

## Matthew 7a

**What command did Jesus give to the disciples (v. 1)?** Do not judge. Jesus meant that His disciples should not do God's job of passing judgment—on His behalf—when He has not authorized them to do so. Only God knows all the facts that motivate people to do what they do.

One public opinion poll indicated that this is currently the most popularly quoted verse from the Bible, and it is routinely misunderstood.<sup>1</sup> Many seem to think (or hope) that Jesus commanded a universal acceptance of any lifestyle or teaching.

This command not to judge others includes the following areas: we should not judge motives; only God can read them; we should not judge by appearance (John 7:24; James 2:1–4); we should not judge those who have conscientious scruples about matters that are not in themselves right or wrong (Romans 14:1–5); we should not judge the service of another Christian (1 Corinthians 4:1–5); and, we should not judge a fellow believer by speaking evil about him (James 4:11, 12).<sup>2</sup>

Jesus is not teaching that we are to be undiscerning Christians. He never intended that we abandon our critical faculty or discernment. The New Testament has many illustrations of legitimate judgment of the condition, conduct, or teaching of others.<sup>3</sup> We might say that Jesus means, “Don’t be judgmental, but don’t throw out all discernment either (John 7:24).”

**What was Jesus’ warning (v. 2)?** Jesus warned that unrighteous judgment would be repaid in kind: “*For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged.*” This principle of reaping what we sow is built into all human life and affairs.<sup>4</sup>

When our judgment in regard to others is wrong, it is often not because we judge according to a standard, but because we are hypocritical in the application of that standard – we ignore the standard in our own life. It is common to judge others by one standard and ourselves by another standard – being far more generous to ourselves than others. According to the teaching of some rabbis in Jesus’ time, God had two measures that He used to judge people. One was a measure of *justice* and the other was a measure of *mercy*. Whichever measure you want God to use with you, you should use that same measure with others.

**What was the principle that Jesus laid down in vv. 3-5?** Jesus exposed our tendency to see a small fault in someone else while ignoring the same fault in ourselves. He purposely exaggerated the situation (using hyperbole) to drive home the point. Someone with a plank in his eye often finds fault with the speck in the eye of another, not even noticing his own condition. It is hypocritical to suppose that we could help someone with a fault when we ourselves have a greater fault. We must remedy our own faults before criticizing them in others.<sup>5</sup>

**What was Jesus’ directive in v. 6?** He warned His disciples not to give holy things to dogs or to cast ... pearls before swine. Under the Mosaic Law, dogs and swine were unclean animals and here the terms are used to depict wicked people. When we meet vicious people who treat divine truths with utter contempt and respond to our preaching of the claims of Christ with abuse and violence, we are not obligated to continue to share the gospel with them. Needless to say, it requires spiritual perception to discern these people.<sup>6</sup>

**What direction does Jesus give to those who diligently seek Him (vv. 7-8)?** Earlier in this sermon Jesus had given the disciples a model prayer (Matthew 6:9–13). Now, He assured them that God welcomes prayer, and urged them to come to Him continuously and persistently. This is emphasized by the present tenses in the verbs: “keep on asking”; “keep on seeking”; “keep on knocking” (7:7). Why? Because your Father in heaven (v. 11) delights in giving good gifts (cf. James 1:17) to those who persist in prayer.<sup>7</sup>

God values persistence and passion in prayer because they show that we share His heart. It shows that we care about the things He cares about. Persistent prayer does not overcome God's stubborn reluctance; it gives glory to Him, expresses dependence upon Him, and aligns our heart more with His.

**What assurance does Jesus give his disciples (vv. 9-11)?** When the conditions for prayer are met, the Christian can have utter confidence that God will hear and answer. This assurance is based on the character of God, our Father. On the human level, we know that if a son asks for bread, his father will not give him a stone. Neither would he give him a serpent if he had asked for a fish. An earthly father would neither deceive his hungry son nor give him anything that might inflict pain.<sup>8</sup>

If human parents reward their children's requests with what is best for them, how much more will our Father who is in heaven do so.

**What principle does Jesus state in v. 12?** This verse is commonly referred to as "the Golden Rule." The principle is that....what people ordinarily want others to do for them should be what they practice toward those others.<sup>9</sup> Christianity is not simply a matter of abstinence from sin; it is positive goodness.

This saying by Jesus summarizes the moral teachings of the Law of Moses and the writings of the Prophets of Israel. If this verse were universally obeyed, it would transform all areas of international relationships, national politics, family life, and church life.<sup>10</sup>

**What are the diverging paths that force the traveler to choose between them (v. 13-14)?** The narrow gate and the constricted way (path) lead to life, namely, life in the messianic kingdom today (cf. vv. 21-22), not just heaven. It is the narrow way of salvation that involves faith in Jesus Christ as the only Savior (cf. [John 14:6](#)). The wide gate and the broad way lead to destruction, namely, death and hell (cf. 25:34, 46; [1 Corinthians 1:18](#); [Philippians 1:28](#); [3:19](#); [1 Timothy 6:9](#); [Hebrews 10:39](#)).<sup>11</sup>

In light of the whole sermon, it was obvious Jesus was comparing the wide gate and the broad road to the outward righteousness of the Pharisees. If those listening to Jesus followed the Pharisees' teachings, their path would lead to destruction. The narrow gate and road referred to Jesus' teaching, which emphasized not external requirements but internal transformation. Even the Lord Jesus acknowledged that few would find the true way, the way that leads to life (i.e., to heaven, in contrast with ruin in hell).<sup>12</sup>

Jesus clearly did not believe in the doctrine of universalism that is growing in popularity today: the belief that everyone will eventually end up in heaven (cf. [John 14:6](#)).

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Matthew, 2025 Edition (published by Sonic Light), 221..

<sup>2</sup> William MacDonald, Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1227.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 1228.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Louis A. Barbieri Jr., "Matthew," The Bible Knowledge Commentary: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Victor Books, 1985), 34.

<sup>8</sup> William MacDonald, Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1228.

<sup>9</sup> Louis A. Barbieri Jr., "Matthew," The Bible Knowledge Commentary: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Victor Books, 1985), 34.

<sup>10</sup> William MacDonald, Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1229.

<sup>11</sup> Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Matthew, 2025 Edition (published by Sonic Light), 228.

<sup>12</sup> Louis A. Barbieri Jr., "Matthew," The Bible Knowledge Commentary: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Victor Books, 1985), 34.