

Matthew 7:1 ¶ Judge not, that ye be not judged.

Matthew 7:2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

“judge” = to distinguish, i.e. decide (mentally or judicially); by implication, to try, condemn, punish

This seems to be a verse that many pagans like to use against Christians. The difficulty comes in distinguishing between proper discernment and condemnation. The application here, I believe, is in condemning others for their sin. In other words, if you are quick to condemn others, they will be quick to condemn you; if you are strict in your standards for condemnation, you will be judged by strict standards for your own life choices. Oftentimes, pagans expect Christians to live by even higher standards than many Christians establish for themselves.

As we go into the following verses, I think it becomes clear that the main point of this particular teaching is to avoid hypocrisy. Again, this goes back to our motives and the attitude of our heart. The objective is not to be a hindrance to others growing in the faith or coming to saving faith. Paul addressed this principle in his letter to the Romans.

Romans 14:12-13 “So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way.”

Matthew 7:3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

Matthew 7:4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

Matthew 7:5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.

Jesus illustrates His teaching on judgment with a word picture. He basically says, “You are pointing out a twig in your brother’s eye while ignoring the big board in your own eye. That is hypocritical. First, get rid of the big board in your eye, and then you will better understand how to help your brother get rid of the twig in his eye.”

The discernment being addressed here is in reference to discerning the sin in your own life and being willing to repent and forsake that sin. Getting rid of sin in your own life results in clearer vision. Getting rid of our sin causes us to come face to face with our need for God’s love, mercy and forgiveness. This prepares our heart to deal with others in love, mercy and forgiveness.

Important to note is that Jesus is not telling us not to confront others with their sin; He is telling us to deal with our own sin first. Then we are to help others without hypocrisy. Jesus gives us a good standard in the gospel of Luke.

Luke 6:31 "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."

As I went on to the next verse, it caused me to come back to this section. It seems that the main application here is regarding your actions toward a "brother," a fellow believer. Although the Greek word for *brother* is inclusive of mankind in general, the context when taken with the following verse would seem to be more in reference to interaction with someone in the kingdom.

Matthew 7:6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

"dogs" = Easton's: As the dog was an unclean animal, the terms "dog," "dog's head," "dead dog," were used as terms of reproach or of humiliation.

Psalm 22:16 "For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet."

"swine" = Easton's: ...regarded as the most unclean and the most abhorred of all animals.

Isaiah 65:4 "Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, which eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels...."

2Peter 2:22 "But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

This verse clarifies that we are to be discerning about our interactions with others. We are not to share our spiritual treasure with those who won't treasure it. This actually makes me think of the debates that occur between believers and atheists or "pro choice" proponents or those who reject scripture as God's word, etc. Debate for debate's sake accomplishes nothing. It just provides a platform for the believer and the treasure he is defending to be mocked and degraded. On the other hand, we should not decline to be ready "to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." (1Peter 3:15) This requires discernment regarding "dogs and swine," those who hate God and His truth vs. those who are seeking the truth.

I want to be clear that I am not condemning programs that offer an opportunity for learned men on both sides of an issue to be presented in a respectful manner. In such audiences there are true seekers as well as mockers. You don't avoid declaring the truth for fear of attack. Jesus clearly exemplified that truth. I think, however, that participation in such formats should be thoughtfully and prayerfully considered.

Matthew 7:7 ¶ Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

Matthew 7:8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

All of a sudden the location of these verses makes a lot more sense to me. In the matters of revelation of our own sin and discernment of “dogs and swine” and understanding of the truth, the Lord is declaring that all we have to do is ask the Father from a sincere heart.

James 4:3 “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.”

It’s easy to verbalize a request to the Father. Jesus expressly grouped “asking...seeking...and knocking” to illustrate perseverance as an indicator of the condition of the heart—Is the request sincere? I like the CJB translation of these verses.

Keep asking, and it will be given to you; keep seeking, and you will find; keep knocking, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who keeps asking receives; he who keeps seeking finds; and to him who keeps knocking, the door will be opened.

Any time we approach God with a sincere heart seeking His truth and / or provision, we will receive. Again, we have to guard against preconceived ideas of expectation as to how He will answer. We just need to ask in faith with confident expectation of His answer.

