a few key points that we talked about last week, you can be right in your reasoning yet wrong in your attitude. You get that? You can be absolutely correct in your reasoning, that's wrong, but your attitude stinks.

So Jesus is saying get your attitude right and that's how you really change your culture. That's how we change the culture is we come at them with the spirit of love and gentleness and humility. We bring the truth, but we don't bring it with a sledgehammer.

We bring it lovingly and we get we can challenge. Do you have a critical spirit? We ask that question. Proudful, judgmental people can always find supposed scriptural support for their actions, while at the same time ignoring the clear cut teaching of scripture on grace and forgiveness.

And they say what I'm contending. No, you're contentious. They say I'm defending the faith.

No, you're defaming the name of Christ. I'm a watchman on the wall, Shane. No, you're self-righteous.

You see the difference? We can cloak our sin with scripture. We see this all the time, don't we? Abusive husband, wife, you better submit to me. I'm the man of this house.

See what the scripture says? No, sir, you better humble yourself and get within the spirit of the written word of God, of humility. You don't go around quoting scripture and yelling at people. You're already missing the point.

So that's what proudful, judgmental people, they like to use the Bible to beat up people, basically. But Jesus encourages us to err on the side of grace, not judgment. It takes humble, broken people to admit that they need to remove things from their own lives before critiquing and instructing others.

Now let me be up front tonight. I have not mastered this area. This is a constant challenge, especially for a pastor, to not critique and pull down.

Because what happens when I can pull down other churches, guess what? Don't we look better? You can pull down other people, you look better. That's really the motive behind critiquing. Yeah, but did you hear? And yeah, but did you know? We get caught up in this pride and this arrogance.

So we asked this last week, how do we judge then? So how do we judge? Well, in a nutshell, patiently, softly, humbly. We're not excited about it, we're not rude, and we're not mean-spirited. You remove the plank out of your eye.

And then you can see better to remove the speck from your brother's eye. As believers, we are called to make judgments. In other words, this is not a good direction.

But what is the point? To help, to encourage, and redirect them if necessary. And what happens, a lot of times, is you'll be seeing, especially in churches, can we get on one or the other extreme, right? We make

no judgments at all. I don't want to judge anything.

Why? Because I don't want to upset you guys. I don't want to upset anybody. So I'm not going to make any judgments.

And then we just become a social club because the power of the gospel is in the truth. You can't water down the truth, you've got to preach the truth. But then you have this other side, it's all hate, it's all mean, it's all bigoted, it's all narrow-minded, it's like beating people up.

And Christ has come back to the middle. Let grace drive your actions and your words. And let the truth be underscored with these things.

And I've noticed that those who have been in the church a long time, and those who are highly educated in biblical doctrine, can often be the most critical, cynical, and negative. An attitude of constant criticism is not a positive character trait. Do you realize that? No, you don't have the gift of criticism.

Look at 1 Corinthians, go into Romans, there's no gift, no gift. Discernment is not criticism. Actually, a discerning person is usually not very critical.

They can disseminate truth and they can lovingly confront something, but they're not usually a critical person when humility is at the forefront. Now, here's the flip side to all this. We've been kind of beating up on those people, like myself, who've had a history of judging and not removing the plank first.

And I went through a season in my life, I've talked about before, you know, six, seven years ago, being kind of judgmental more often than not. I could pick apart anybody on ministry, anybody in TV, and God really began to work in my heart on that. But on the flip side, I often run into people who say we shouldn't judge at all.

We shouldn't judge, Christians should just, nothing, we shouldn't say anything. The reason is because they're convicted by their lifestyle. It does not align with God's Word.

So they don't want people judging them. And do you realize that's one of the big things with the homosexual agenda, or the, you know, whatever the agenda is, it's getting the church to shut their mouth, to be quiet. Why? Because it's convicting.

Remove God, and I hate to keep beating up on this subject, but it's in our culture and it's growing at an alarming rate, and everybody just wants to judge not and be quiet and say nothing. But the Bible is crystal clear that we're supposed to discern between good and evil, right and wrong, truth and error, light and darkness. That's the whole point of preaching, may I be quite honest with you.

