

# “Judge Not, That You Be Not Judged” // Matthew 7:1–6 // *The Difficult Sayings of Jesus*

We are in a series called *The Difficult Sayings of Jesus*. (Always online). We’re looking at things Jesus said that were hard to understand.

- (These statements are kind of like **hard candy** where you have to be patient with them to really enjoy them. Some **verses are like caramels** you put it in your mouth, chomp down, and you can enjoy the whole thing in a few seconds. **These statements—if you just crunch down on them, you might break your theological teeth.**
- But I would encourage you to be patient with them, whether you are a new person trying to figure Jesus out, or a believer trying to get to know Jesus better, because some of the sweetest, deepest truths about life and God come from them.

## Matthew 7:1–6

Today we are going to look at one of the most recognizable statements Jesus ever made: **Matthew 7:1, “Judge not, that you be not judged.”**

- If you ask the **average guy on the street to quote 2 verses** from the Bible, this is one of the two.
- In fact, when I typed in **“the Bible says not to...”** on a Google search, here’s what Google auto-suggested for me:



(This is how we do sermon research, ladies and gentlemen.)

“Judge not” is one of the most popular verses in our culture because it seems to fit **in with two of our culture’s most basic assumptions**: that **a) religion is private** and **b) morality is relative**, which means you can’t **really tell anybody** what they believe is wrong (religion and morality have more to do with preference)==(**Waffle House vs. IHOP**), so people this verse out like a **deflective weapon** whenever you say something or someone else that they like is wrong. (I’ve heard **Bill Maher** quote it... “Who are you to say this or that is wrong... doesn’t the Bible say, “Judge not?”)

But **is that really** what Jesus means?

Well, let’s read the whole passage: **Matthew 7:1, “Judge not, that you be not judged. [2] For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.**

[3] Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? [4] Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? [5] You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. And then, this verse:

[6] "Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you."

- Well, if "judge not, lest you be judged" is music to modern ears, that last verse has to be the opposite. Did Jesus just refer to some people as **dogs and pigs**?
- Think about. Basically, Jesus says, in this one passage: "Don't judge... and be careful, because some of your friends, and some of you... are pigs."

Oh my goodness, what does all of this mean? Let see if we can make some sense of it...

**First, what does Jesus mean by judging? Well, he** can't mean that you never tell someone that they are wrong, because Jesus spent his whole ministry doing that:

- In fact, just a few verses after Jesus makes this statement, Jesus says, "The gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and many are going this way. But the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few." **Matthew 7:13-14** This doesn't sound like a "Hey, whatever way you want to get there is fine... who am I to judge?"
- Later in Matthew Jesus tells a group of people, "But Jesus answered them, 'You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God.'" **Matthew 22:29**
- In fact, here's how Jesus characterized his whole life: "The world hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil." **John 7:7**

- This doesn't sound like, "Who am I to correct?" Hippie walking around in Birkenstocks saying, "It's legal in Colorado."
- And **Jesus' followers** would do the same thing:
  - John the Baptist lost his head as a result of calling out Herod for sexual sin.
  - Paul said we are to: "Rebuke the works of darkness."

So it can't mean you don't tell people they are wrong. So what's it mean? (Take notes so person beside you doesn't judge you and think you're not serious about God)

**Big Idea #1: You judge someone not when you assess their position, but when you dismiss them as a person.**

- Here's what the Bible says about Jesus: "God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." **John 3:17**
  - Even though Jesus told some people their works were evil and made very clear to everyone that unless they enter by the narrow gate they won't get to heaven... he still "did not condemn the world."
- Because "not condemning" does not mean, "not telling the truth." It is about casting a person off after you tell them the truth.
- **It's what you do after you tell someone the truth that determines whether or not you are condemning, or judging, them.**
  - **After telling us the truth**, Jesus brought us close. He made us—sinners—his friends.
  - The verse before John 3:17 is **John 3:16**, that God so loved the world that he gave his only Son who would die for us...
  - He told us the truth then made us his friends and laid down his life for us!

**Big Idea #2: Judging reflects extreme ignorance of our own sinfulness**

- When Jesus talks about the **speck in your neighbor's eye** and the log in your own, what is he getting at? Hypocrisy? Sure. You shouldn't berate people for the very things you are guilty of.
  - This is like the **guy who lectures his small group for not tithing** when he's cheating on his taxes... Or, **when I grew up I knew people** that would flat condemn you for smoking a cigar because "your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit"... when they were 150 lbs overweight. I would be like, "Bro, why don't you take the **Swiss Cake Roll log** out of your own eye before you lecture everybody else about the small leaf in their mouth?"
- So, yes, he is telling you not to be a blatant hypocrite... but **I think that Jesus is getting at more** here.... I think he's confronting us for failing to grapple with our own sinfulness.
  - Notice that Jesus **assumes the log is in our eye: not "if"** there is a log in your eye but he assumes that there is.
  - Christian doctrine teaches that we are completely sinful.
    - Jesus said that the **human heart was deeply depraved**... like a disease (symptoms) or a polluted well, in which you cover up...<sup>1</sup>
    - You **might learn to contain** or cover up because of your experiences, personality, ...
    - **WOL water** in NY
- **Different ones of us because of our experiences, our personality, or our upbringing, might learn to contain or even cover certain things, but the depravity is still in there.** Think of it like a disease. Just because you don't show *all* the symptoms of a disease doesn't mean you have the disease.
  - **John Owen** said, "*The seed of every sin is in every heart.*"
  - *Breaking Bad*: the depravity was always in him, he just didn't have opportunity. It's in all of us.

