

To Judge or Not to Judge

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[0 : 00] This lesson starts the final chapter of the Sermon on the Mount.

! Jesus changes the emphasis slightly.! The next verses focus on our relationship to other people.! We need to remember that the Sermon on the Mount is one continuous sermon.

Although his emphasis changes somewhat, Jesus reminds us throughout the chapter of two things. First, we must avoid hypocrisy in our actions. And second, we must remember that everything we do is done in God's sight.

Martin Lloyd-Jones put it like this. He said, If we were questioned and asked whether we believe that we go on living after death and that we shall have to face God in judgment, we would undoubtedly say yes.

But as we live from hour to hour, are we mindful of that? We cannot read the Bible without concluding that the one thing that really differentiates God's people from all others is that they always have been people who are conscious of their eternal destiny.

[1 : 10] The Christian always should know that he is walking in the presence of God and that he is going on to meet God. That thought should determine and control his life. The theme of chapter 7 is judgment.

That theme pops up in several different ways. So let's talk now about what we'll see over the next two weeks. Six verses, the ones that we'll cover tonight, focus on the negative aspect of a self-righteous, judgmental spirit.

The following six verses that we'll cover next week focus on the positive aspect of a spirit that is humble, trusting, and loving. Together, the 12 verses summarize the principles of proper human relations.

With that as an introduction, let's read the verses that we'll cover tonight. Those verses are Matthew 7, 1 through 6. In those verses, Jesus talks about logs, dogs, and hogs in the context of proper Christian judgment.

That's not your outline for the lesson, but I thought about doing it that way. Starting in chapter 7, Jesus said, Judge not that you be not judged.

[2 : 23] 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. You've already noticed that this passage includes one of the most often quoted Bible verses.

That, of course, is verse 1 of chapter 7. Arguably, verse 1 is the verse most often quoted by unbelievers. One pastor even called verse 1 Satan's favorite verse.

When the verse is quoted, it often is misapplied. As with any verse, we must look at its context to understand what Jesus really is telling us here.

[3 : 36] Looking at the verses together, here's the main idea of verses 1 through 6. Jesus commands believers to judge others appropriately. Jesus commands believers to judge others appropriately.

As we cover the verses tonight, keep in mind that Jesus still is using the Pharisees' behavior as an example of what true believers should avoid doing.

His emphasis has changed, but Jesus' continuing disgust with the Pharisees helps him illustrate his points. We'll look at verses 1 through 6 under four headings.

Verse 1 has the first heading, and there we see the controversial saying. The controversial saying is your first section. Look at verse 1 again.

That is where Jesus simply said, Judge not that you be not judged. I thought about heading this section as the confusing saying, but Jesus clearly says what he means here.

[4 : 41] The confusion comes from the fact that people neglect to dig down to determine the meaning. Because of that, we get controversy between believers and unbelievers. Wrong interpretation of the verse also causes controversy sometimes among believers.

Interpreting this verse correctly is the key to interpreting the six-verse section correctly, and it also sets up what we'll see next week in verses 7 through 12. So let's dig into verse 1 to see what Jesus meant.

The word translated judge there means to separate, choose, select, determine, and it has a dozen or more different shades of meaning that must be decided from the context.

In the present passage, Jesus is referring to both judgment of motives, which no human being can know of another, and also to the judgment of external appearances. What Jesus here forbids is self-righteous, hasty, unmerciful, prejudiced, and unwarranted condemnation, and that would be based upon human standards and human understanding.

To judge another person's motives or to curse that person to condemnation is to play God. People misapply this verse when they say that the Bible forbids judgment.

[6 : 02] That clearly is wrong, and we'll see that tonight. Much of Christ's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount assumes that we will use our critical powers to judge things.

For example, we've repeatedly heard the call to be different from the world around us. We're to develop a righteousness that exceeds that of the Pharisees. We've been told to do more than others in the standard of love that we adopt.

We've been told to be different from the hypocrites in our piety, and to be unlike the heathen in our ambitions. How could we possibly obey all those teachings if we didn't first evaluate the performance of the others and ensure that ours is different from what they do?

Similarly, in Matthew 7, the very command not to judge others is followed almost immediately by two further commands. We'll see those tonight when Jesus talks about avoiding giving what is holy to dogs or giving pearls to pigs.

