



"Judge Not!"

Matthew 7:1-6

Sunday | July 2nd, 2017 | Pastor Patrick Bowler

CONSULT THE SCRIPTURES

Matthew 7:1-6 "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. 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? 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? 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. 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."

(See also Matt. 5-7; 2 Tim. 3:16; Eph. 6:1-4; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; Heb. 10:24; Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13; Gal. 6:1; Js. 5:19, 20; 1 Thess. 5:11; Ps. 139:23, 24)

CONSULT THE SCHOLARS

[Kevin DeYoung] "Evangelical Christians are often told not to judge. If there is one verse non-Christians know (after, perhaps, some reference to the "least of these") is that's Jesus taught people, "Judge not, that you be not judged" (Matt. 7:1). Of course, what the casual Christian critic misses is that Jesus was not calling for a moratorium on moral discernment or spiritual evaluation. After all, he assumes five verses later that his followers will have the wherewithal to tell what sort of people in the world are dogs and pigs (Matt. 7:6). Believing in the sinfulness of sin, the exclusivity of Christ, and moral absolutes does not make one judgmental. Just look at Jesus.

But this doesn't mean Matthew 7:1 has nothing to teach conservative Christians. Like everyone else on the planet, we have a propensity to assume the worst about people, to happily pass on bad reports, and to size up individuals and situations without knowing all the facts (or even half the facts). I'm not talking about disciplining wayward church members, or having hard conversations about people caught in sin, or refusing to ever

take someone's past behavior into account, or being hopelessly naive about the way the world works, or refraining from the public exchange of ideas, or suspending all our powers of discernment until we understand something or someone with omniscience. I'm talking about the all too natural tendency to shoot first and ask questions later (or not at all).

Is there a piece of biblical wisdom more routinely ignored on the internet, not to mention in our own hearts, than Proverbs 18:17?—"The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him." I've never been accused of serious misconduct that I knew to be patently false or horribly misunderstood. But if I am someday, I hope folks will remember the book of Proverbs. "If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame" (Prov. 18:13). Too often we are quick to speak and slow to listen. The world, the flesh, the devil, and the internet want us to rush to judgment, when the Bible urges us to suspend judgment until we've heard from both sides."¹

DISCUSS

1. Eric Bargerhuff said, "If mishandled and used inappropriately, the Bible can turn into a dangerous book."² What do you think? Do you agree? Why or why not?
2. As a group, can you identify ways in which you have seen the Bible mishandled? Give examples (avoid gossip).
3. Pastor Patrick talked about the need for a distinction between "meaning" and "significance" with regard to Scripture. What was his point and why is the distinction important?³
4. Read *Matthew 7:1-6* and discuss. How has this verse been mishandled? What did Jesus mean? (Remember context is important)
5. What is a hypocrite? What is Jesus saying to the hypocrite?
6. Read *Psalms 139:23-24*. How does this relate to *Matt. 7:1-6*?
8. What immediate applications can be made in light of this text?

¹Kevin DeYoung, "Yes, We Are Judgmental (But Not In the Way Everyone Thinks)" (The Gospel Coalition, Jan. 12, 2014). <https://blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/kevindeyoung/2014/01/14/judgmental-but-not-like-that/>

²Eric Bargerhuff, *The Most Misused Verses in the Bible* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 2012), p. 14.

³**Meaning** is what the author intended to communicate (using words). **Significance** relates to the response of the reader/hearer to that meaning.

¹ Andreas J. Kostenberger, *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2011), p. 57, 58.