

4 acts of Love

(Reflections from the sermon on Sunday – April 17, 2016)

2 – Act #1: Radical Hospitality

For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son."

John 5:22 NIV

"If anyone hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge that person. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. ⁴⁸ There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; the very words I have spoken will condemn them at the last day.

John 12:47-48 NIV

Judgmental: (definition by Merriam-Webster): *tending to judge people too quickly and critically.*

Synonyms – *captious, carping, caviling, faultfinding, hypercritical, critical, overcritical.*

1. Have you ever felt undue judgment from someone? How did that make you feel? How did you feel about the person who made that judgment?
2. Have you ever felt that the church has been judgmental? Please explain.
3. The church has a solid reputation for acting as judge and jury over our individual differences. If much of the world (87% of Americans)ⁱ feels church people are judgmental then what are we doing to give them that impression?



Researchers say 91% of Americans say they believe in Godⁱⁱ, 88% say faith is importantⁱⁱⁱ, and the large majority (64%) says they are open to pursuing their faith in an environment different from a typical church^{iv}. People want God, just not the way the church packages Him.

Here are six basic needs of Americans^v:

- a. The need to believe life is meaningful and has a purpose.
 - b. The need for a sense of community and deeper relationships.
 - c. The need to be listened to and to be heard.
 - d. The need to feel one is growing in faith.
 - e. The need to be appreciated and respected.
 - f. The need for practical help in developing a mature faith.
4. For each one of the needs above, how can the church redefine itself to the community and offer a radical version of the love of Christ?
- a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
 - f.
 - g.
 - h.
 - i.
5. Look at **Matthew 7:1-5**. Are we to judge? Why? What should believers do first? What happens after the plank is removed from the believer's eyes?

ⁱ *UnChristian* – Gabe Lyons and David Kinnaman (Grand Rapids, MI, Baker Books, 2007) 28.

ⁱⁱ Pew Research Center, “‘Nones’ on the Rise,” The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, October 9, 2012, 48.

ⁱⁱⁱ The Barna Group, “Americans Are Exploring New Ways of Experiencing God,” June 8, 2009, <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/12-faithspirituality/270-americans-are-exploring-new-ways-of-experimenting-god.html>.

^{iv} Ibid.

^v George Gallop, Jr. and D. Michael Lindsay, *The Gallup Guide: Reality Check for 21st Century Churches* (Loveland, CO: Froup Publishing, 2002), 12-14.