The whole point of preaching isn't to tickle your ears, it's to challenge your heart. That's what we're called to do, in love, in a spirit of love and gentleness. So last week was judging the culture, this week is judging believers.

Can we do that? Yes, in certain situations, of course. We are to judge, but this is often misunderstood, and we can easily become wrongfully judgmental. So as I was thinking about this, I've isolated three things where I think Christians are what happens and why we become judgmental.

Number one is we fail to recognize diverse giftings. We fail to recognize that God has called me different than He's called you, and He's called you different than He's called you. That's why we say things like, why

are they always so concerned about missions? And why do they tell us, why aren't you concerned about missions? They say, why is this guy always going on a political rant? Why doesn't that guy ever talk about politics? Why is that guy always talking about this? Why aren't they talking about this? Why is he so this? Why are they so that? Because God has called different giftings.

And a lot of times the gifting He's given somebody with a prophetic type edge differs than a pastor. You have a preacher and you have a pastor. Right? A pastor loves to talk, but a preacher needs to listen.

A pastor wants to be among his people, but a preacher needs to be alone with God. A pastor wants to talk, a preacher needs to preach. There's a difference there.

They interlap, but there's different callings. So because somebody's not just like me, I get upset and I judge them. Why aren't they like this? And then vice versa.

You see how that works? Oh, it happens in churches all the time. Does it not? Oh, that's a pastor. He just smiles all the time over there.

He doesn't say anything controversial, just loves everybody. And they say, oh, that's a pastor. He just lets them have it.

He just rips them apart. He has no love. And that guy has no truth.

And he goes back and forth. We have to realize that God calls different people for different things. He'll call a Daniel.

He'll call a Isaiah. He'll call a Jeremiah. He'll call an Ezekiel.

He'll call a Joel. He'll call an Amos, an Obadiah. He'll call a Paul.

He'll call a Peter. Different character traits. So one of the things I think happens is we become judgmental because somebody doesn't share my same gifting.

And it can turn into criticism. The next thing which is obvious is we judge by default. You've heard me use that word a lot, default.

What that means is if you don't work at something, your sin nature by default is going to take you in the wrong direction. So just living, just breathing, just walking, existing, you will want to judge. It's part of our sin nature.

It just can't get enough, can it? I just have to say something. I have to judge. I have to just be critiquing.

I always have to be putting down family members. I have to be, oh yeah, but this and this. It's just constant because by default, my sin nature wants to judge.

So you have to put that at bay. You have to conquer that area. You have to let humility and grace and love and what did we talk about a few weeks ago? Bring your thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ.

See, we take our thoughts captive. They don't take us captive. We're called to take our thoughts captive with gentleness and humility.

You see what I'm saying? You talk about that area a lot, humility, brokenness. Yeah, I'd rather err on the side of speaking too much about those things than too little because we need it desperately in our culture. Now, the third thing is obvious as well.

Our need to be right. I have to be right. I have to get the last word in.

Charles Spurgeon said something very interesting. We are never, never so much in danger of being proud as when we think we are humble. I better read that one again.

And you might want to memorize it. We are never, never so much in danger of being proud as when we think we are humble. I'm a prideful man.

I've made that confession many times before. I'll make it again tonight. I'm a prideful man working on humility by the grace of God.

Borrowing a quote from C.J. Mahaney. It's true. We are prideful men, prideful women working on humility by the grace of God.

As soon as you think you are the epitome of humble, and now you can tell everybody else how humble you are. Let me show you how to be so humble. Oh, you are not humble now because pride comes in.

Pride is thinking more of ourselves than we should in a nutshell. Looking out for number one. It's very dangerous when it comes to Christian ministry.

You might say, OK, Shane, how do we check motives? And we went through Matthew 7, verse 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 last week. This week was really part two that I didn't get to. But how do you check motives? Well, here are a few helpful questions.

