

# Chapter 11

## **SERMON ON THE MOUNT 6**

### *MATTHEW 7 - PART 1*

#### **SECTION 1: JUDGING (Matthew 7:1-5) Scripture List:** Luke 6:41-42; John 12:48-50; Romans 14

- I. Jesus spoke very plainly to His disciples about criticizing and judging other people. He said, “*Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way as you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.*” This is a clear warning that if we judge others, we will face the consequences of that judgment in our own lives.
  - A. To judge means to distinguish; decide; try (as in a court of law); punish; determine; discern between good and evil.
    1. Judging is determining right from wrong, good and bad. We know that in a world where both right and wrong, good and evil exist, that judgment is necessary. It requires use of judgment to convict the guilty and acquit the innocent.
    2. Judgment implies that standards have been set: standards of right and wrong, standards of good and evil, standards of acceptable and unacceptable. God Himself established the standards of right and wrong and good and evil.
    3. When Jesus says, “Do not judge...,” He is not referring to establishing a society with no laws, codes of conduct, or system of determining guilt and innocence. Jesus is speaking about our individual inclination to have an opinion about everything and everyone; to declare others good or evil, acceptable or unacceptable, without knowing all the facts, without being able to see beyond the surface, and without taking into account our own weaknesses and failings.
  - B. God judges. God is a just judge. God established for His people Israel a system of laws and standards that emphasized fairness and consistency. He also established the principle of “an eye for an eye,” let the punishment fit the crime. God’s judgment is not based on superficial outward observation, but rather on His ability to see the inside, the thoughts and motives of the heart. (Exodus 12:12; Leviticus 18:4; 1 Samuel 16:7; Psalms 19:9; John 5:30; Hebrews 12:23)
- II. We must understand that there is both right and wrong judgment. Jesus cautions us to avoid wrong judgment - that which is based on superficial observation, that which is not our responsibility, that which makes us feel superior to the one we are judging, and that which unfair - and He upholds right judgment - that which takes into account the motives of the heart, that which takes into account our own weakness, and that which is tempered with mercy.
  - A. Here are some of the characteristics of wrong judgment:
    1. Wrong judgment is external. Samuel’s initial misjudgment when he was sent to anoint one of Jesse’s sons to be the next king of Israel was based on outward observation or appearance. (1 Samuel 16:7; John 7:24)

2. Wrong judgment is negative or destructive. It is judgment for condemnation rather than restoration. Wrong judgment offers no hope of redemption.
3. Wrong judgment is prejudiced. It makes judgments based on one's preconceived ideas about a person or people. It is driven by emotions and attitudes rather than by truth.
4. Wrong judgment is hasty. It involves judging without hearing both sides, getting all the facts, or inquiring and waiting on God.
5. Wrong judgment is prideful. It judges others harshly without taking into account one's own sins, weaknesses, and failings.

B. Here are some characteristics of right judgment:

1. Right judgment is fair and impartial. It hears all sides of the story, gets all the facts, and looks for the issues of the heart. (Proverbs 18:17; John 7:24)
2. Right judgment refuses to be influenced by one's emotions, prejudices, and self-interest.
3. Right judgment is merciful, cares for the wrong doer, seeks forgiveness and restoration. (James 2:13)
4. Right judgment is corrective. It looks forward to righting the wrong. If right judgment requires discipline or punishment, it also aims to instruct and reform.

III. Both Jesus and Paul advocated self-judgment. Jesus said we should *"take the plank out of our own eye before attempting to remove a speck from someone else's eye."* and Paul tells us "if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment." (Matthew 7:5; 1 Corinthians 11:31-32)

A. When we judge ourselves, we are not to act as prosecutor (to seek to condemn) or as defender (to rationalize and justify), but simply to get at the truth, to be open and honest. (Romans 8:1)

1. Condemnation comes from Satan. Condemnation attacks one's sense of worth rather than the fault or error. Condemnation makes one feel worthless and hopeless. Reject condemnation.
2. Conviction comes from the Holy Spirit. Conviction makes us aware of specific sin or fault, challenges us to admit and confess our sin, and gives a specific course of action to deal with the sin and its consequences. Conviction gives hope - hope of forgiveness and cleansing, hope of restoration. Embrace conviction.

