

## “Why do you see the speck in your neighbor’s eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye?” (Luke 6:41)

After coming down from the mountain where he had prayed all night, Jesus chose his apostles. In an open field, he spoke to them at length, starting with the beatitudes.<sup>1</sup>

In Luke’s text, unlike in Matthew’s Gospel, there are only four beatitudes and they concern those who are poor, hungry, afflicted or persecuted, with the addition of four admonitions against those who are rich, complacent, unconcerned or arrogant. In fact, in the synagogue at Nazareth,<sup>2</sup> Jesus proclaims God’s special love for the “least” and makes them his mission. He affirms that “the Spirit of the Lord has come upon me” and proclaims that he will bring good news to the poor, deliverance to captives and freedom to the oppressed.

Jesus goes on to exhort the disciples to love even their enemies, taking their inspiration from the way his heavenly Father acts towards us: “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”<sup>3</sup>

He goes on to tell them: “Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.”<sup>4</sup> Then Jesus admonishes them further by using a deliberately disproportionate image:

### “Why do you see the speck in your neighbor’s eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye?”

Jesus truly knows our hearts. How many times in our daily lives do we have this sad experience: it is easy to criticize others—even harshly – for errors or failures, without taking into consideration that, in doing so, we attribute to ourselves a right that belongs to God alone. The fact is that to “remove the log” from our own eye<sup>5</sup> we need the humility that comes from the awareness that we are sinners, continually in need of God’s forgiveness. Only those who have the courage to notice their own “log”—what they personally need to change—will be able to understand, without judgment, without exaggeration, their own frailties and weaknesses. It’s through humility that can give others the possibility to recognize the speck in their eye.

On the other hand, Jesus does not tell us to close our eyes and let things slide. He wants his followers to help each other to progress along the journey to a new life. Saint Paul insistently calls Christians to be concerned about one another: to correct those who are undisciplined, to encourage the fainthearted, to support the weak, to be patient with everyone.<sup>6</sup> Only love is capable of this kind of service.

1. Cf. Lk 6:20-26.

2. Cf. Lk 4:16-21.

3. Lk 6:36.

4. *Ibid*, 37.

5. *Ibid*, 42.

6. Cf. 1Thes 5:14.

## “Why do you see the speck in your neighbor’s eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye?”

How can we put this Word of Life into practice?

Let’s take the opportunity beginning with this Lenten season, we can ask Jesus to teach us to see others as he sees them. He sees everyone with the eyes of his heart, because his is a gaze of love. Then, in order to help one another, we could go back to a practice that was fundamental for Chiara and the first group of young women in Trent.

Chiara said, “In the beginning, it was not always easy to love one another constantly. [...] ‘Dust’ would settle on us, clouding our relationships with one another, and our unity would diminish. That happened when we noticed one another’s faults or imperfections, and so judgments would arise, and the fire of reciprocal love would grow cold.

One day, in order to counter this situation, we got the idea of making a pact. We called it ‘the pact of mercy.’ We decided that every morning we would see each person we met as totally new—at home, at school, at work—totally forgetting their imperfections or defects, covering over everything with love. [...] It was a strong commitment, made by all of us together. It helped us to always be the first to love, imitating our merciful God who forgives and forgets.”<sup>7</sup>

Prepared by Augusto Parody Reyes  
and the Word of Life team

---

7. Chiara Lubich, “Love of Neighbor” to a meeting of Muslim Friends of the Focolare, November 1, 2002.

---

Each month the Focolare chooses a Scripture passage as a guide and inspiration for daily living. The commentary on it was originally written by founder, Chiara Lubich (1920–2008). Today this Word of Life, written by an international commission and translated into 96 different languages, reaches several million people worldwide. For audio and videos resources about the WoL, visit [focolaremedia.com](https://www.focolaremedia.com)