You guys ready to answer honestly? Let's see if we need a heart check. Will you keep the confrontation to yourself and avoid gossiping? Or do you want to tell everybody? Do I take pleasure in confronting? Am I known as a confrontational person? You don't know? Just when you're leaving tonight, just ask your spouse on the way home. Morgan might say, yeah, maybe a little bit.

Maybe just a little bit. But these are signs to the inner condition of the heart. Am I a fault finder who rarely apologizes? Listen, I'm going after fault finders tonight.

I brought out my sniper's rifle. I'm going right to that heart tonight. The fault finder.

All they do is they come to church or they go to an event or they go wherever they go. Their job is to point out all the wrong things that are done. And have I said before many times, I can go to any church and pick it apart if I wanted to.

Can we not? That wasn't true expositional teaching. The worship songs weren't exactly doctrinally sound. That guy didn't have a good introduction.

He didn't have three points in a poem. That person didn't do this. I wasn't greeted here.

Why are the lights on? Why do they have candles? Why do they have this? Why do they have that? Why are they standing up? Why are they sitting down? Suits and ties. Why are they wearing shorts? Why are they wearing flip flops? We can just have a critical spirit. And I see it in here all the time.

And not here at this church per se, but in church and Christianity. Everywhere we go, it seems to be we've developed this critical spirit. We're so blessed in America that that blessing has turned into a curse.

Because we can become prideful and arrogant and think down on other people. You should talk to some people that have been in the underground church in China. Or the persecuted church in Africa.

There's not a lot of critiquing going on. They're too busy worshiping God. To fight over all the little non-essential things.

Number five, I've noticed this as well. Do you have a problem with authority? A lot of people don't like to be under spiritual authority. They don't like to be under governmental authority.

And they sure don't want to be under legal authority or law authority. They don't like being under authority. They say, Shane, what does that have to do with anything? Well, it reveals the heart.

Because humility is all about submission. I'm submitting to the God-ordained authorities that God has put over me. Do I have the I'll show you mentality? Is the confrontation fueled by a sinful impulse? In other words, is jealousy, anger, envy, pride? Is this sparking my judgmentalism? Do I need to confront or can I wait on the Lord and pray for clarification? Because you have to remember, when you're trying to confront somebody, we forget that there's three people in the equation.

There's the confronter, me. There's the receiver, there. And there's God.

See, I can't change this person. I can only lovingly persuade, lovingly encourage, pray for them, and allow God to work on them as well. But it takes three.

It takes that third person. A lot of times we get, I think, upset because things aren't happening quick enough and we're trying to push the issue and push the issue. We have to remember that there's three people involved here.

Well, two people and God, of course, dealing with that person. So answers to these types of questions reveal a great deal about personal motives. Confrontation may need to take place, but not until motives and attitudes are clearly understood and repentance, if warranted, occurs.

Did you catch that? If we answer these questions in such a way that we do have a judgmental spirit, then we need to repent of this and allow God to make those changes in us. And I like what Augustine said many years ago. At least he's accredited with saying this.

In the essentials, unity. In the nonessentials, liberty. And in all things, love.

Now let's think about that for a minute. In the essentials, the essentials of truth, of doctrine, Christ is the only way, the inerrancy of Scripture, Jesus is the Son of God, our sin nature, the atonement, all these things, substitutionary atonement, all these things we've talked about before, these are essentials. We have to be united in those.

If somebody believes, well, Jesus isn't who He is, I can't be united with you. I can go to lunch with you. I can try to witness to you, but I cannot be united with you in the faith.

Why? Because it's unity of the essentials. If you do something interesting, do a study on unity in the Bible. We're hearing that term a lot now, aren't we? Churches just need to be united or ecumenical movements

where everybody comes together, coexists on the bumper stickers and all these things, everybody coming together, coming together.

Unity in the Bible is never unity for the sake of unity. God never says, go be united with that, you fill in the blank. What is unity in the Bible? Unity of faith, unity of doctrine, unity of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit crying, Abba, Father, loving the truth, embracing the truth.

And then when I'm in right relationship with God, I'm united with those who are in right relationship with Him as well, on the truth. See, you cannot bring all faith together. You can't have this church over here and that church all be united unless they agree on the essentials of the Christian faith.

