

# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

## SESSION 7

## Matthew 7:1-12 - *Leader Guide*

### WELCOME

Welcome back to the Sermon on the Mount – week 7. Today we're going to dig into **Matthew 7:1-12**. In this passage of the Sermon, we encounter misunderstood verses, as well as teachings that challenge our perceptions of judgment, prayer, and conduct towards others. Jesus invites us to reflect on how we interact with others, urging us to approach judgment with humility and compassion. He unveils the power of prayer, assuring us that our requests are heard and answered by a gracious God.

### SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Matthew 7:1-2**

Jesus is teaching us that we should not judge **hypocritically**. Hypocritical judgment is being critical of others while there is unrepentant sin in our lives. This kind of judgment is absolutely despised by God, because this is an attempt to step into God's **position**.

This is what **verses 1-2** are warning against this attempt to step into the judgment seat of God. The reality is there is One Judge [**with a capital "J"**] of the universe. He's the Judge of judges, the King of kings and the Lord of lords – and He's the only Judge that sees everything perfectly! There are no question marks at the end of His judgment.

WE judge **imperfectly**. [*case in point – "we" are the ones who picked King Saul. He's tall, handsome and ripped – and LOOKS like a king.*]

So, Jesus is warning against judging hypocritically, because when we judge imperfectly/ unfairly, then that same standard **"will be measured to you."**

### QUESTIONS

**Are Christians forbidden from ever judging others?**

- So, what kind of attitude should we have about judging?

**A lot of sinning believers or unbelievers will say that Christians are judgmental and intolerant. They give Jesus' dealing with the adulteress women as an example that we should be tolerant. Do they have a point?** [*Use what God said, not our own opinions. Do it God's way and let His Word do the talking.*]

**What does it mean "or you too will be judged?" By who?**

- How do we balance confronting people with their sin and the fact that God is THE judge?

## SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Matthew 7:3-6**

Jesus takes it a step further in **verses 3-5**, when He compares a person's hypocritical judgment to a type of **blindness**. And His point is crystal clear – the hypocrite notices every fault/ shortcoming that others have BUT they are blind to the MASSIVE flaws [log] in their life. They're like the kings and queens of self-righteousness, and strut around thinking they're superior to everyone else.

Jesus teaches that to fix this kind of blindness, we need to remove the log out of our own life – take a long hard look at our own shortcomings – and THEN we will be able to remove the speck from someone else's eye.

But, before we finish this section, we also need to look at **verse 6**. In the context of the first 5 verses against hypocrites, Jesus may be saying that the **dogs** and **swine** represent those who continue to judge hypocritically. Those that practice this kind of judgment should not be offered the "pearls" [*the treasure of the gospel*] that belong to the Church.

## QUESTIONS

**What is Jesus' point in verses 3-5?**

- How does His use of the word "hypocrite" show us the problem He is speaking against here?
- How can we avoid being a hypocrite?

**What do the speck and the plank represent?**

**What is the meaning of verse 6 and how is it related to the rest of the passage?**

## SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Matthew 7:7-8**

Again, another verse that is often misinterpreted. Some take this as ask God for anything and He'll give you everything! This is not what Jesus is teaching here. Jesus is teaching His disciples about the importance of **prayer**. And this is an AMAZING transition for Jesus after teaching about judgment. In order to judge properly [as commanded in Scripture], we should be seeking the wisdom of God in prayer.

This is something that Jesus practiced consistently throughout His ministry. Traditional Jews in the 1st century would pray regularly 3 times each day. In the Gospels, it is mentioned in 25 different occasions that Jesus prayed for Himself, went away to pray, taught His disciples to pray or prayed for others. So, not only is Jesus teaching the importance of prayer but He is also **modeling** the importance of prayer.

So, He teaches them to "ask," "seek," and "knock." In these commands, we see different aspects of prayer and different aspects of its reward.

- Prayer is the process of **asking** that the will of God be "done."
- Prayer is like **seeking** in that we search after the will of God. When we pray this way we are seeking for what God has kept secret.
- Last, prayer is constant and consistent. Just like **knocking** on a door until it is opened. Have a consistent prayer life is crucial in discerning when God's will is revealed.

## QUESTIONS

**How does this passage motivate you in your prayer life?**

- Who should we ask?
- What should we ask for?
- How often should we ask?

**What do we learn from Jesus' illustration?**

## SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read [Matthew 7:9-12](#)

**Last**, Jesus is teaching the fruit of an obedient prayer life – that prayerfully seeks the wisdom of God. A wisdom that is useful in judgment and in seeing our own faults. If in our prayers, we ask, seek and consistently pray for God to reveal His will and wisdom – then our “Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!” Regular prayer helps us remember that God is kind to us, and it helps us to develop an even deeper **love** for Him and for others.

As Jesus taught this rule to His disciples, He taught it with a positive spin – He taught it with **love** and **devotion**. Because this is what He wanted His disciples – and His church – to teach to the world.

This especially applies to Christian fellowship. If we would experience love and have people reach out to us, we must love and reach out to others.

## QUESTIONS

**What do these verses show us about God's heart?**

**What do these verses show us about our position as God's children?**

- What kind of things count as “good gifts?”

**How does [verse 12](#) relate to the passage? What does it show us about the importance of our actions toward others?**

## CONCLUSION

Today, we learned from Jesus how we can display the wisdom and character of Christ to those around us through His message about judgment, prayer, and the golden rule. Jesus urges us to refrain from hypocritical judgment and instead show compassion and understanding towards others. He emphasizes the power of prayer, assuring that those who seek will find and those who ask will receive. Finally, he encapsulates the essence of moral conduct in the golden rule, encouraging us to treat others as we would like to be treated. These teachings serve as guiding principles for living a righteous and compassionate life, fostering harmony and love within communities.

Outline for how we will study of the **Sermon on the Mount**:

- **April 28th:** *Matthew 7:13-29*
- **May 5th:** *Hangout Night or Content Make-Up*