So, **when I am talking to someone who is in sin, or in error, I should be painfully aware** that I am infected with the same sinful stuff that

they are, **AND [2] ~~For~~ with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.**

- What judgment was pronounced on me? Mercy. Shouldn't that affect how I approach others? Won't that change my tone?
- After telling me the truth... Jesus brought me close. Won't that change how I approach others?

The antidote to judging is to remember the gospel; to be broken by the gospel.

**Let me tell you... How to know when you are judging (and forgotten the gospel):**

1. **You are more enraged at someone else's sin than you are embarrassed by your own**

- A sure sign! **Dietrich Bonhoeffer** on the church
- **"Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. (means confronting, but doing it with a gentle spirit). But consider yourselves, or you also may be tempted."** Galatians 6:1<sup>2</sup>  
consider = be painfully aware

2. **You fail to forgive**

- You are saying, "I will not let you off for what you did to me, even though I know God has forgiven me..."
  - **10 million talents**
  - Do you even realize?
- Sometimes people say, **"Well, I'll forgive, but I can't forget..."** which basically means I am going to say I forgive but I'm going to stay mad at you, and will probably be a little cold to you" and may bring it back up... but forgiveness is saying, "I choose not to bring it back up or hold it against them or let it affect your disposition toward you in any way."

<sup>1</sup> Matthew 15

<sup>2</sup> Commentators often make the connection between this verse and 1 Cor 10:12: "*Let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed, lest he fall.*"

- You say, “Well, **I can’t forget.**” Forgiving doesn’t mean that you physically can’t remember it... it means to the best of your ability you won’t bring it back up or let it color your disposition...

You judge when...

### 3. You “cut off” those who disagree with you

- You are judging when you disagree strongly with someone—over something like faith or morality or politics—and because you can’t agree you cut them off. Basically saying, “*We can’t really be friends if we disagree on **this** issue.*”
- Let me say something I hope you don’t misinterpret: **You have to love the person more than you love your position on a particular issue.** That doesn’t mean we ever **compromise the position**, or fail to state it, just that even when they disagree with it, we don’t cut them off. “Yes, this issue is important. I can’t compromise... but **I love you more than I love being right** and so **even if you don’t see things** my way, I’m going to keep bringing you close and remain committed to you.”
- Best example of this: **Jesus with Judas.** After he’d betrayed him... and Jesus knew it... he called him friend. (Not sarcasm.) He was still offering the hand of friendship to him.
  - **The ultimate statement of judgment** is to say to someone, “Depart from me.” Jesus never said that to us. Even after we’d betrayed him, he said, “My friend!”
  - How can I say, “Depart from me” to someone else, when God doesn’t even say that to me?
- **Politics. Lifestyle choices.**
- Many of you have made people **projects**... as soon as you saw they weren’t going to change their mind...

### 4. You gossip

- Maybe the **worst kind**... judging them, but with no chance for changing them
- Don’t mask it with “prayer” or “bless his heart.” (in the South)

### 5. You refuse to receive criticism

- **WHY IS THIS A SIGN THAT WE JUDGE? WELL, WHY DO you and I hate criticism?** We don’t like to admit we have faults.
  - **But if you understand the gospel**, your faults should not surprise you. So, when you point out my depravity, I should say, “Well, of course... Here are a few others.
  - When you don’t do receive criticism well... you are putting yourself in this position of perfection, from which you can judge everybody else since they have faults but clearly you don’t...
6. (And this one is really ironic... you are actually judging someone when) **You refuse to correct someone’s position.**
- **When you won’t tell somebody** that God’s Word says they are wrong, **either you don’t really believe** what the Bible says is true, or you think “It’s no use, they’ll never change. They won’t listen.” **NOT WORTH THE PAIN...**
  - **You’ve just condemned** a the person and written them off as beyond hope.

Which is the last one...

### 7. You write someone off as hopeless

- We serve a Savior who raises the dead! No gradations of death.
- ~~You say, “Well, **if I were honest**, it’s not that I think they are beyond hope... it’s just that to tell them the truth means they might get mad at me, or create this awkward situation...” **Do you realize how selfish that is?** You are willing to let this person be condemned by God, because you don’t want to go through the potential awkwardness of telling them they are wrong. **That is, de facto, condemning them!**~~

**When Jesus told us to “not judge,” he was not telling us to not assess someone’s position—quite the opposite—he was telling us to assess the position—with great clarity—without dismissing the person.** (guy in our church this week who said, “How can I not tell you this...?”)