Later on, in verse 15, we'll see that he warns us to be aware of false prophets. Just to show that judgment is called for throughout the Bible, let's look at some other passages where the Bible talks about proper judgment.

[7 : 17] Like what Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount, these cross-references show us that we're to use our judgment properly while at the same time avoiding self-righteousness.

Here are Romans chapter 16, verses 17 and 18. I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught.

Avoid them. For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive.

The only way we can identify those who cause divisions and teach false doctrine is to judge what they say. In Matthew chapter 18, verses 15 through 17, Jesus said, If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone.

If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses.

[8 : 28] If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

Confronting somebody about sins the way the Bible specifies requires us to judge. Listen now to 2 John verses 10 and 11.

2 John 10 and 11 say, Obviously, evaluating somebody's teaching requires judgment.

Hebrews tells us that we are distinguished between good and evil. Listen to Hebrews 5.14.

Hebrews 5.14 says, But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

The concept of a spiritual discernment or judgment goes back to the Old Testament too. Listen to Leviticus 19.17. Actually, this is Leviticus 19.15 and it says, You shall do no injustice in court.

[9 : 49] You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness you shall judge your neighbor. You can see from these verses that the Bible clearly calls us to use proper judgment, particularly about biblical teachings about others or about the sins of others.

The judgments we are to make are based upon the clear teachings of the Bible itself. What is forbidden is the self-righteous type of judgment that was practiced by the scribes and Pharisees. Their primary concern was to condemn others to eternal judgment because of actions and attitudes that differed from their own worldly self-made traditions. The Bible regularly condemns this type of self-righteous judgment.

Listen to what Paul wrote in Romans 14.4. He said, Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls, and he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

Later in the same chapter, Paul wrote these words in Romans 14.13. He said, Therefore, let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.

[11 : 13] Listen to what James wrote in James 4.11-12. He said, Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother speaks evil against the law and judges the law.

But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy.

But who are you to judge your neighbor? Going back to Paul, here is what he said in 1 Corinthians 4.3-5.

He said, But with me, it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself, for I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted.

It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore, do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart.

[12 : 20] Then each one will receive his commendation from God. That's the same Paul who wrote all the verses we cross-referenced in Romans. Those verses include the ones where he told us to watch out for people who cause divisions or who teach the wrong doctrine.

And listen to what he said in Galatians 1, verses 8 and 9. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.

As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. So here's the summary from all of those cross-references. We must judge what people say and do, and we must judge their actions. But those judgments must be grounded in what the Bible clearly says. What we must avoid is condemning others based upon self-righteous standards.

John MacArthur said, Except as they may be continually teaching false doctrine or following standards that are clearly unscriptural, we are never to judge a person's ministry, teaching, or life, and certainly not his motives, by a self-styled standard.

[13 : 40] Whenever we assign to people to condemnation without mercy because they fail to do something the way we think it ought to be done or because we believe their motives are wrong, we pass judgment that only God is qualified to make.

The \$10 word for what Jesus is condemning here is censoriousness. The censorious critic is someone who is a fault finder, who is negative and destructive towards other people, and who actually enjoys seeking out their failings.

He puts the worst possible construction on their motives. He pours cold water on their schemes and is ungenerous towards their mistakes. To be censorious is to claim the confidence and authority to sit in judgment upon somebody else.

We should avoid making judgments based upon self-righteous standards because if we are guilty of that, we will face the same type of judgment. Look again at Matthew 7.1.

Jesus says, Judge not that you be not judge. So if we pose as judges, we can't plead ignorance of the law that we claim to be able to judge others by.

[14 : 55] So let's summarize this section with one last cross-reference. Listen to what Jesus said in John 7.24. He said, Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.

Again, that was do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment. The meaning of verse 1 becomes more obvious when we move to the second section of the lesson.

That's because verse 2 expands on verse 1. Properly applied, it shows that verse 1 never needs to be controversial, and that's because verse 2 gives us the clarifying statement.

The clarifying statement is our second heading. Jesus said in verse 2, For with the judgment you pronounce, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

We're going to be judged using the same standards that we attempt to impose on others. That should make us want to avoid the censorious judgment condemned by verse 1.