*Mark 11:23 “For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; **and shall not doubt in his heart**, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.”*

In thinking through this section again, it seemed important to clarify that those who are part of God’s kingdom and recognize Him as Lord would only approach Him with requests that are according to His revealed will. This would rule out presumptuous prayers that position God as “Santa Claus” to provide the desires of our flesh.

John 15:7 “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”

1John 5:14 “And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us....”

Matthew 7:9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

Matthew 7:10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

Matthew 7:11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

Again, Jesus illustrates the truth He is teaching using a father and son. My paraphrase—“Who among you would give a stone in response to his son’s request for bread? Or a serpent in response to his request for a fish? You, all of whom are sinners, know how to give good gifts to your children. Don’t you think that your Father in heaven, who is holy and righteous, can be counted on to give good things to His children?”

In Luke’s gospel the Lord goes on to identify good gifts as the Holy Spirit, the source of the believer’s empowerment and provision that indwells every believer for preservation and security until the time he/she is in possession of his/her full inheritance as a joint heir with Christ.

Luke 11:13 “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?”

1Corinthians 3:16 “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”

Ephesians 1:13-14 “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”

(12/08) It is through the Holy Spirit that God “gifts” every believer.

*1Corinthians 12:4-11 “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one **and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.**”*

Matthew 7:12 ¶ Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Conclusion to this section: Live according to the golden rule as quoted above from Luke and as stated in this verse. The modern version—Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Why does Jesus say that this is the teaching of the law and the prophets? Because (also as quoted previously) the law tells us to “love your neighbor as yourself.”

Leviticus 19:18 “Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.”

Zechariah 8:17 “And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour....”

Matthew 7:13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

Matthew 7:14 Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

Enter what? The context of the teaching is the kingdom of heaven, God's kingdom. I thought the Greek for the word *straight* was thought-provoking:

“narrow (from obstacles standing close about)”

In other words, the way that leads to **life** is a narrow one that is surrounded by obstacles that would prevent our staying on that path. The way that leads to **destruction** is spacious and obstacle free. The Greek for *find* is also enlightening.

“get, obtain, perceive, see”

In other words, it will take some discernment and desire to identify the narrow way. It's not hidden; it is, however, beset with obstacles and not a popular route. You'll find yourself going against the crowd along the way. There will be few that find and choose to follow this road in comparison to the many that will be content to follow the easily traveled road to destruction.

It just hit me that the way/road leads to the gate that provides entrance to life or destruction. Once in the gate, the believer will find that his life is full and abundant, spacious and secure, and blessed with all the treasures of the kingdom. Those who enter the gate that leads to destruction will find their lives empty, confining and full of misery. Both gates give entry to one's eternal existence.

Matthew 7:15 ¶ Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

Matthew 7:16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

Matthew 7:17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

Matthew 7:18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

Matthew 7:19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

Matthew 7:20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

For the first time I am actually understanding more of the flow of these verses. The false prophets in sheep's clothing are obstacles on the narrow way in the life of the believer and those who are seeking the truth. The Greek for “false prophets” makes reference to “religious impostors”; in other words, they are pretending to be what they are not in order to deceive others. The Lord often references His followers as sheep.

Psalm 100:3 “Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.”

John 10:26-27 "But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me...."

These false prophets are masquerading as followers of the Lord, and they want to satisfy their hunger by destroying sheep. The Lord then anticipates the obvious question—"How can we identify a false prophet among the sheep?" Jesus reveals that what they produce will identify them. A good tree produces good fruit. You can't gather grapes or figs from thornbushes. A rotten tree produces bad fruit. The Lord is saying that false prophets, ravening wolves, are corrupt trees and true believers, God's sheep, are good trees. The bad trees are going to be cast into the fire.

Revelation 20:15 "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

The Lord then emphasizes again that it is what is produced through the "ministry" of these false prophets that will identify them. I remember a statement Jon Courson gave in one of his teachings. My paraphrase: If it eats sheep, it's a wolf.

Matthew 7:21 ¶ Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Matthew 7:22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

Matthew 7:23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

These are very serious verses that should cause each one of us to carefully examine our lives. The first thing I notice is that Jesus is identifying Himself as "Lord," the supreme authority or master. He then says that not everyone that addresses Him as "Lord" will get to enter the kingdom of heaven. In other words, you can know who He is without truly serving Him as Lord. He is very clear in stating that those who DO the will of His Father in heaven are the ones who qualify to enter the kingdom. I can hear many shouting—"But salvation is a gift." That is true. True faith, however, is proven by obedience to the will of the Father. The book of James clearly addresses this truth.