The Bible calls this being full of grace and truth, which was the description given to Jesus.

- **Grace and truth.** Truth without grace is *judgmental fundamentalism*; grace without truth is *liberal sentimentality*.
- Grace and truth is the gospel.

*Is that what you're doing in your relationships?*

- **(To the unbeliever:** You've probably seen Christians do this really badly, that's because we haven't thought enough about the implications of the gospel. It's not that we believe the gospel too much; we don't believe it enough.)

So, now we come to vs. 6: [6] *"Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you."*

**So what does this mean? It can't mean** that we should refuse to really engage with someone who disagrees with us; like Jesus is saying "don't throw the awesome pearl of your wisdom in front of people who disagree." That would be to miss the entire point of what Jesus has just said about not dismissing the person!

No, in fact, **he's giving you instructions about how to engage** with people who don't believe like you... But that raises another question—**isn't Jesus here calling people pigs and dogs?**

There are different forms of life on earth, and those different forms of life are able to perceive value differently. For example:

- The **lowest form of life is a plant:** It's alive, and it responds to food and water. But it doesn't get excited about food... "Oh, yummy... here comes some **manure**. That's good for me." They don't get scared when they see the lawnmower coming, "Oh no, this is going to hurt!" Those perceptions are beyond them.
- The next level is animal life. Animals can get quite excited about food. If you have a dog, you know what happens when you tell

them, "Want some food!" **But giving them pearls?** They sniff, and get bored.

- A pearl is of great value—it could buy them 10K piggy meals—but they can't perceive it, so you throw it out there to them, and they're like, "I can't eat this junk!" So then they come after you, because at least you are edible.
- Humans, however, can recognize the value of pearls.
- **Here's the meaning:** Throughout the Gospels, Jesus compares the message of his kingdom to a pearl. But some people, he says, don't have the capacity to grasp it. Because there is a higher form of life than human life, and it is the life given by the Spirit. And God has to supernaturally give people eyes to see...
  - Which I know that is **a little insulting**... and it is supposed to be. Blind. Dead.

**So what does this parable mean, practically, for you?** I really want to give you some handles to make this practical.

*Make prayer your main weapon*

- **Only supernatural power can change the heart...** in the words of E.M. Bounds: "We shouldn't try to talk to a person about God without also talking to God about that person."
  - **Illus: Insane man.** Before arguments makes sense, they need sanity
  - People don't just need information, you see, they need regeneration, and God is the only one that can do that. **So make prayer your main weapon.**
- **Disciples were bothered they couldn't cast out a demon:** This kind only comes out by prayer and fasting

*Be sensitive to what people can handle*

- Many of the people in ancient Israel were pig farmers... they had to feed the pigs. Jesus is saying, "Look, be smart. They don't appreciate the pearl. Don't give them that yet!"
- Jesus once told a crowd: "Many things you're not ready for yet." Compromise? Some people aren't ready for certain things.

- **CS Lewis: sexual ethics** are not the center of Christianity

#### **Seek conversion to Christ before persuasion to your point of view**

- I watch sometimes how Jesus avoided getting quagmired in 2ndary matters—political issues; the issue is Jesus!

#### **Learn to adapt your message to your hearer**

- DMLJ pointed out that Jesus answered Pilate's question, but stood silent before Herod.
- *"You do not handle a Pilate and a Herod in exactly the same way... You must become expert in knowing what to give to each type. You answer the questions of a Pilate, but you say nothing to Herod."*
- John 11: Has two different women (Mary and Martha) and Jesus responds in two completely different ways.

#### **Devote yourself to listening before speaking**

- Medical journal: 18 seconds<sup>3</sup>
- My mechanic

#### **Be patient with the pace of God in someone's life**

- People who waited for years for sons, parents, husbands...
- Bill Hybels: neighbor. Just walked across the room. "It took you 15 seconds to read this... It took 8 years."

#### **It's ok to back out of destructive relationships**

- Brad Hambrick, our counselor, says that he believes one of the things Jesus is teaching here is that there is a time when you have to back out... abusive relationship.

#### **Sometimes, you have to be willing to be torn**

- Thinking here not of a physically abusive relationship, but in terms of evangelism.

- Psalm 22 is a prophecy about Jesus dying on the cross: "Bulls and dogs surround me... they open their mouths wide against me. I am poured out like water." (Psalm 22:12–16)
- But through this he changed us; through our patient sacrifice we change others.
- Drew Whitt: rock climbing
- John Peterson: Guy here who came to Christ as a college student: hired a deprogrammer. Locked herself in bathroom until he promised not to tell anybody or raise support from any friends. Today they have become believers...
- Tommy Swain
- *Are you willing to do this?*

To the unbeliever: I love John 3:17...

- He came to testify. We needed a Savior.
- He prayed "father forgive them" for you in this moment. (she ignores; doesn't take me seriously; he's too distracted)
- Come to the Son during this window

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/1991/11/13/health/all-too-often-the-doctor-isn-t-listening-studies-show.html>