

Lesson 16

“Do Not Judge”

Key Scripture Readings: Matthew 7:1-6

Summary

- Matthew 7:1 is misused a lot in our current culture. Many use it to suggest that followers of Christ should never make any moral judgments. They should never call out certain practices as wrong and sinful. That is not what the Lord is teaching when He says, “Do not judge so that you will not be judged.”
- The judging Jesus condemns in Matthew 7:1 is hypocritical judging. This point is made clear in the following verse. In Matthew 7:2, Jesus says, “For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.”
- God demands that His people make moral judgments. In John 7:24, the Lord says, “Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.” In Matthew 7:6, He says, “Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.” The disciples must make a judgment of someone’s behavior to obey that commandment!
- In Matthew 7:3-5, Jesus uses some humor and illustrations of an exaggeration to condemn hypocritical judging. Think of how ridiculous it would be for someone with a log (a beam that would be the size of a battering ram) stuck in their eye to try to help someone with a speck (a small object) in their eyes. Before trying to help someone with their speck, the person with the log needs to deal with their problem first! Once he takes care of his log, then he can see how to help someone else.
- The person being described here is a constant faultfinder. This is a destructive person who is always looking to find spiritual issues in the lives of others. The scribes and Pharisees demonstrated this kind of character constantly towards Jesus!
- In Matthew 7:6, Jesus urges disciples to make wise judgments with unbelievers. Dogs were not often viewed as cute and cuddling animals in first-century Jewish society. Instead, they were considered as frightening, disgusting animals who wandered the streets and carried diseases. Pigs were also viewed as disgusting animals. Jews would not eat or even want to be near them. The “pearls” mentioned are a reference to the word of God.
- The point of Matthew 7:6 is disciples should never waste much time on unbelievers who don’t want God’s word. They must recognize when people are genuinely interested in the gospel and when they are not. Followers of Christ need to use good judgment when casting their pearls. This principle is also taught in Matthew 10:14.

Study Questions

1. List some ways in which you have heard people misuse Matthew 7:1. Why do you think this verse is misused so much?
2. What principle of Bible study needs to be applied to get the correct understanding of Matthew 7:1? List other passages where this principle is often neglected?
3. List some practical examples of ways in which someone can be guilty of hypocritical judging. Why is Jesus so against this kind of judging?
4. List some examples where Jesus made moral judgments. Also, list some examples where disciples also made moral judgments.
5. Why is it sometimes easy for us to become faultfinders instead of people who are always self-evaluating?
6. Why is it sometimes difficult to obey what Jesus says in Matthew 7:6? What negative consequences can result from a failure to heed His instructions?