

# *MATTHEW 7: 1-6*

## *TO JUDGE OR NOT TO JUDGE*

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In Your Health Magazine, AL Hinman writes:

**A spotless kitchen may harbor as many bacteria as a less tidy one, says a surprising new finding from the University of Arizona in Tucson. That's because the most germ-laden object in a kitchen is often the sponge. Researchers tested sponges and dishrags collected from five hundred kitchens across the U.S. and found that as many as one out of five contained salmonella bacteria. Almost two thirds had at least some other bacteria that, when ingested could make people ill.**

Some attempts to cleanse can cause more harm than good. So it is when a pharisaical attitude prevails. Self-righteous condemnation is the salmonella of the soul.

Remember, we are still studying the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus is still teaching those that have chosen to follow Him on the way His followers are to live their lives. He is, as it were, pouring new wine into new wine skins. He is changing gears here, going from themes like prayer, fasting and materialism, things that tend to effect us more on a personal level and going to something that tends to effect our personal ministries. Don't misunderstand me. We don't live in a vacuum. ANYTHING we do can and does reflect on our relationship with God, but prayer, fasting and materialism and their effects on God's provision for us hit us more so on a personal front. But our attitudes towards each other and those outside of Christianity can have a more direct effect on our witness, at least when it comes to sharing the Gospel. Once again, our entire lives effect our witness, but the theme here addresses our direct relationships where others are concerned. Our attitudes towards those around us, our worldviews come out to some degree as we interact with those God places in our paths.

What we are studying today shows us how we are to develop true kingdom life in the real world.

So we open up with a scripture that has perhaps been misrepresented and misinterpreted more than any other.

**1 *“Judge not, that you be not judged.***

At one time, John 3:16 was the most quoted and perhaps the most well known verse of the Bible. Now it is this one, Matthew 7:1. And since it is the best known and the most quoted, it is no wonder that it is the most misunderstood.

But it is quite clear what is said here, isn't it? I mean, how clear can you be? It says not to judge. So that must be what it means.

Context, context, context...

This is why it is so important not to lift a verse out of those surrounding it to apply it however we want.

**To judge – krino – to analyze, evaluate as well as to condemn or avenge...**

Adversaries of the Bible and Christianity use this verse in an attempt to quell our moral absolutes. But if this is the correct way to understand this verse, then it effectively negates the rest of the Bible. Therefore, it cannot be the correct interpretation. In fact, today we will see exactly what Jesus meant and how this interpretation is diametrically opposed to what Jesus meant. Let's read further.

**John 7:24**

**24 Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.”**

**Galatians 1:8**

**8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.**

**Philippians 3:2**

**2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation!**

**1 John 4:1**

**1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.**

All of these verses require one to make a judgment. Everyone, believer or not has to make judgments on a daily basis. Now, lets look at the next verse.

*1 "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.*

This section mirrors what Jesus has already said prior to this.

**Matthew 5:7**

**7 Blessed are the merciful,  
For they shall obtain mercy.**

**Matthew 6:12**

**12 And forgive us our debts,  
As we forgive our debtors.**

So, as we can see Jesus is being consistent and other places in the NT are consistent with what Jesus said. Let's look at the next verses in order to gain a greater context.

*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.*

Here Jesus uses hyperbole in a parable to bring clarity to what He is attempting to teach us.

Brother and hypocrite.

How can you say to your brother? This somewhat focuses the bandwidth of Jesus' statement. Now we are dealing with our brothers and sisters in Christ. We are to help those around us in their walk, but we can't do that when we have major vices of our own. We will never be perfect, but we can, with the help of the Holy Spirit, live lives that are increasingly moving towards perfection. This calls for a great deal of self-examination. This isn't possible through our own power, but only through an honest assessment of our lives and the confession of sin.

**Mt. 18: 15 - 17**

**15 “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ 17 And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.**

Sir Percivall Lowell 1877... canals on Mars... Lowell syndrome

So often we think we have a first hand view of what ails others, when in fact it is our own disease we are seeing.

Dogs and hogs!

*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.*

Here, Jesus calls for the very opposite of judging hypo-critically; naïve acceptance. In the everyday world the disciples would have to make constant evaluations. They have to make critical assessments of right and wrong, good and bad.

**Mt. 7:15 -23**

**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.**

**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!'**

You can't force feed the gospel to people. When you discern (evaluate) that someone has rejected or is not willing to accept the Gospel, it does no good to force it upon them. In fact, it can be counter-productive. In many ways, this can lead to a backlash such as Jesus speaks of here, where the hearer becomes so antagonistic towards the disciple that things become dangerous.

Dogs weren't domesticated back then. They ran wild in the streets. Hogs were deemed unclean as they also ran through the streets. There were even cases of them killing children when in a frenzy. Pearls are valuable to us, but to a hog they are worthless. The pig seeks only to feed his belly.

We all have to make judgments. We all have to evaluate those around us. But we can do that lovingly, not as the final judge - that is for God alone. We must be wise to discern how we can tactfully and lovingly minister to others.

**There is a form of evangelism that urges Christians to use every opportunity to share the Gospel. Unfortunately, insensitive evangelism often proves harmful to the obdurate whose heart is hardened by the undifferentiating evangelist, but harmful also to the gospel that is force-fed... Aggressive evangelism gets converts and counts them, but we are never able to count those turned away from the gospel for the numbers of the offended are never tallied.**

**Brunner**

If you are from my generation, you will remember the Christmas special regarding Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer. In the show there was a place known as the Island of misfit toys. We are all residents of that place. If, once we have been redeemed and repaired, forget from whence we came, we forfeit our ability to help those that still reside there. Therefore, we need to approach those that are still broken and those that have been redeemed though still have scratches with love and grace. After all, that is the way Jesus reached out to us.