

“EXCUSE ME, IS THAT A PLANK IN YOUR EYE?”

Presented by
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While Jesus was on the Earth, He taught many important lessons through the sermons He preached, the stories He told, and the example He set. Most of His lessons had a specific purpose. But in the end, each one of them was intended to help people get to heaven. Sometimes Jesus taught about things that people **should** do, while at other times He taught about things people should **not** do.

In one of His sermons, as Jesus was teaching about something we should **not** do, He used a rather odd illustration. Here is what He said:

“Why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or, how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck out of your eye’; yet look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother’s eye” (Matthew 7:3-5).

Can you imagine a man walking around with a piece of lumber sticking out of his eye? How could **that** be possible? What was Jesus trying to teach people when He used this strange illustration? Here is the explanation of Christ’s story. The speck in the first man’s eye represented a **small** problem in his life. The plank in the second man’s eye represented a **big** problem in his life. The man with the plank in his eye should not have been trying to help the other man get rid of the little problem in his life because the fellow with the plank in his eye had a much bigger problem of his own. Instead of worrying about someone else’s problems, he should have been fixing the problems in his own life!

Christ’s story teaches us an important lesson. We cannot help our friends with their small problems if we have bigger problems in our own lives. If one of my friends is a thief, and he tells me not to steal, do you think I’m going to listen to him? No, I won’t. I am smart enough to know that since **he** does not obey God, he has no business telling **me** to. The opposite is true, too. For example, if I use curse words when I talk, can I tell my friends not to use curse words—and expect them to listen to me? Of course not! How can I expect anyone else not to do or say bad things if **I** am doing or saying bad things? And how can someone else expect to teach **me** not to do bad things if **he** is doing bad things?

We must first obey God before we can talk to others about how **they** should obey God. If we want to help other people with their problems, then we must first make sure that our own lives are right. In 2 Corinthians 3:2-3, the apostle Paul talked about this when he wrote: “You are our letter, written to be known and read by all; and you show that you are a letter of Christ, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.” What was Paul saying? He was saying that by our good examples, we can influence people to live properly and to be faithful Christians. There is an old poem that expresses this thought very well.

Men read and admire the gospel of Christ,
With its love so unfailing and true;
But what do they say, and what do they think
Of the gospel **according to you?**

You are writing a gospel, a chapter each day,
By deeds that you do, by words that you say.
Men read what you write, whether faithless or true.
Say, what is the gospel **according to you?**

The example we set each day for those around us can help them become Christians and go to heaven.
Or it can drive them away from Christ and Christianity. So what is the gospel—**according to you?!**