James 2:17-22 "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?"

Jesus then acknowledges that there will be some who will claim to have prophesied in His name, cast out devils and performed miracles; yet, He will tell

them that He never recognized them as His followers. He then identifies these people as “workers of iniquity.” This again goes back to the false prophets in sheep’s clothing; there are many who “claim” the name of Christ falsely. This also tells me that miracles can be performed by false prophets. This makes me think of other verses

*Matthew 24:24 “For there shall arise **false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.**”*

*2Thessalonians 2:8-9 “And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is **after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders....**”*

I think we tend to forget that Satan is capable of miraculous things within the parameters allowed Him by our Sovereign God. The story of Job vividly depicts this truth.

*Job 1:8-2:7 “And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. **And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand.** So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD. And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother’s house: And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: **And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword;** and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, **The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them;** and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, **The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword;** and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother’s house: And, behold, **there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead;** and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.... Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD.... And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. **And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.** So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.”*

This illustrates that Satan has power to utilize evil men in his schemes, to make fire fall from heaven that is wrongly attributed to the actions of God, to cause a tornado to wreak destruction in a specific spot, and to cause Job to develop boils all over his body. The scripture is very clear that he was only allowed to act within the parameters established by God. Scripture is also very clear in declaring Satan to be the god of this world.

*2Corinthians 4:3-4 "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom **the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not**, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."*

*Ephesians 2:2 "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to **the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience...."***

*Revelation 12:9 "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called **the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world**: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."*

I think one of the greatest tools used by the forces of Satan is deception.

*2Corinthians 11:14-15 "And no marvel; **for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness**; whose end shall be according to their works."*

We tend to believe what we see and experience. We need to remember that what we see and experience can be deceiving. I believe that anything we see, hear or experience that doesn't line up with God's word in every way is a tool of deception in the hands of the enemy. It may appear to be good and harmless, but it will lead us down the path of regret and will eliminate our ability to be effective in ministry before our Father in heaven.

"that day" (v22) – This indicates that there is a future day of reckoning for all before Jesus, Who is pictured here in the position of Judge. Other scripture clearly declares that the Father has delegated all judgment to the Son.

John 5:22 "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son...."

Romans 14:10 "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."

2Timothy 4:1 "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom...."

Matthew 7:24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: Matthew 7:25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds

blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. Matthew 7:26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

Matthew 7:27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

“Therefore” – Considering everything I’ve told you....

Jesus is basically saying (my paraphrase): If you have listened carefully to what I’ve told you and live accordingly, you are like a wise man who builds his house on a well placed, strong foundation so that it can’t be destroyed by the powerful forces of nature. If you have heard what I have said and choose to ignore the instruction, you are like a foolish man that carelessly built his house on a poor foundation and will easily be completely destroyed by the forces of nature. (1/08) In other words, living according to God’s will through faith in Jesus will enable us to weather the storms of life and emerge safe and secure through the provision of the Holy Spirit. If, however, we ignore God’s will as revealed in His word, the storms of life will destroy us because we will be without God’s provision of the Holy Spirit.

We know that as believers, the foundation of our faith is the **rock** Jesus Christ.

*Deuteronomy 32:3-4 “Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is **the Rock**, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.”*

*1Samuel 2:2 “There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: **neither is there any rock like our God.**”*

*Psalms 89:26 “He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, **and the rock of my salvation.**”*

*1Corinthians 10:4 “And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and **that Rock was Christ.**”*

*1Peter 2:5-8 “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion **a chief corner stone**, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And **a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence**, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.”*

Matthew 7:28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:

Matthew 7:29 For he taught them as *one* having authority, and not as the scribes.

Jesus came to the end of His teaching. The people were amazed because He taught them as the authority behind the truth He was teaching. (Note that at this point His audience consisted of more than His disciples.) He wasn't teaching from scripture about God's authority, which is how the scribes taught. The scribes would be comparable to our pastors and seminary instructors today. They can only teach according to their understanding of God's truth. Jesus was the author of that truth, and could teach it with authority within the right context with the proper application and intent.