B. One of the possible consequences of both self-judgment and judgment of others is blame and guilt. Judgment fixes blame on a person. If we simply accept the blame and don't deal with it, it leads to condemnation. If we don't accept the blame we try to shift the blame to someone else or to something beyond our control. We need to turn from blame-fixing or blame-shifting and focus on guilt-removing.

1. Self-judgment should always come before judging anyone or anything else. (Matthew 7:5)
  2. Whether the sin and guilt is yours or another's, the aim should be to forgive the sin and cleanse the guilt through honest confession, repentance, and cleansing by Jesus' blood. (1 John 1:8-10)
  3. Self-judgment brings self-correction and self-discipline. When we judge ourselves, we turn from the sin and change our behavior and attitude. We discipline ourselves to correct conduct.
- IV. Jesus clearly taught that we will be judged by the same standards and with the same measure we apply to others. (Matthew 7:1-2)
- A. We will be judged as a consequence of judging others. If we do not judge others, we will remove the pressure of judgment from ourselves to a large degree. If you're not part of the problem or part of the answer, don't judge the person or the situation. We don't have to have an opinion on everything.
  - B. We will be judged by the standards we judge others with. Those who set very high standards for others, who leave no leeway for mistakes by others, will find themselves held to a much higher level of accountability with God.
  - C. We will be shown mercy as we show mercy to others. God has always found a way to temper His judgment with mercy. If we will do the same we will be in a position to receive mercy ourselves when we need it. (Matthew 7:1; Matthew 18:21-35; James 2:12-13)

**SECTION 2: PEARLS AND PIGS - PRECIOUS AND VILE (Matthew 7:6) Scripture List:**  
Jeremiah 15:19; Hosea 10:12; Acts 18:6; 1 Corinthians 3:1-2

- I. Jesus said, *"Don't give what is sacred to dogs; don't throw your pearls to pigs..."*
- A. What kind of pearls? Pearls of truth. Pearls are precious stones but they are distinct from all other precious stones because they are formed within a living creature. They are formed within an oyster as it responds to a painful irritant within its shell.
  - B. God's truth must be formed within us. When we hear truth, believe truth and embrace truth, it often begins to focus on painful irritants within our own lives. The "truth we own" may be formed in adversity, in painful experience, in the fire of testing and temptation.
- II. Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." He preached and taught the precious truths of the Kingdom of God. But just as He was opposed, attacked, and persecuted because of the truths He taught, He knew His followers would also find the things they believed and taught opposed and attacked. (John 14:6)
- A. Truth comes from God and is precious. A very high price has been paid to make truth accessible to everyone. God sent His Son to declare and demonstrate the truth. Jesus died for truth. Through the centuries many people have given their lives to spread the truth of God and His Kingdom in their generation or to pass it along to the next

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generation. (John 14:6)

- B. Truth produces liberty. Truth believed and received, truth applied in one's life produces true freedom and liberty. (John 8:32)
- C. Truth requires a response from the one who hears it. When we learn facts it only requires mental assent, but when we learn truth, it requires a response of the mind, will and emotions. If we do not respond to truth immediately it leads to the development of a Response To Truth Gap. Over time, the Response To Truth Gap will progress from 1) knowledge of truth, 2) doubt of truth, 3) confusion about truth, 4) deception and rejecting truth, 5) error and believing a lie. You don't have truth until you respond to truth. **"It's not what you know, it's what you do with what you know."**
- D. The truth always requires the payment of a price by those that receive it. You must let go of that which opposes truth to really have it. To receive truth one must put aside error. To believe truth one must not believe a lie. To practice truth one must live in a way that exposes error. (Proverbs 23:23; Matthew 13:45-46)

III. Truth brings responsibility. The more truth we have received, the more we are to be held accountable for. (Luke 12:47-48)

