

*TrailNotes* speaks to forward movement, paying attention to the “landscape” we are passing through in this trail-laced wooded hillside and valley, not to mention the world beyond. *TrailNotes* is an unfolding, ongoing journal of the people who share the trail with us and the things we’re learning and doing.

## ElderTalk

## Do not judge...ever?

ANDY HEININGER

If you have any social media (SM) accounts, most likely you will see Matthew 7: “*Do not judge*,” be injected in some form or another. It is frequently used to defend the right of people to practice freely whatever they believe is right in their heart, and to tell anyone being contrary to “butt out!” This is also typically followed by the encouraging and most popular motto in our current culture, “*Just follow your heart.*”

Truly, the phrase *sounds* lovely, and anyone saying anything to the contrary in these social media arenas, no matter how “*loving*” or “*hateful*” a manner, is portrayed in a negative, judgmental light, pointing to Matt. 7, “*Do not judge!*”

For this article, I combed through five different translations of the Bible to see if I was missing something, but Matt. 7:1-5 continues to a conclusion that I have never actually seen referenced in the SM debate world. Christians and non-Christians alike post the ever-popular verses 1 & 2 with warnings not to judge because the same measure of judgement will be applied to you. Stop there and one could conclude: don’t judge ever! But continue further, and Jesus (look for red letters) instructs us to remove the plank from our own eye so we can see clearly to remove the speck from our brother’s. Remove your plank first, and remove your brother’s speck second. (Interestingly, none of the five versions says, “*Help your brother remove...*” Just “*remove.*”)

Notice, Jesus didn’t offer another option to “*mind my own business*” or “*confirm the speck and let my brother just follow his heart regarding it.*” This made me ask, “*Why would I be judging him for a speck anyway?*” “*Doesn’t my brother want his speck removed?*” I would. In my mind, it would be an irritation.

- Maybe my brother doesn’t know he has one.
- Maybe he has just grown accustomed to it.
- Maybe he is fond of his speck.
- Maybe he finds some sort of pride in his speck.

Seems far-fetched as an actual speck, but if we look at the speck as a metaphor for sin, that makes more sense

why this Matthew passage isn’t fully referenced in the social media disagreements. Conclusion: Jesus instructs that the plank and speck are to be removed.

This reminds me of another passage that is commonly quoted but often short-changed. In John 8:1-11, we meet the woman brought to Jesus, caught in the act of adultery. Typically, we hear Jesus quoted, “*You without sin, cast the first stone*” and then the part where He says, “*Where are your accusers? Has no one condemned you?*”

She replies, “*No one.*”

Jesus says, “*Neither do I.*”

Often, the references stop there. But Jesus concludes: “*Go and sin no more.*” Most people like the non-condemnation part, but the “*Go and sin no more*” part, and “*Remove your plank and speck,*” part are less appealing.



“*Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery*”  
by Lucas Cranach the Younger  
after 1537 in Wittenberg, Germany  
(Now in the Chrysler Museum of Art,  
Norfolk, Virginia)

Finally, Jesus says that we are called to address sin wherever we see it. We are commanded to remove our plank first so we are not being hypocrites. We can then carefully and lovingly remove our brother’s speck through our own personal testimonies because we have been there.

## The story of GRACE HAVEN - II

ANITA HICKINBOTHAM

Ray and Eunice Nethery and the other leaders were powerful instruments, making themselves available collectively and individually to the non-stop parade of young adults who came up the lane—some even arriving, inconveniently, in the middle of the night. Of course, there were a lot of issues involved in keeping a place like this running and the householders met often to discuss both pastoral and practical issues. It was no small task figuring out how to feed and house and tend to so many people. Part of the solution was certainly in making use of the land and raising beef, gathering eggs, bee-keeping, and boiling maple sugar into syrup in the sugar shack.

Numerous householders came and went, but the Nethery home continued to be a foundation stone of the place, literally a light on the hill for hundreds of people whose lives were forever changed by what they experienced here. Many still keep in touch at Christmas or by phone calls and visits. One of our favorites happened not too many years ago in a flashback moment when a classic VW van arrived, carrying a couple who had been here in the early days. You can always tell when an old Farmie is approaching by the slow pace at which they drive up the lane.

At the same time, of course, the Netherys were also busy raising their own five daughters, transporting them to school, tennis, volleyball, gymnastics, swimming and piano lessons, cheerleading, and cross-country bike trips. Eunice rewarded Tori, Jenny, Beth, Kati, and Jackie with 25 cents for each poem they could memorize.

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## “Christmas Unwrapped!”

December 24, 2019

As part of GFC’s Christmas Eve Service, the Grace Youth Production Company, assisted by a chorus of other GFC’ers and musicians, gave the premiere performance of “Christmas Unwrapped” written and directed by our own Samuel Heininger. The program was well attended, but for those of you who missed it, here are some photos taken by Jon Vega, Juli Parsons, and Andy Anschutz to give everyone a glimpse of the evening’s drama.



# An unobstructed view

JULI PARSONS

*Ed's note: Juli shared much of this during worship recently and I asked her to write it up for TrailNotes. Here are the results.*

Recently, I was invited by a friend to paint in the wilderness, down dirt roads into the middle of nowhere, on roads that are impassable if it rains. As an artist, I was delighted with the colors, the light play and shadows as we drove. When we arrived at the house built into the hillside on the tiny little “sort of” road, I could barely contain myself. The back patio was above the tree line, and every mountain was visible on three sides.