[16:05] When we assume the role of final omniscient judge, we imply that we are qualified to be that type of judge, that we know and we understand all the facts, all the circumstances, and all the motives involved.

So when we assert our right to judge, we'll be judged by the same standard of knowledge and wisdom that we claim to have as our own. Most people feel free to judge others because they wrongly think that they are somehow superior to others.

The Pharisees fit that scenario. They thought they were exempt from judgment because they believed they perfectly measured up to the divine standards. The problem was the standards that they used were human standards that they and others like them had set up.

Those standards were far short of God's holy and perfect law, and we've seen Jesus point that out as we've gone through the Sermon on the Mount. Listen also to how Paul put it in Romans 2, verses 1-3.

Here are Romans 2, verses 1-3. Paul said, Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another, you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things.

[17:24] We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. Do you suppose, O man, you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourselves, that you will escape the judgment of God?

The same principle is taught in James 3, verse 1, when James says, Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.

If we hold ourselves to be experts in something, we will be judged as if we were an expert. Martin Lloyd-Jones said, If therefore I am careful in my scrutiny of other people and their lives, that very standard comes back upon me, and I have no ground at all for complaining.

There is nothing I know of that is so likely to deter us from the sinful practice of condemning others and from that foul and ugly spirit that delights in doing so.

We've covered the controversial saying and the clarifying statement. In verses 3 and 4, we have the comedic scene. The comedic scene is your next heading.

[18:40] Saying that something in the Bible is comedic almost sounds blasphemous. That Jesus sometimes used humor in his teaching, and verses 3 and 4 have one of those times.

Look at those verses again. Here are verses 3 and 4 of Matthew chapter 7. Jesus said, 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? Depending upon the translation you have, the word translated speck in the ESV can be rendered several different ways.

Many of those renderings understate the significance of the speck. The word translated speck was used for a small stalk or a twig or possibly a splinter.

So you've got a small stalk, a twig, or possibly a splinter in that eye. It's small in comparison to a log, but it's still a significant object to have in the eye.

[19:52] So Jesus' comparison is between a sin that is large and one that is gigantic. Picture what Jesus is trying to tell us.

The person criticizing the speck is completely oblivious to the giant log sticking out of his own head. While the person with the log is pointing out the speck in somebody else, the person with the log can barely see because of his even more significant problem.

In fact, the person with the log may even be injuring the other person because he keeps hitting him with the log that's sticking out of his head while he's trying to get closer to take out the speck. That's why we can say this is a comedic scene.

But when the caricature is transferred to us and our own temptation to do fault-finding, we sometimes fail to appreciate the joke. That's because all of us have a tendency to exaggerate the faults of others and minimize the significance of our own.

We find it impossible when comparing ourselves to others to strictly be objective and to be impartial. We tend to have a rosy view of ourselves and a negative view of others.

[21 : 03] What we often are doing is seeing our own faults in others and then judging the others because of that. Earlier, Jesus exposed our hypocrisy in relation to God.

That involved practicing our righteousness before men to be seen by them. Now he exposes our hypocrisy in relation to others. That's when we meddle with their lesser sins while failing to deal with our own more serious sins.

The spirit of hypercriticism or censoriousness is concerned with personalities rather than principles. Our real desire is to condemn the person rather than to get rid of the evil that is in that person.

That makes us incapable of true judgment. If there's any bias, if there's any personal feelings or animosity that creep in, we're no longer true examiners.

Even the law recognizes this. Think about a court of law. If it can be proved that there is some connection between any member of a jury and the person that is on trial, that member of the jury can be disqualified.

[22 : 13] What is sought in a jury is impartiality. There must be no prejudice. There must be nothing personal. The jury must have unbiased, objective judgment.

The personal element has to be entirely excluded before there can be true judgment. Look at verse 4 again. That's where Jesus said, 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?

Verse 4 is similar to verse 3, but there's a slightly different twist here. In verse 4, the person with the log goes beyond pointing out the speck in the other person's eye.

The person with the log attempts to remove that speck. So how is somebody with the log sticking out of his eye going to be able to see well enough to remove a speck or a splinter?

Jesus says that our own condition is such that we're quite incapable of helping others. We claim to be very concerned about these people and their faults, and we try to give the impression that we're concerned only about their good.