That's why they're called fundamentals, the fundamentals of the Christian faith. That's why we're called narrow-minded, because Jesus said narrow is the way. It's not arrogance, it's boldness.

Truth, when you preach truth, there's boldness there, because you have the truth in the spirit of love and meekness, of course. So always remember that. We don't have to be united with, I don't want to say a whole bunch of religions, because I've talked about it before and I get mean emails, and people say, you know, I named the religion.

But that, we cannot be united with certain groups. I can't worship with you if you're not looking to the one true and living God. If you say that God was once like us, and that I will be like God, that's blasphemy.

I cannot worship with you. If you say that Jesus is a created being, the brother of Lucifer, and we got it wrong with the Bible, I can't worship with you, I cannot be united with you in the essentials of the Christian faith. If you say that there are gods everywhere, he's in the trees and he's in the earth, and we've got a divine consciousness of a better reality, we can just come worship together.

No, I can't worship with you because you're not worshipping the one true and living God. Paul says in times past, God has overlooked your ignorance, but now he's calling all men everywhere to repentance, and to do what? To worship the one true and living God. That's genuine unity.

But you don't have to be mean about it. I mean, I get probably every other month or so a letter in the mail or email wanting me to come be a part of these interfaith movements. You know, Buddhist and Muslim and Hindu, and all these things, all these religions just coming together just to have a prayer meeting and come together.

I'll get lunch with you and I'll witness to you, but I can't worship God. I can't act as if, yeah, we're all on the same team because we're not. Scripture is crystal clear.

That's the dividing line. Scripture is crystal clear. If you deviate from Christ, Christ is the only begotten of the Father, the only one true and living God, that we are not a god.

We don't have a divine center within us, that we worship the one true and living God. If we can't agree on the essentials, then we have no unity. Call me rigid, call me narrow-minded, call me arrogant, call me a fundamentalist, but it's biblical.

So that's what he's saying here. In the essentials, in the essentials of this, there has to be unity. Now within this, you have Baptist, Pentecostal, just keep filling in the blanks, right? God has granted us different denominations because of what? Why? The non-essentials.

So see, I can worship with somebody who agrees on the non-essentials, but then when it comes to non-essentials, what are those non-essentials? Well, are the gifts of the Spirit valid today? Eschatology? How many people believe in the rapture? How many don't? Church government? Do you have a plurality of elders? Or do you have a mosaic form of church government where the pastor is mainly the senior pastor? Or do you have a group of elders leading? Or what about baptism community? How often? What does it mean? The significance? You know, I'm reading a book right now on the worship of the Puritans. It talks about how Martin Luther and John Calvin had different type of worship services. Calvin, if it wasn't in here, he wasn't going to have a worship service.

Where Luther was more flexible and he would allow candles or incense so we can worship God in all of our senses. And they could be united, but they were divided on this area of worship. Oh, this has not changed.

Do we use the hymnals or do we use the contemporary? What do we do? Non-essentials. Those are non-essentials. We shouldn't judge over those.

We shouldn't critique over those. Those are preference probably more than anything. And a lot of times what people think is racism in the church, I don't think it's racism.

Sometimes, of course it is. But I think certain ethnic groups and certain generations like certain types of things. Have you been to an African-American church? They can worship.

My Lord, I'm tired. Three hour service. Sylvester, who spoke here a couple weeks ago, came from Africa.

He said the church services start at 8 in the morning and end at 2 in the afternoon. I said, what's wrong with American churches? Everybody's in a hurry. They've got to eat.

They're hungry. He said, well, I wish their hunger for God was the same as their hunger for an Out Burger. We'd be doing a lot better.

Don't get me started on that either. So in the essentials, unity. In the non-essentials, liberty.

Means there's liberty there, but in all things, love. So how does that play out? And I've been going back and forth all week. Oh gosh, do I want to talk about any of this? But I want to kind of bring this in a little bit to what I'm trying to get at here.

