

Rev. T. Jefferson Rogers Jr.
Righteous Living
Matthew 7:1-6

Matthew 7 opens with a controversial subject—Judging! Should we judge as Christians or should we not? The answer to this question is yes and no. Yes, we should judge righteously. No, we should not judge hypocritically. In Matthew 7:1 Jesus is not saying that Christians are never to judge. He is cautioning Christians of the unrighteous judgment of the scribes and Pharisees. In other words, don't judge like the scribes and Pharisees.

Matthew 5:20

Judging (Matthew 7:1-6)

The hypocritical, self-righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees were harsh judges of anyone different from them. Therefore, Jesus said, ***“Judge not, that you be not judged”*** (7:1). This judgment is not judging in a court of law or discernment. The court of law is designed to judge according to the law of the land. As Christian believers, we are to discern between right and wrong.

John said in 1 John 4:1, ***“Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”*** We are told to try spirits in 1 John 4:1. The word “try” is *dok-im-ad'-zo* which means to test, approve, discern, and examine.

The word judge in verse 1 is *krino* which means distinguish, decide, try, condemn, punish. It carries the idea of passing judgment, or giving your opinion in a private manner. The interpretation is that Christians should not make opinionated judgments about the behavior of others. Opinionated judgment is shown to be erroneous by multiple commands in Scripture. For example, in John 7:24 Jesus said, ***“Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.”*** Judging according to one's opinion is to judge the superficial aspect of things, the merely formal side, the unexplained letter of the Law. In other words, your opinion is not God's standard for righteous living.

In Matthew 7:1, Jesus is not telling us not to judge at all. As is frequently the case with biblical truths, the Christian's role in exercising judgment on others is found in a tension between warnings to avoid judging others and admonitions concerning how to best judge others. You must remember that context determines word meaning. Therefore, in this particular text the Pharisees and scribes were wrongfully judging Jesus with an objective of finding Him to be inadequate. The reason for the their opposition of Jesus is found in the fact that Jesus was not the kind of king the Pharisees and scribes anticipated. Jesus did not highlight men like the scribes and Pharisees. Jesus did not give, pray, and fast to be seen of men like they did. In Matthew 6 Jesus said, ***“And when you pray, you shall not pray like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”*** So, Jesus' rejection of the Pharisees and

scribes falsified practices caused them in return to overtly reject Him. Their judgment of other people was unrighteous.

Jesus said in verse 2, ***“For with the what judgment you judge, you shall be judged: and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again.”*** This means the measure we use to judge others is the measure by which we will be judged. The word measure deals with a measuring rod. A measuring rod is a tool used to physically measure lengths and sizes. Often people quote Luke 6:38 when it pertains to giving an offering, but miss what comes before it in verse 37. Luke 6:37 says, ***“Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.”*** Then verse 38 says, ***“Give and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”*** The way we judge people will have a boomerang effect on us at judgment day. If we judge harshly, God will judge us harshly. Jesus repeatedly taught that God will deal with us as we deal with our fellowman. Examples: Jesus taught in Matthew 5:7, ***“Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.”*** In Matthew 6:15 Jesus taught, If we do not forgive them, God will not forgive us. As long as we make it our business to point out the sins of other people there is no hope that our sins will be blotted out. Another example is mentioned in Matthew 18:21-35 the parable of the unmerciful servant.

With the unmerciful God will show Himself unmerciful.

Jesus asked some very significant questions in verses 3-4, ***“How can we see a mote, or speck, in a brother’s eye but not notice the beam in our own eye. Or, how can we say to a brother or sister, Let me pull out the mote of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?”*** Jesus used hyperbole to emphasize a point. His is that most of us are blind to our own faults. We are quick to find fault or sin in others but are often blind to very same sin in our own lives. There is something wrong with all of us. There is something in all of our eyes. The problem is when we ignore what is wrong with ourselves and look in judgment and act in judgment with what is wrong with others.

Jesus said in verse 5, ***“You hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of your own eye.”*** A hypocritical person is the last to perceive his own sin. It may be huge as a beam, yet he is quite unable to see it while he is busy in hunting for the speck of dust in his brother’s eye. There is nothing which so hinders a person from heart-searching self-examination, nothing which so hardens him in self-complacent pride, as the habit of finding fault with other people. Jesus teaches us to first confess our own sins, which is often pride, self-righteousness, or a condemning spirit. We should first pray for God to create a clean heart and renew a right spirit in us. After the removal of our sins then we can see clearly to take the speck out of our brother’s eye.

Jesus said in verse 6, ***“Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast you your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.”*** Dogs and pigs have significant meaning. They represent unholy, or unclean, people who treat the Gospel with contempt when it is presented to them. They are like pigs who do not realize the value of pearls.