

15: THE GOLDEN RULE & GODLY JUDGMENT

(Matthew 7:1-15)

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. 7:1-15, to rightly apply the most used/misused verse in the Bible.

beourguest

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teachingnotes

The most quoted/misquoted verse in all the Bible

Matthew 7:1 (NIV) Do not judge, or you too will be judged.

Does this mean we should NEVER judge? That's certainly what our culture thinks.

② Are we to stiff-arm discernment & silence our objections OR...can we **follow the Golden Rule** & still apply **Godly judgment**?

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.

Judge With Mercy

Matthew 7:1-2 (NIV) Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For **in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.**

There are different kinds of judgement:

- 1) **Evaluating what is right & wrong.** Jesus is NOT saying we are never to judge between what is wrong and right. Christians are commanded to discern the difference between right and wrong (1 Jn 4:1; Jn 7:24).
- 2) **Confronting wrongdoing.** *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 another's actions are sinful. The **GOAL** of the confrontation is merciful restoration.
- 3) **Condemning the wrongdoer as eternally guilty before God** is the kind of judgment is what Jesus is warning the Christian against. God alone gives the final judgment.

1 of 2 extremes (neither of which Jesus wants)

- 1) Unwilling to say that anyone or anything is **WRONG** - which gets us in the mess our culture is currently in.
- 2) OR we become quick to condemn others on behalf of God, without extending mercy. It's this extreme that Jesus was warning His ancient audience against. This is what *Jonah* did - having experienced God's mercy, but unwilling to extend His mercy to others. *Jonah is UPSET* that God is willing to graciously forgive His enemies when he says these words...

Jonah 4:2 (NIV) I knew that **You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity.**

If the perfect Creator and Righteous Judge of all mankind is willing to extend mercy to His enemies, we should not be quick to condemn our enemies to hell. We can't send them to hell; only God can.

BIG TRUTH: Judge with mercy... *the kind of mercy we want extended to us.*

② *What's the measure of mercy you use?* Would you pray this?: "**God, judge me with the same kind of mercy I extend to others.**"

Judge Without Hypocrisy

Matthew 7:3-5 (NIV)

Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then **you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye**.

This illustration of **plank in the eye** might have caused Jesus' audience to laugh.

🌟 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 plank in his eye**.

Jesus is NOT saying we never confront & correct a brother or sister who is caught in sin (see Mt 18:15; 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.

After King David got busted by Nathan, he responded in repentance and wrote Ps. 51, which includes these words.

Psalm 51:1-2 (NIV) **Have mercy on me**, O God, according to Your unfailing love; **according to Your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.**

Psalm 51:12-13 (NIV) **Restore to me the joy of Your salvation** and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, so that **sinners will turn back to you**.

Trusting that God would forgive him, David was like one beggar showing another beggar where to find the bread, and **that should be OUR desire** - 1) to make sure WE are right with God - then 2) desire to help others be right with Him.

Matthew 7:6 (NIV) **Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs.** If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

What's THAT all about? Jesus is talking about PEOPLE who act like **dogs** and **pigs**...and that's quite a judgment.

- **DOGS.** In Jesus' day most **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.
- **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 mercy & without hypocrisy*) - **with anger or total disregard** - **we make a JUDGMENT** that these people are pagan, unwilling to listen to **GODLY JUDGMENT** - and invest our time in those who WILL listen.

Pray Persistently

Matthew 7:7-11 (NIV) **Ask** and it will be given to you; **seek** and you will find; **knock** and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. "Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though 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 calling on God? Have you forgotten WHO you are asking?

The Golden Rule

Matthew 7:12 (NIV)

So in everything, **do to others what you would have them do to you**, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

Christians are to treat others with kindness - even their enemies. To love our neighbor as ourself is the teaching throughout the Scriptures (**the Law and the Prophets**).

Wide Road vs Narrow Road

Matthew 7:13-14 (NIV) Enter through the narrow gate. For **wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction**, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and **narrow the road that leads to life**, and only a few find it.

Jesus warns His sheep of the dangers awaiting them. According to Jesus, **many** are following the path that leads to **destruction**, while **only a few** will follow the road that leads to eternal **life**.

- The **broad road to destruction** is spacious and comfortable for any and everybody.
- The **narrow road** isn't comfortable, BUT...this narrow road **leads to eternal life!**

Those who tell you anything different aren't telling you the truth.

False Prophets & Bad Fruit

Matthew 7:15-16a (NIV) Watch out for **false prophets**. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are **ferocious wolves**. By their fruit you will recognize them.

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 **ferocious wolves** licking their chops to feed on the sheep. More on how to **recognize** their **fruit**, next Sunday.

✓ The reason why we can recognize **false prophets** is because **we judge rightly**.

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

Christians are to apply both **the Golden Rule & Godly judgment**. We are to...

Judge with mercy & without hypocrisy.



1. **Turn from YOUR SIN.** What sin must you put to death? What plank is in YOUR eye?
2. **Approach a brother/sister caught in sin with mercy.** Who do you need to approach with prayerful & mercifully
3. **Live the 'Golden Rule' daily.** Serve someone this week. Show mercy this week. Forgive someone this week.

heretoseveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

- * Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Christy** (850-673-9764), **Caleb** (864-315-8015), or another follower of Jesus soon!
- * Or call our **deacons & wives**: Alan & Christy Androski (850-464-1428), Steve & Debbie Bass (850-673-7952), Freddy & Joyce Howard (850-973-0047), Tim & Joni Hughey (850-464-1156), Mark & Dot Mancil (850-253-5405), Boss & Amelia Mulkey (850-464-6717), or Tom & Martha Waddail (850-973-0011).

discussionquestions

Take some time to discuss these questions with your family, friends, or group.

1. What challenged or encouraged you most from today's teaching? You might need to look back in your notes to help explain your answer.
2. **Read Matthew 7:1-2.** Why is it important that we judge others with MERCY? If you were caught in sin, how would you want another Christian to confront you about it?
3. **Read Matthew 7:3-4 & 18:15.** Is Jesus saying we should never confront another brother/sister about their sin? Explain your answer. What should we make sure to do BEFORE we approach another person about their sin? Why is it so important that we **judge with mercy & without hypocrisy**?
4. **Read Psalm 51** and **focus on vv12-13.** After being forgiven much, what is David's desire for others? What should we appreciate and apply from David's example?
5. **Read Matthew 7:6.** What is this illustration all about? **Read 1 Jn 4:1; Jn 7:24.** How does it show that Jesus expects His people to judge rightly?
6. **Read Matthew 7:7-11.** How does this passage encourage you? What is something you are seeking the Father's help with?
7. **Read Matthew 7:12.** How would our culture change if everyone applied 'the Golden Rule'? Share an example of someone who has treated you this way.
8. **Read Matthew 7:13-14.** Explain how this statement causes you concern for those around you. What are you doing/going to do about that?
9. **Read Matthew 7:15-16a.** Why is it that some false prophets/teachers are not quickly recognized? What are some ways we can recognize them? (Show up Sunday for next week's teaching for more insight on how to spot false teachers.)
10. Share prayer needs and pray for one another.