

True Wisdom - Matthew 7:1-29

Imagine two families each building their dream homes.

- One family chooses to save time and money by building on a flat patch of sand near the water—beautiful views, soft ground, easy digging. The other spends extra time and resources, digging deep and laying their foundation on solid rock, further from the shore.
- For months, everything looks **picture-perfect**. The houses go up fast, paint is fresh, and the sand-side family grills dinner with toes in the sand.
- But one evening, dark clouds gather. Rain pours, winds whip, and the river rises.
 - **By morning, one house remains—solid, unmoved.**
 - **The other? Washed away, nothing left but memories.**

At the close of the **Sermon on the Mount**, Jesus said hearing his words is not enough—it's acting on them that gives a life foundation that holds, no matter the storm.

Matthew 7:24-29 - "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: ²⁵ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

²⁶ "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: ²⁷ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

²⁸ And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, ²⁹ for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

True Wisdom is Hearing and Heeding

- **It's listening to the Lord and then doing what he says.**
- **Notice the difference – Both houses heard the Word; Faced Storms, but only one survived**
- **The one who heard the Word and Obeyed!**
- **True Wisdom is hearing the Word and Heeding**

Biblical Definition of True Wisdom:

True wisdom, according to Scripture, is the skill and ability to live life according to God's design.

- It is not just knowing facts or possessing intelligence, but applying God's truth and obeying His commands in daily decisions and relationships.
- True wisdom begins with a right relationship with God ("the fear of the Lord") and results in a life that reflects His character and purposes.

Proverbs 9:10 "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

True biblical wisdom is hearing God's Word, revering Him, and actively living out His truth in all areas of life.

James 3:13-18 - Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct *that* his works *are done* in the meekness of wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. ¹⁵ This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. ¹⁶ For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil

thing *are* there. ¹⁷ But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. ¹⁸ Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

Biblical Wisdom vs. Worldly Wisdom

Biblical Wisdom has the Word of God as it's Source and is rooted in the fear of the Lord (Proverbs 9:10; James 1:5).

Worldly Wisdom: Comes from human reasoning, culture, or personal experience (1 Corinthians 1:20; Colossians 2:8).

Biblical Wisdom Focuses on God's will, His character, and living for His glory.

Worldly Wisdom Focuses on self-advancement, temporary gain, popularity, or comfort.

Biblical Wisdom: Is demonstrated by obedience to God's Word (Matthew 7:24; James 3:13)

Worldly Wisdom: May look clever, but often justifies selfishness, pride, or compromise (James 3:14-16).

Biblical Wisdom: Brings peace, righteousness, stable foundations, and eternal reward (James 3:17; Matthew 7:25)

Worldly Wisdom: Ultimately leads to confusion, disorder, and spiritual emptiness (James 3:16; Matthew 7:27).

Three Realities about True Wisdom:

Options are Limited

Two Roads; Two Trees; Two Destinations – Options are Truly Limited

Matthew 7:13-14 - ¹³ "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. ¹⁴ Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

There is one Road that leads to life;

One Road that leads to Destruction

- One is Narrow; difficult; One is broad; it's wide
- One is popular; it's trendy; it's ~~chie~~ (**sheek**)
 - It's what everybody is doing. Just because everybody's doing it don't make it right!
 - Child might say, "But, Mama, Everybody's doing it!"
 - Momma replies, "If everybody jumped off a bridge, would you?"
- There is one way to lasting peace ... one way to fullness of joy

Matthew 7:14 - ¹⁴ Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

- Jesus said, **Luke 9:23-25** - "Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, **let him deny himself**, and **take up his cross daily**, and follow Me. 24 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. 25 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost?

Let me ask you, ***which road are you on?***

- You are either on the road that leads to life, or the one that leads to death.
- You are either in Christ or you're Not ... You are either saved or you're not

Jesus said, (John 14:6) Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Acts 4:12 - Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

You cannot get to God ...

- ... through Mohammed, Budha, or through the Pope
- ... through being good, being religious, getting baptized, going to church
- There is only one way to the Father – Through Faith in the Son
- You are either saved and on your way to spend Eternity with God, or you are lost and you will be eternally separated from God in a place not made for man!