I grabbed my paint, easel and canvas and stood in wonder of all the beauty in each direction, taking a moment to decide which direction to paint. I was reveling in the glory of this unobstructed view and my friend laughed and said, “I told you that you would want to paint here!”

During one of my “Thankfulness Walks,” I was musing on “an unobstructed view,” and it occurred to me, what if we had an Unobstructed View of Jesus?

We all have obstructions that change our perspective and our view of who Jesus is. Our wounds, our sins, past hurts and circumstances, all cloud our view of Jesus.

I NEED an unobstructed view of Jesus this Christmas. The depth of our need for Jesus brings reality. I need the real, raw, beautiful Jesus that made these mountains, holds my tears, understands and comforts me in my wounds, breaks my bonds, and sets me free from it all. He is the Savior of the world.

In order to show others the real, raw, beautiful Jesus that takes every wound, hurt and sin upon Himself, and constantly loves far more than any of us could imagine, I first have to enter that place where I want to know Him more and more, sit at His feet, see beauty with His eyes.

I NEED an unobstructed view of Jesus this Christmas, simply because I want people around me to see that Unobstructed View of Jesus.

Less of me and ALL of Him.  
Juli Parsons, © 2019



Photo by Juli Parsons



## Like father, like son!

In the photos below, taken by former GFC Youth Pastor Adam Hange, we see his and his wife Hannah’s (Ross) son, Dietrich, age 6, as he practices for (left) and reads (right) the Christmas story at First Congregational Church in Hillsboro, Oregon, where Adam is pastor.



*“Behold, I bring you good news of great joy,  
that shall be for all people!”*

## JANUARY 2020

- 5** Pastor Eric Byrom begins series on the book of Romans. This week, Romans 1:1-7. 10:00 am.
- 11** Family Game Night 6:00 to 9:00 pm at GFC.
- 12** Elder Eric Byrom preaches on Romans 1:8-15. Circle Church leaders meet at 12:45 pm. Members’ potluck 5:30-7:30 pm. 
- 18** Men’s Prayer Breakfast at McDonald’s on Hanley Rd. 9:00 am.
- 19** Elder Robert Key preaches on Spiritual Gifts. Buildings and Grounds Committee lunch meeting 1-2 pm in Multi-Purpose Room. 
- 26** Elder Robert Key preaches on Spiritual Gifts.

## GRACE HAVEN - II *(continued from page 2.)*

Chet and Carol Weigle and their kids lived in the old farmhouse at the end of the driveway, until the structure burned and a new ranch-style home was built on the site. The Weigle, Walker, and Nethery kids (14 in all) were often together exploring in the woods, in the nature reserve (where the Phillips' home is now), in the fields, or at the pond or creek. Life on the Farm included riding horses throughout what had accumulated to almost 90 acres, or making forts in one of the barns, or the periodic shenanigans of childhood. Once a classic moment escalated and some of the kids launched water balloons into the house! We suspect that didn't happen twice! Sometimes it became necessary for the families to hang a note on their door, letting folks know that it was, for a few hours, family time.

Ah, yes....those were the days...But by far, the early days weren't the only good ones. Although a few of us were here in the beginning (you can recognize us by our gray hair and our tendency to reminisce), through all the subsequent years we have continued to evolve because of the faithfulness of the Lord and the presence and contributions of those with whom we've progressively shared life.

I guess we all began here as seekers. We were each looking for something to fill a void, to be a part of something bigger than ourselves, to learn Kingdom principles and skills and life skills and work skills. Most of us found ourselves being stretched by a God who had a bigger vision and agenda than we did. We have had to learn flexibility and humility and trust. We've needed to repent and forgive. We've discovered strengths, and developed relationships that have enabled us to weather some pretty significant storms. We've had to die to some dreams, and have been surprised when God sometimes sprouted something unexpected from those buried seeds.

We've shared a lot of life together. We've celebrated birthdays, engagements, marriages, births of children and ministries, baptisms, graduations, new jobs, victories over illness, answered prayer, special provisions, anniversaries, holidays, housewarmings, the arrival of the first grandchild, the first fall leaf, the first snowflake, and the first crocus—which brought the hope of another summer ahead. Ray never fails to remind us to be aware of the creation around us and to be grateful for its beauty. But we must confess—we didn't often celebrate the overly generous gift of rainfall that seemed to coincide with every summer's July 4th conference. Abraham's stars have nothing on our raindrop tally.

*(to be continued)*

## "Santa Claus is coming to town"

Recently, a British evangelist began his sermon with this observation:

"There are four stages of a man's life: 1) he believes in Santa Claus, 2) he doesn't believe in Santa Claus, 3) he IS Santa Claus, 4) he looks like Santa Claus."



After getting spiffed up at the neighborhood barber shop, Santa, alias Matt Godsil, headed to the Carousel to delight local children.

(both photos courtesy of Meghann Artz Photography)



*(Matt performed the wedding for the parents of this baby!)*

### Grace Fellowship Church

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Eric Byrom	Presiding Elder/ Pastor
Jadaé Fox	Elder
Andy Heining	Elder
Robert Key	Elder
Jon Vega	Elder
Kay Berry and Jadaé Fox	Office

*(A complete list of church functionaries will return next month)*