And you guys have all heard these names, right? You see them on TV. Rick Warren, Joel Osteen, T.D. Jakes, Joyce Meyer, Billy Graham, Rob Bell. These are people people have asked me about probably in the last three or four months.

And what happens is you take somebody that I've talked about before, and I'm not afraid to do this, but you take somebody like a Rob Bell who clearly goes against scriptural leading. He says there's no hell. He's now embraced that homosexuality can live in harmony with biblical Christianity.

He's going in a very dangerous direction. So as a pastor, I have to warn the next generation in love. Say, listen, this guy, you want to stay way, way far away from.

He's not only orthodox. He's off the charts. He's trying to make a seeker sense of user-friendly gospel that appeals to the culture, but doesn't confront the culture that it's appealing to.

So he's very careful. Now these other people, to be honest with you, I haven't taken time to research them. So somebody, let's say like Rick Warren, I would have to read his book.

I would have to look at purpose-driven life. Is there anything heretical? See, that's what we're going after here. I might not say that.

That's a little too flowery. I would have called people to repentance. You know, that's preference.

So I would have to go through and say, because when you say somebody's a false teacher or heretical, that's a very dangerous statement. You better be careful. Are they heretical? Are they espousing something that's not biblical? Some of those guys on TV are.

They're saying things that I just don't know where they're coming up with these things. Joel Osteen I've talked about before. Motivational speaker.

Probably shouldn't be a pastor if he's not going to talk about the difficult truths. You know, when he says, I don't want to talk about sin, Larry King, and I don't want to talk about hell. Well, how can you be a pastor? We have to talk about love and wrath.

We have to talk about grace and judgment. We have to talk about truth and mercy. We have to talk about repentance and love.

We have to talk about holiness and the righteousness of God and the grace of God. You can't just, let me just talk about all these good things because that's a motivational speaker. So we would definitely disagree on the essential or on the non-essentials big time.

On the essentials, I don't know. I don't follow him. I don't listen.

You know, so that's my point is I can't come out and say things against people that I haven't really researched and talk to them. Another example I've given before is, you know, somebody asked me about T.E. Jakes the other day. I haven't listened to him in a long time.

I did go out there and speak at the Potter's house when I released a weight loss book. I spoke on health and fitness. And I actually went there with a checklist.

You know, modalism. Do you deny the Trinity? Name it and claim it. Are you part of the faith movement? I talked to elders and some of the people there and they're like, of course not.

Your faith will stand trial. We believe in the triune nature of God. So who's wrong? Who's right here? Who's wrong? You know, I don't understand.

Somebody's not being up front is what's happening. So a lot of this stuff came out and what I'm trying not to do is endorse anybody. Because our videos get a lot of hits.

I know I'm already going to get emails just mentioning those names. Just saying those names is going to get the bloggers going a little bit crazy. But I'm not endorsing.

You understand that, right? I'm just saying you've got to look into it to know before you use the word heresy or heretical. Those are very strong words. For example, Billy Graham.

Some of you saw, you know, that cross video was one of the most powerful things I've ever seen on the cross. However, he was interviewed a while back and Robert Shuler was talking to him. It's on YouTube.

A lot of hits. And I was listening and I said, oh, Billy, I would not have said that. What? Why? No, because it made it sound like, you know, the way Shuler structured the question kind of caught him off guard, I guess, and he answered it, you know, he didn't answer it really good.

So now he's a false teacher and he's got this. But then you look at the cross. You look at past sermons.

I listened to sermons in the 50s, 60s, and 70s. Man, that guy would call sin, sin. He would call righteousness, righteousness.

He would call people to repentance. Is there something he said that I probably would have said a lot differently? Sure. But that leads to this point.

Christians are fallible and make mistakes. We should consider the total portrait of one's life, character, and ministry and evaluate on that basis. A few poorly chosen statements over the course of many years should not define a person.

One's life and character speaks volumes as to the sincerity of his or her ministry. We should extend to others the same grace that we desire and be patient with others. So what I'm doing here with these groups, I'm not endorsing these people, but I also have to have a lot more information because a lot of times, not all the times, but a lot of times those groups, those self-proclaimed apologetic groups who go after everybody really are not coming after those people with love and grace.