The Second Realities about True Wisdom:

Not only are the Options Limited, but

Consequences are eternal

Matthew 7:21-23 - ²¹ "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' ²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

It's not about what you say you do...It's about a relationship – The things you do are an evidence of true salvation.

Matthew 7:24-29 - "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: ²⁵ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

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Jesus ends the Sermon on the Mount with the parable of the Wise Man & Foolish

- Wise man: Hears Jesus' words and ***puts them into practice***—house built on the rock, withstands storms.
- Foolish man: Hears but does ***not obey***—house built on sand, collapses "with a great crash."

The "storms" represent challenging, testing circumstances in life.

- While day-to-day difficulties can be part of this meaning, the vivid finality—"the house fell with a great crash"—**strongly echoes biblical images of divine judgment.**
- Some conservative commentators agree that, while the "storms" may apply to the trials of life, the ultimate storm in view is God's final judgment.

Whether the storm of life refers to temporary or eternal judgment, the truth should shake us and wake us up.

- Not Everyone who claims the name of Christ is truly born again

- Do you know that you know you are truly saved?
- Do you know that your family is truly saved? **Invitation – Back Table**

The Third Realities about True Wisdom: Not only are the Options Limited, Consequences are Eternal, but

Fruit is evident

Matthew 7:15-20 - ¹⁵ "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ **Therefore by their fruits you will know them.**

Notice Matthew 7:17 – Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree **cannot** bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit.

Matthew 7:20 - **Therefore by their fruits you will know them.**

Blank Live - Fruit is evident

Most commentators agree "fruit" refers to visible evidence in a person's life—what someone truly believes is shown in their actions, character, and influence.

Good conduct that flows out of godly Character

- Jesus Warns about the False Teachers – "Beware...they look good on the outside
- Time will tell – You may have heard the old quote commonly attributed to Abraham Lincoln, "x
"You can fool some of the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time,"

We can identify various fruits in this passage

Bear Fruit of Humility in our Discernment – Matthew 7:1-6

Bear Fruit of Commitment to Prayer – Matthew 7:7-11

Matthew 7:7-11 - "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. **This shows humility**

Bear Fruit of Love for Others – Matthew 7:12

Matthew 7:12 - Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

Bear Fruit of Obedience – Jesus emphasizes obedience in the last part of the sermon

Let' Go back to the First one...Many believers get hung up...

Fruit of Humility in our Discernment – Matthew 7:1-6

Matthew 7:1-6 - "Judge not, that you be not judged. ² For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. ³ And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? ⁴ Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank *is* in your own eye? ⁵ Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

⁶ “Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.

We shall know them, but their fruit – That’s Biblical Discernment.

- Many commentators (such as John Stott, Kent Hughes, and the Broadman Bible Commentary) agree that this command is not a blanket prohibition against all forms of correction.
 - Jesus is addressing a ***hypocritical, self-righteous, and harsh judgmental attitude***—not legitimate discernment or accountability.
 - We are not to judge by appearances or charisma, but by whether a person’s life and message align with Scripture.
 - Healthy trees cannot bear bad fruit (v.18), meaning real believers will inevitably show signs of spiritual life.

This verse is often cited to suggest that Christians should never call out sin or error, but in context, Jesus Himself encourages discernment.

- He says do not give what is holy to dogs & beware of false prophets
- He even provides guidelines for correcting others just a few verses later (Matthew 7:5).

Here Jesus warns against a condemning, self-righteous spirit rather than every form of judgment.

- Believers are called to humbly address sin first in their own lives (“take the log out of your own eye”) before lovingly helping others.
- We must exercise church discipline and accountability, but always with humility, love, and self-examination.
- The passage is about guarding against arrogance and hypocrisy, not abandoning all discernment.

Picture a group of young mothers who stay connected in a chat group.