[23 : 23] We say that we're troubled by this blemish that is in them, and that we're anxious to help them get rid of it. But Jesus says the beam that is in your own eye makes you incapable of doing so.

Jesus almost certainly used logs, specks, or twigs in our eyes on purpose as the illustration. That's because the log sticking out of our own eye actually blinds us to the truth.

The sin that always is to blind us is self-righteousness. And the sin that Jesus repeatedly condemns in the scribes and Pharisees is self-righteousness.

And he does that throughout his ministry. Almost by definition, self-righteousness is a sin of blindness or of grossly distorted vision because it looks directly at its own sin and still imagines it sees only righteousness.

Let's remind ourselves what makes self-righteousness so bad. The very nature of self-righteousness is to justify oneself and to condemn others.

[24 : 26] People play God because they judge themselves by their own standards and wisdom. Self-righteousness, then, is the worst of sins because it trusts in self rather than in God.

Self-righteousness denies and opposes the gospel because the gospel proclaims man's sinfulness and lostness while it proclaims God's mercy and grace. Because a self-righteous person sees no sin in his life, he sees no need for God's grace.

So think about that again. Think about the difference between the gospel and self-righteousness.

The gospel proclaims man's sinfulness and lostness while it proclaims God's mercy and grace.

Because the self-righteous person sees no sin in his life, he sees no need for that grace. If Jesus had stopped this section with the words of verses 3 and 4, the answer to the question of to judge or not to judge would be very obvious.

However, Jesus' continuation in verses 5 through 12 make it clear that we are to judge, but we must judge biblically. Because we've covered the controversial saying, the clarifying statement, and the comedic scene, we're ready to hear what Jesus tells us in verses 5 and 6.

[25 : 44] In those verses, we have the commanding summary. The commanding summary is what comes next. Jesus gives four commands in the last two verses we'll look at tonight.

Some people may say the verses only have three, but the context clearly lends itself to four commands. So look at verses 5 and 6 again.

Jesus said, 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. So do you see the four commands?

Each verse has two. We'll see each of the four commands as we take the verses one by one. Look at verse 5 again. Jesus said, You hypocrite!

[26 : 43] 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. He prefaces the first command by pointing out the hypocrisy in being self-righteous.

Remember the origin of the term hypocrite. It originally applied to an actor playing a role. Jesus is saying that we must stop attempting to look like something different than what we are.

And that leads to the first command in this section, First take the log out of your own eye. We could rephrase it as, Deal with your own faults or your own sins first.

Only when we address our sin can we hope to be somewhat qualified to deal with another person's sin. This is another place where we get reminded that the Sermon on the Mount is one continuous sermon.

Think back to the early verses of chapter 5 when we looked at the Beatitudes. Consider how those attributes apply here as we get to chapter 7. The person who has the mind and attitude of the kingdom citizen, the person who is poor in spirit, hungers, and thirsts for God's righteousness, will be the person who first sees and mourns over his own sin.

[28 : 01] Jesus corrects the wrong kind of judgment by showing the right balance between humility and conviction, poverty of human spirit, and power in the Holy Spirit.

First of all, we confess our own sin, often the sin of self-righteousness and of a condemning spirit toward others, and ask for God's help in cleansing us of that sin.

When our own sin is cleansed, when the log is taken out of our own eye, we will see our brother's sin clearly and be able to help him. But more than that, we'll see everything clearly, God, others, and ourselves.

We'll see God as the only judge, others as needy sinners who are just like ourselves. We'll see our brother as our brother, on our own level, and with similar types of needs.

After we've dealt with our sin, the second command comes in the last part of verse 5. Jesus says, Then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

[29 : 03] This command shows that we are to address sins that we see in other people's lives. Jesus is saying that we must deal with the speck in the other person's eye, but we must first make sure that we see ourselves clearly, and we deal with our own sins.

When we're preparing to confront others about their sins, at least two questions could come to mind. The first is, Have I dealt with the sins in my own life?

And the second is, Am I approaching the sinning person with the proper perspective and motivation? The perspective and motivation should be the same perspective and motivation that God would have, and that's to bring the sinner to repentance, and to help that sinner experience God's love and forgiveness.

John MacArthur called the proper perspective and motivation, The right balance of humility and helpfulness. So, the right balance of humility and helpfulness.

