



# BEN WASHINGTON BAPTIST CHURCH

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Wednesday Noon Bible Study

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## SERMON SERIES

### “Kingdom Living: The Sermon on The Mount”

#### Part 7 – “Law of Judging”

Matthew 7:1-14, part of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, teaches against hypocritical judgment, encourages persistent prayer, and illustrates the choice between the easy path of destruction and the difficult path to eternal life.

#### The passage is structured into three main teachings:

**Judging Others (vv. 1-6):** Jesus commands His followers not to judge or condemn others, warning that they will be judged by the same standard they use. He uses the metaphor of the "speck" and the "log," urging people to remove their own faults before trying to correct the faults of others. He also cautions against offering sacred things to those who will disrespect them (dogs and pigs).

**The Power of Prayer (vv. 7-11):** Jesus encourages believers to ask, seek, and knock, assuring them that God is a loving Father who delights in giving good gifts to those who ask Him.

**The Narrow Gate (vv. 12-14):** Often called the "Golden Rule," verse 12 summarizes the Law and the Prophets: "Do to others whatever you would have them do to you." He concludes by stating that the way to destruction is wide and easy, but the road that leads to eternal life is narrow, hard, and found by only a few.

#### **Matthew 7:1-6 KJV**

1 Judge not, that ye be not judged. 2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. 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? 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? 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. 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.

#### **A summary statement on passing judgment upon others. (Mat 7:1-2)**

**Judge not, that you be not judged:** Here Jesus moved to another idea in the Sermon on the Mount. He had primarily dealt with themes connected with the interior spiritual life (attitudes in giving, prayer, fasting, materialism, and anxiety over material things). Now He touches on an important theme related to the way we think of and treat others.

We remember that Jesus called for a righteousness that was greater than that of the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 5:20). In the way some people think, the way to make oneself more righteous is to be more judgmental of others. Jesus here rebuked that kind of thinking.

With this command Jesus warned against passing judgment upon others, because when we do so we will be judged in a similar manner.

The Christian is called to show **unconditional love**. But the Christian is not called to unconditional approval. We really can love people who do things that should not be approved of.

So, while this does not prohibit examining the lives of others, it certainly prohibits doing in the spirit it is often done.

- We break this command when we think the worst of others.
- We break this command when we only speak to others of their faults.
- We break this command when we judge an entire life only by its worst moments.
- We break this command when we judge the hidden motives of others.
- We break this command when we judge others without considering ourselves in their same circumstances.
- We break this command when we judge others without being mindful that we ourselves will be judged.

**For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged:** Jesus did not prohibit the judgment of others. He only requires that our judgment be completely fair, and that we only judge others by a standard we would also like to be judged by.

**With the measure you use, it will be measured back to you:** This is the principle upon which Jesus built the command, "Judge not, that you be not judged." God will measure unto us according to the same measure we use for others. This is a powerful motivation for us to be generous with love, forgiveness, and goodness to others. If we want more of those things from God, we should give more of them to others.

### **An illustration of Jesus' principle regarding judging. (Matthew 7:3-5)**

**Why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?** The figures of a speck and a plank are real figures, yet used humorously. Jesus shows how we are generally far more tolerant to our own sin than we are to the sin of others.

- An example of looking for a speck in the eye of another while ignoring the plank in one's own is when the religious leaders brought the woman taken in adultery to Jesus. She had certainly sinned; but their sin was much worse, and Jesus exposed it as such with the statement, He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first (John 8:7).

Jesus indicates that the one with the plank in his own eye would not immediately be aware of it. He is blind to his obvious fault. It is the attempt to correct the fault of someone else when we ourselves have the same (or greater fault) that earns the accusation, "Hypocrite!"

**First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye:** Jesus didn't say that it was wrong for us to help our brother with the speck in his eye. It is a good thing to help your brother with his speck, but not before dealing with the plank in your own eye.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus drew upon the poor reputation of dogs to illustrate an important point to His disciples about preaching the gospel.

