

THE
**GOLDEN RULE AND
GODLY JUDGMENT**
MATTHEW 7:1-20

Jesus said, "Don't judge", but did He mean that it's always wrong to judge? Are we to silence our objections or can we follow the Golden Rule & still apply Godly judgment? Today we study Matt. 7:1-20, to rightly apply the most used/misused verse in the Bible.

The most quoted/misquoted verse in all the Bible.

Matthew 7:1 (NET) ¹ "Do not judge so that you will not be judged.

But does this mean we should NEVER judge?

Our culture has developed an unspoken expectation to stay out of each other's business. *Don't judge me...and I won't judge you. It is implied that saying anyone is WRONG....is...WRONG.*

When you say someone is WRONG for judging...you have just JUDGED them!

2 Important Rules of Bible Interpretation:

1. **Never Read a Bible Verse.** The Bible was not meant to be lifted out one verse at a time any more than sentences from your letters are. Read the surrounding text to get the context.
2. **View Scripture THRU Scripture.** Consider other passages when you run into one that seems a little strange. Interpret what is UNCLEAR in light of what IS CLEAR.

Matthew 7:1-6 (NET) ¹ "Do not judge so that you will not be judged.² For by the standard you judge you will be judged, and the measure you use will be the measure you receive.³ Why do you see the speck in your brother's eye, but fail to see the beam of wood in your own? ⁴ Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye,' while there is a beam in your own? ⁵ You hypocrite! First remove the beam from your own eye, and then you can see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. ⁶ Do not give what is holy to dogs or throw your pearls before pigs; otherwise they will trample them under their feet and turn around and tear you to pieces.

There's some strange stuff on the back end of that, huh? Let's walk through it committed to 1) Never read a Bible verse and 2) View Scripture through Scripture.

Judge With Mercy

Matthew 7:1-2 (NET) ¹ "Do not judge so that you will not be judged.² For by the standard you judge you will be judged, and **the measure you use will be the measure you receive.**

Our tendency is to view other people's actions through the *MICROSCOPE* while we want them to look at our actions through a *TELESCOPE*. We tend to show ourselves much more mercy than we offer others.

Jesus is NOT saying we are never to judge. Remember, this chapter is part of the larger writing in which **JESUS commands His disciples to confront a fellow believer who is living in sin** (Matt. 18:15-22). In order to do this, one MUST judge that their actions are sinful. However, the GOAL of the confrontation is merciful restoration. Jesus expects us to **judge with mercy**...the kind of mercy we want extended to us.

Question What's **the measure** of mercy **you use**? Can you pray this? "*God, judge me with the mercy I extend to others.*"

Judge Without Hypocrisy

Matthew 7:3-5 (NET) ³ Why do you see the speck in your brother's eye, but fail to see the beam of wood in your own? ⁴ Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye,' while there is a beam in your own? ⁵ You hypocrite! First remove the beam from your own eye, and then you can see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

This hyperbole might have caused His audience to smile or even laugh or loud (LOL).

🦊 King David was confronted by Nathan (2 Samuel 12). Nathan tells the story of a man who has many sheep who takes a lamb from another man. David says, "*He should die. Have him pay back 4 times as much!*" - Nathan says, "You're the man!" (12:7). David was judging hypocritically - with a stick in his eye.

Jesus is NOT saying we shouldn't try to confront & correct a brother or sister who is caught in sin.

(Gal. 6:1) Jesus is NOT saying we should forget about removing the speck from our brother's eye, but to be gentle & humble when removing it.

GODLY JUDGMENT: Judge with mercy & without hypocrisy.

Read about King David's repentance & response Psalm 51, which includes these words.

Psalm 51:13 (NET) Then I will teach rebels **your merciful ways**, and **sinners will turn to you.**

If that's our desire, **if we judge with mercy & without hypocrisy - that's Godly judgment.**

Dogs & Pigs?

Matthew 7:6 (NET) ⁶ Do not give what is **holy** to dogs or throw your **pearls** before pigs; otherwise they will trample them under their feet and turn around and tear you to pieces.

Jesus is talking about PEOPLE who act like **dogs** and **pigs** (that's judgmental).

DOGS. In Jesus' day **dogs** were dirty & dangerous scavengers, not domesticated house pets. If you messed with them they might **turn around and tear you to pieces.** Some PEOPLE are like that. Instead of appreciating your merciful & unhypocritical judgment, they turn on you.