They're coming after them with hate and their mean spirit. And that's the whole point why I passed out this book *Contentiously Contending*. So if you're hearing this on the radio later or the internet, try to pick it up.

It's going to be an e-book pretty soon, *Contentiously Contending*. And it talks about these issues. And that's what I want to do real quick.

Let me just read a few things from here. It's so powerful that I had to just read it. And you guys, if you have copies, you can go over this later.

And Anton was actually in apologetic-type ministries. And he said, I wrote these articles in response to several decades of participation with and observation of many apologetic or discernment-type ministries. While I see a great need for watchmen who will faithfully sound the alarm at the attacks of the enemy, I also see the need for those involved in this vital ministry to go about this work in a godly way.

I am deeply concerned that many who involve themselves in these ministries do so for the wrong reasons and or with the wrong attitude. In the process, they cause more damage than the very error that they are trying to correct. It seems to me that those who take this battle personally and those who resort to malicious attacks on those who believe and teach error are insecure in who they are and what they believe.

And therefore, they need to prove themselves by discrediting everybody else around them. People like this find it hard to relate to other people, let alone impart wisdom to others. Thus, many of them sit in their glass houses to discern error and point fingers at those around them.

And I'll just let you go through this book at your leisure, but it talks mainly to those people who have a critical heart and who are putting down other ministries and other Christians. Now, granted, we need to stand as watchmen on the wall. We need to warn.

We need to contend. We need to challenge people. We need to watch what is being offered.

Oh, thank you, sir. You can tell I have the sniffles, huh? I didn't hide it too well. So basically, that's what I was getting to when Anton's book is closing on this point that we need to weep before we whip.

And this is an urgent call to fault finders that Jesus made here in Matthew 7.1. Removing the plank from your eye. It hurts, does it not? It doesn't happen quickly. Go and remove the plank.

Take it out. It's an urgent call to those who have a critical heart or even those maybe who have been judging God. Is that possible? Is it possible that we've been judging God? There's people here that have been judging God wrongly.

Judging Him as a cosmic ball of love, a doting grandfather that overlooks everything. Judging Him as a mean, vengeful God when all He says is, Come back to Me, come back to a loving Father who wants the best for you. So this whole sermon was focused on that judgmental attitude, whether it's judging others, judging ministry, even our attitude towards God, judging God.

Or obviously, if you don't know Him, if there's people here tonight that don't know Him, this is a wonderful opportunity as we worship Him, as we close our service, cry out to God and say, Lord, I need You. I ask for forgiveness of my sin. I repent of my sin.

That's what this whole point of the sermon was, to look at the heart, the critical heart, and to see, Lord, is it I? Because a lot of people say, Preach it, Shane. Brother, you preach it. You let them have it.

But very few of you are saying, Lord, is it I? Remember, Jesus says, One of you is a devil. It was interesting, they didn't go, I know who it is. What did they say? Lord, is it I? Probably because they knew the deceit of their own heart.

I mean, if Jesus came in here and said, One of you is a devil. One of you is a liar. One of you needs to get your lifestyle straight.

Lord, is it I? Is it? Maybe. Why is that? Because it's that sinful condition of the heart. And that's a good place to be.

Is it Lord? If you're saying, Lord, is it I? Help me of this. I repent of this. Or you're saying, That's not me.

That guy, Shane, he's just too easy. You get harder on these people. Do you need to hear this message? Don't get upset.

Get humble. The whole point is not to upset you. It's to convict so that real change, lasting change, takes place.

Let's end on that note. Lord, I just ask, Lord, that you would help our hard hearts tonight. We just pray for repentance, Lord.

I pray that you would, through this worship, Lord, move our hearts back closer to you. Lord, we want revival here. We want revival in our lives.

We want to be desperate for more of you. Lord, if repentance needs to take place in our marriages, in our families, Lord, in our own personal lives, in our spiritual lives, Lord, we ask that that would take place tonight. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/32/SID32169.mp3>

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