**Do not give what is holy to the dogs:** After He warned us against judgmental attitudes and self-blind criticism, Jesus here reminded us that He did not mean to imply that the people of His Kingdom suspend all discernment. They must discern that there are some good, precious things that should not be given to those who will receive them with contempt.

The dogs and swine here are often understood as those who are hostile to the Kingdom of God and the message that announces it. Our love for others must not blind us to their hardened rejection of the good news of the kingdom.

The disciples shouldn't offer what is holy (the message of the gospel) to dogs (those who have shown that they consider it worthless). Jesus reiterated this principle in a more straightforward way later in His ministry, saying, "And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town"

In the last part of Matthew 7:6, Jesus emphasized that persecution is a key factor in making the decision: "They may . . . turn and tear you to pieces." When there is a hostile reaction to the gospel message, the hearers have shown their nature. In seeking to harm the messenger, the hardened sinner becomes dog-like in his viciousness. So, it is important to discern when to "shake the dust off" and take the message elsewhere.

#### **Matthew 7:7-12 KJV**

7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: 8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. 9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? 10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? 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? 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.

**Ask... seek... knock:** We see a progressive intensity, going from ask to seek to knock. Jesus told us to have **intensity**, **passion**, and **persistence** in prayer. The fact that Jesus came back to the subject of prayer — already dealt with in some depth in Matthew 6:5-15 — shows the importance of prayer.

In this three-fold description of prayer as asking, seeking, and knocking we see different aspects of prayer and different aspects of its reward.

Prayer is like **asking** in that we simply make our requests known to God, and everyone who asks receives. Receiving is the reward of asking.

Prayer is like **seeking** in that we search after God, His word, and His will; and he who seeks finds. Finding is the reward of seeking.

Prayer is like **knocking** until the door is opened, and we seek entrance into the great heavenly palace of our Great King. Entering through the opened door into His palace is the reward of knocking, and the best reward of all.

**Ask and it will be given to you:** God promises an answer to the one who diligently seeks Him. Many of our passionless prayers are not answered for good reason, because it is almost as if we ask God to care about something we care little or nothing about.

- God values persistence and passion in prayer because they show that we share His heart. It shows that we care about the things He cares about. Persistent prayer does not overcome God's stubborn reluctance; it gives glory to Him, expresses dependence upon Him, and aligns our heart more with His.

**Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone:** Jesus made it clear that God doesn't have to be persuaded or appeased in prayer. He wants to give us not just bread, but even more than what we ask for.

- Thankfully, the times we ask for something as bad as a serpent without knowing, like a loving parent God often mercifully spares us the just penalty of our ignorance.

**Conclusion to the Sermon on the Mount:** A partial summary and a repeated call to decision.

**(Matthew 7:12) A summation of Jesus' ethical teaching regarding our treatment of others: the Golden Rule.**

"Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."

**Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them:** The negative way of stating this command was known long before Jesus. It had long been said, "You should not do to your neighbor what you would not want him to do to you." But it is a significant advance for Jesus to put it in the positive, to say that we should do unto others what we want them to do unto us.

**For this is the Law and the Prophets:** Jesus shows that this simple principle — the Golden Rule — summarizes all the Law and the Prophets say about how we should treat others. If we would simply treat others the way we would want to be treated, we would naturally obey all the law says about our relationships with others.

#### **Matthew 7:13-14 KJV**

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

#### **The decision between two ways and one of two destinations.**

"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."

**Enter by the narrow gate:** Jesus did not speak of this gate as our destiny, but as the entrance to a path. There is a right way and a wrong way, and Jesus appealed to His listeners to decide to go the more difficult way, which leads to life.

- He understood and taught that not all ways and not all destinations are equally good. One leads to destruction, the other to life.

**Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life:** The true gate is both narrow and difficult. If your road has a gate that is easy and well-traveled, you do well to watch out.