PIGS. For Jewish people, **pigs** were unclean nuisances who could tear up good farming ground. Throwing precious **pearls** into the middle of a pile of pigs wouldn't cause them to stop suddenly and appreciate the beauty of the pearls.

👉 When people respond to our Godly judgment with anger or total disregard - we need to stop offering the holy & precious truths of God to them and go to those who will listen.

Applying Godly Judgment cannot be done without God.

Pray Persistently

Matthew 7:7-11 (NET) ⁷ "**Ask** and it will be given to you; **seek** and you will find; **knock** and the door will be opened for you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. ⁹ Is there anyone among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹ If you then, although you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, **how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!**

Followers of Jesus can trust that **God hears, cares, & responds to our prayers.**

Ask, seek, & knock are 3 ways to say the same thing: **Keep on calling on God!**

Have you STOPPED doing that? Have you forgotten WHO you are asking?

Your Father will answer and **give good gifts to those who ask Him** (v.11).

The Golden Rule & the Narrow Gate

Matthew 7:12-14 (NET) ¹² In everything, **treat others as you would want them to treat you**, for this fulfills the law and the prophets. ¹³ “Enter through the narrow gate, because the gate is wide and the way is spacious that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. ¹⁴ But **the gate is narrow and the way is difficult that leads to life**, and **there are few who find it**.

This is what makes Christianity stand out from other teachings. Christians are to treat others with kindness, even their enemies. Contrary to our culture’s cry, Christians aren’t to turn a blind eye to people caught in sin, but are to care enough to do the tough thing and speak the truth in love. To love our neighbor as ourself is the teaching throughout the Scriptures (**the law and the prophets**).

It’s easy to follow our culture; to love the lovable, applaud the sin that is socially acceptable, and seek out smiles without caring about souls. But ***we have not been called to take the easy road***.

Jesus warns His sheep of the dangers awaiting them...and us.

False Prophets & Bad Fruit

Matthew 7:15-20 (NET) ¹⁵ **Watch out for false prophets**, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are voracious wolves.¹⁶ You will recognize them by their fruit. Grapes are not gathered from thorns or figs from thistles, are they?¹⁷ In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree is not able to bear bad fruit, nor a bad tree to bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ So then, **you will recognize them by their fruit**.

False prophets are those who claim to speak for God, who pretend to be a part of the flock (**in sheep’s clothing**), who are really **voracious wolves** waiting to feed on the sheep.

So how is it that we can recognize false prophets? Jesus says, “**You will recognize them by their fruit**”. We can only do that if we **apply Godly Judgment**.

And here’s the danger you need to be aware of. ***It’s not that these people don’t speak some truth - it’s that these people point others away from THE TRUTH*** - who Jesus is and what Jesus says.

What might these people look like? Will they be ugly, unkept, poor communicators that no one will want to hear? Unlikely. Just because they smile, tell good stories, have thousands of followers, & quote some Bible doesn’t mean they are true prophets speaking on behalf of God. They will likely comfort & soothe without warning of God’s judgment & the need for turning from sin.

Paul warned of False Teachers

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 (NET) ¹³ For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no wonder, for even **Satan disguises himself as an angel of light**. ¹⁵ Therefore it is not surprising his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will correspond to their actions.

How should we Spot & Respond to False Prophets?

Next week we will open with some typical teachings that false prophets are known for. Here are some ways to spot & respond to false prophets/teachings.

1. Listen to what is being said and weigh it with Scriptures. (Bereans - Acts 17:11) Remember:

- A. Never read A Bible verse.
- B. View Scripture Through Scripture.
- C. Ask a mature believer for insight.

2. STOP LISTENING to false prophets & seek out true teachers.

3. PRAY for & CONFRONT those leading others astray.

If we believe someone is a false prophet, do we PRAY for them? Do we desire to extend mercy in exchange for their repentance? If not, then we need to check our motives & remember the mercy that has been extended to us. At the same time, Jesus - the Good Shepherd - calls us to protect His sheep from those who prove to be wolves.

'Judge not' might be the mantra of our culture but this is NOT the meaning of the Scripture.

It is our task, commanded by the King, to apply both Golden Rule & Godly judgment.

GODLY JUDGMENT: Judge with mercy & without hypocrisy.

Feet2Faith Challenges:

1. **Turn from YOUR SIN.** What sin must you get rid of?
2. **Approach a brother/sister caught in sin with mercy.** What brother or sister do you need to approach with prayerful & mercifully?
3. **Make the 'golden rule' a part of your daily practice.** Serve someone this week.