- One day, someone shares about a mom in their church who let her toddler have a meltdown in the grocery store without stepping in right away. The group quickly starts chiming in—some with ***concern***, but others making comments that ***sound more like criticism***:
 - “She just lets her child cry in public?”
 - “I would never let my kid act like that—what was she thinking?”
- Before long, the conversation turns into a session of judgment, with very little empathy or understanding of what that mom might be facing.

But what if, instead, one of the moms paused and said,

- “You know, we don’t know what kind of day she’s had, or what her child might be struggling with. Maybe we should pray for her, or even offer to help if she needs it.”

That’s discernment—seeing beyond the surface,

- holding back from quick ***condemnation***, and ***responding*** with ***grace and truth***.
- Judging focuses on tearing others down,
- but discernment asks, “What does love require here? How can I help build up my sister in Christ rather than criticize her?”

How can we tell the difference between Biblical Discernment & Hypocritical Judgement?

- ***The difference lies in the motivation and outcome:***

- Judging (as forbidden by Jesus): Is motivated by hypocrisy and self-righteousness, often leading to condemnation and division. It focuses on finding fault in others while excusing oneself.
- Discernment (as commandment by Jesus): Is motivated by a desire for truth and protection for the church.
- It involves observing a person's life and teaching to evaluate whether it aligns with God's Word and produces righteous outcomes.

Therefore, while we are not to condemn others hypocritically, we are certainly called to exercise discernment,

Definition of Biblical Discernment:

- "Biblical discernment is more than quick judgment—it's a humble, prayerful process of separating truth from error according to God's Word, with the aim of building others up, not tearing them down."
- Biblical discernment is the Spirit-enabled ability to distinguish between truth and error, right and wrong, or good and evil, according to God's Word. It involves thoughtfully and prayerfully evaluating situations, teachings, and behaviors—not based on mere opinion or external appearance, but rooted in the wisdom and principles found in Scripture.
- Discernment is not the same as passing judgment or condemnation. Instead, it's about "testing everything; hold fast what is good." (1 Thessalonians 5:21). It requires humility, dependence on the Holy Spirit, and a desire for truth and restoration—not self-righteousness.

Imagine you're shopping at a grocery store for apples.

- Some of the apples look shiny and perfect on the outside, but when you pick one up, you notice a soft spot or a bruise underneath. You don't stand in the aisle loudly accusing the apple or the store manager—you simply inspect carefully, checking for what's good and leaving what's bad behind. You're not condemning the apple; you're wisely deciding which fruit will be good for your family.
- In the same way, biblical discernment isn't about harshly condemning people or getting caught up in appearances. It's about looking beneath the surface, comparing what we see to the truth of God's Word, and choosing what is true and honorable. Just as the store gives you permission to inspect fruit, God calls us to inspect our own lives and the things we hear and see—always with humility and love, not self-righteousness.

Romans 12:16 - Live in harmony with one another.

1. Always try to give people the benefit of the doubt.

- Surely that includes cutting people slack.
- Proverbs 19:11 - The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, And his glory is to overlook a transgression.
- Jesus said in verse 12 - Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.
- When we see something negative in others or we're suspicious about their motives, let's slow down before we conclude that they are morally wrong or bad.

- Christ-like love doesn't mean being a sucker,³ but we can slow down and suspend judgment. Jesus says, "A person's wisdom yields patience; it is to one's glory to overlook an offense."⁴ Christ modeled this practice of overlooking faults in people and He puts His Holy Spirit in us to help us copy Him.

2. Assume the best of others.

- Assume that they have good intentions and that they're smart. I can't remember what leader said, he said there are so many different conflicts that could be resolved if you just assume that your co-workers are smart and have good intentions, so we need to assume that about one another.
- You're smart and you've got good intentions. If you prove that you don't have good intentions then that's something to deal with, but I'm going to give you the benefit of the doubt as long as I can.

3. Extend Grace as Grace as Been Extended

- When wronged, when there's a misunderstanding or disagreement, let's extend grace in the same manner that Jesus showed to us.
- Thank God that He didn't walk away from us when we were confused or we made a wrong statement but we continue to love and to reach out.