- A. Truth is a gift of God to be stewarded. We must "manage" the truth we have received. (Matthew 24:45; Luke 12:42; 1 Peter 4:10)
- B. Truth must be applied in our own lives before it can be exported. It's not what you know, it's what you do with what you know. (Ezra 7:10; Luke 6:46-49)
- C. We are accountable for the level of truth we have received or to which we have been exposed. (Luke 12:47-48)
- D. We are responsible to declare truth and warn of the consequences of violating truth. The hearers are responsible to respond. (Ezekiel 3:17-19)

IV. Some cautions concerning sharing truth. What it means not to "throw your pearls to pigs."

- A. We are always to share the truth of the gospel, salvation by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.
- B. When sharing truth we can be hurt and rejected. Precious truths such as our relationship with God as our Father, the truths and experiences we have with the Holy Spirit, graces that have been worked in us through suffering.
- C. We may share truths with people prematurely and inoculate them against real response. When evangelizing, we must be careful not to press for an incomplete response to a partial understanding of the gospel message.
- D. We must be sensitive to know what truth to share and where and when to share truth. Don't hinder fellowship by emphasizing non-essentials.
- E. Don't get involved in arguments over minor doctrinal points: Baptismal formulas, eschatology, questionable matters. Concentrate on the large body of truth on which we

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agree rather than on the often minor points on which we disagree. (2 Timothy 2:24-25)

- F. Be as patient with others as God is with you. Truth is like a seed, it falls on the soil, it sprouts, and then it matures and produces fruit. Allow time for the seed to grow. (Hebrews 10:35-36; James 5:7)
- V. Determining how and when to share truth with people.
  - A. Learn to identify where people are at. What is their experience, what is their background, what do they know, how much do they understand, how ready are they for more?
    - 1. Jesus pinpointed where people were regarding truth. He said to one man, "You are not far from the Kingdom of God." Apply the principle of sowing and reaping. When the ground is prepared, plant the seed, cultivate it, wait for the harvest.
    - 2. There should be an order in the presentation of truth: Foundation before superstructure. Repentance and Faith before Eschatology and End-Time matters. Don't fall into the trap of dealing with obscure prophecies and minor doctrinal points when the need is for the foundational truths of faith.
  - B. Learn to bring people to a point of faith. You and the Holy spirit must work together to bring people to faith. Sharing truth is not a matter of winning arguments and convincing people you are right. It is a joint labor with the Holy Spirit to allow truth to create desire, to convict of sin and error, and to release faith to believe and respond.
    - 1. Knowledge and information is not enough. There must be a heart response. We are laborers together with God. The Holy Spirit must do the work.
    - 2. Look for openness to truth, a readiness to acknowledge God's Word as the standard. Sow the seeds of truth in prepared hearts, where the Holy Spirit is at work preparing the soil. Ask God to make the person able to receive and respond.
  - C. Don't become angry and combative when people don't receive the truth. There may be a number of reasons, both right and wrong why someone may not receive what you have to tell them. Leave it with God. Don't feel you have to win an argument or show them how wrong they are. Don't destroy the opportunity for yourself or someone else to present truth to them again when they are ready.

**SECTION 3: ASK, SEEK, KNOCK (Matthew 7:7-12) Scripture List:** Deuteronomy 4:29; 1 Chronicles 22:19, 28:9; Psalms 17:1-2, 24:3-6; Mark 9:23; Luke 11:9-13; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 11:6

- I. The law of Asking, Seeking, Knocking has to do with our approach to God. We must first understand that God is a good God. Jesus tells us to approach God as we would approach a kind and loving Father and to then boldly and confidently ask for what we need.
  - A. Jesus used the words ask, seek, and knock as present tense verbs. The implication in His words is: Ask and keep on asking, seek and keep on seeking, knock and keep on knocking.
    - 1. Ask, Seek, Knock is active and aggressive. It requires that we take steps of

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initiative and action.

2. Ask, Seek, Knock has levels of accomplishment. We are to see asking, seeking, and knocking as steps in a progression of getting what we need and getting to where we need to be.
3. Ask, Seek, Knock requires persistence. This is not just a casual, or one-time effort. One asks until one receives, one seeks until one finds, one knocks until the door opens.

B. Asking, Seeking, and Knocking in faith doesn't wait to begin after we reach Christian maturity. The new convert begins to apply this truth immediately. How prayers are answered often changes as God grows and matures us.

II. The three levels or steps in the process of receiving what we need and getting to where we need to be: Ask, Seek, Knock.

A. Ask, and keep on asking. Asking is the beginning. Ask until you receive.

1. Asking is formalizing your desires into a specific request. Before you can truly ask, you have to know what you want. This involves your desires, values, and priorities.
2. Asking acknowledges that we have a need and are not sufficient in ourselves to succeed. Asking shows our dependence on God.
3. Asking acknowledges that we see God as our sole source of supply and will rely only on Him. We go to the source. When we go to God in prayer we are naming Him as our source.
4. Asking sets in motion the process of receiving from God by faith. Sometimes the process of receiving involves time, circumstances, and even change on our part. But the process doesn't actually begin until we ask.

B. Seek and keep on seeking. Seeking is the middle. Seek until you find. (Hebrews 11:8-10)

1. The first point to understand is that receiving from God by faith is active, not passive. Once we have asked, presented our request to God, then we need to be actively looking for His answer. We must begin to keep our eyes and ears open for revelation, insight, and direction from God concerning our request.
2. As insights or opportunities become apparent we should investigate or check them out according to principles we have learned. Don't just run after everything that seems to be a possibility, but keep your focus on what you know about God and His ways.
3. Don't give up or lose interest in the seeking process. Remember that the timetable is God's, not yours. The times of delay become opportunities to test our resolve and determination.

- C. Knock and keep on knocking. Knocking is the final step. Knock until the door opens.
  - 1. This is taking the first step of faith when we believe we have received direction from the Lord. Peter saw Jesus walking on the water and said, "Master I want to do that. Please call me to come to You." When Jesus called, Peter jumped into the water.
  - 2. As opportunities or possible answers present themselves we go and check them out. We move towards them. We step up and knock on the door. We try the opportunity and see if it is right. When we find the one we are confident is right, we stay with it until we see results.
  - 3. After asking and seeking, we must speak words of commitment and take actions of faith to move forward, overcome obstacles, see fulfillment.
  - 4. Persistence and determination must operate at all three levels. Persistent knocking means that we don't let delay, opposition, and hardship keep us from reaching the goal. I WON'T QUIT!

III. Prayer is the means of setting the process in motion.

- A. Prayer must be an expression of faith.
  - 1. Prayer without faith is vain or useless.
  - 2. Faith without prayer is wishful thinking.
- B. Effective prayer will produce results. Elijah had the same problems and struggles we face, but he persevered and God answered. (James 5:16-18)

IV. What are some things we should ask, seek, and knock for?

- A. To find our place and function in the church, Christ's body. There is a place prepared for each one of us, a place where we can fit and function. (1 Corinthians 12:27)
- B. Gifts and enablements for service. "Lord, stretch me so I can receive more." Paul said to seek the best gifts, those which will allow us to serve and to fulfill our calling. (1 Corinthians 12:31, 14:1)
- C. For increase. It is appropriate to ask and seek for spiritual increase and growth, for financial provision and blessing, for numerical growth for the church, for strength to face life's trials and to fulfill one's calling.
- D. For God's abiding presence in our own lives, in our family, and in the church. (Psalm 27:4)
- E. To be fruitful in our service to God. (John 15:4)

**QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION**

*Chapter 11 Sermon on the Mount 6: Matthew 7 - Part 1*

1. Jesus said, "Don't judge or you will also be judged." Does this mean we should have no opinions, no strong feelings about things? What sort of things do you feel are right to judge and what sort of things are wrong to judge? How can we avoid judging wrongly?
2. How would you apply Jesus' teaching about "Ask, Seek, and Knock" to finding the will of God in a decision you need to make? How would you apply it to praying about something you want or need very badly? Is it possible to be "out of balance" on any one of the three? What do you feel would be the consequence of emphasizing one of these three too much and the others too little?