Flip over to Psalm 51 for a minute. In Psalm 51, we'll see how David showed the proper balance. Remember that Psalm 51 was written after David was confronted about his adultery with Bathsheba.

[30 : 26] We're going to look at verses 10 through 13. So, here are Psalm 51, verses 10 through 13. David wrote, David wrote the words of Psalm 51 before Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount, but the verses we just read reflect the teachings of Matthew 7-5.

David first dealt with the metaphorical log that was in his own eye, and that was the sin with Bathsheba, so that he could once again point other sinners to the same type of forgiveness from God and fellowship with God that he experienced.

And that is what Jesus says we should do when he says the words of Matthew 7-5. So, look at Matthew 7-5 again. And putting those two commands together, Jesus said, 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. Verse 5 clearly shows that we are to judge. It also clearly shows that we must do so with the right perspective and motivation. And that proper perspective and motivation come from first dealing with their own sins.

That will help us from being hypocritical, like the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees. Listen to this summary of verse 5 from John MacArthur.

[32 : 10] He said, For more proof that we are to judge, provided that we do it with the proper purpose, proper perspective and motivation, let's look now at verse 6.

Jesus said there, 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.

We'll dig deeper into these verses shortly, but consider the broadest point first. The only way we can recognize dogs and hogs is to judge properly what the dogs and hogs do.

That's why verse 6 shows that we must judge others. And so with that in mind, let's look deeper at the verse now. The first detail we need to understand about this verse is how differently dogs were viewed when Jesus preached this sermon than dogs were viewed today.

Only then can we really understand the first command in verse 6. In biblical times, dogs were seldom kept as household pets in the way that they are today.

[33 : 42] Except for the dogs that were used as working animals to herd sheep, dogs were largely half-wild mongrels that acted as scavengers. So they were dirty, greedy, snarling, and often vicious and diseased.

That made them dangerous and despised. People in Jesus' day would have considered a dog much like we consider a wolf or a bear today.

The next thing we need to consider about this verse is what Jesus means when he refers to what is holy. When Jesus refers to what is holy, he's referring to a specific portion of the meat offered as sacrifice in the temple.

The Jews had strict laws about what should be done with the meat related to a sacrifice. Some portion of those offerings were burned up. Some parts were eaten by the priest, and some would often be taken home and eaten by the family who made the sacrifice.

The part left on the altar was the part which was consecrated exclusively to the Lord. That part was considered holy in a special way. If no man was to eat that part of the sacrifice, how much less should it be thrown to a pack of wild, filthy dogs?

[35 : 01] Realizing that the dog example would have been quite shocking to his original audience, consider how Jesus' next example would have been even more shocking. This next example has the second command in verse 6, and the fourth command overall.

Jesus said, For Jews, pigs were considered the ultimate example of uncleanness.

Jesus spoke these words before God lifted the dietary restrictions. Devout Jews wanted nothing to do with pigs. That's the reason why Antiochus Epiphanes' sacrifice of the pig on the jury's altar and then forcing the priest to eat it was such an absolute abomination.

It even touched off the Maccabean Revolt against Greece in 168 B.C. Pearls, on the other hand, were the most highly valued gems in the ancient world, and they were often bought as investments, much like diamonds are today.

In the form of pearls, a great amount of wealth could be kept in a small space. A pig, though, would possibly think that the pearls were edible if you tossed the pearls out in front of him.

[36 : 18] Discovering that the pearls were inedible could cause the pig to trample the pearls and then attack the person who gave the pearls to the pig. The illustrations are clear, but like verse 1, the point of what Jesus is saying in verse 6 often has been misinterpreted.

We can look elsewhere in the Bible to better understand what Jesus meant. Because of the pearl's value, Jesus liked to compare the kingdom of God to a pearl.

Listen to Matthew chapter 13, verses 45 and 46. Jesus said in Matthew chapter 13, verses 45 and 46, Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

In Matthew chapter 7, verse 6, Jesus is saying that we are to avoid giving the valuable things of God to people who have no regard for them. This is another quote from John MacArthur.

He said, That summary should raise some alarm bells and call it to God. That summary should raise some alarm bells and cause us to say something like, Wait a minute, what about the Great Commission?

[37 : 57] Remember Jesus' words in the Great Commission. Matthew's gospel ends with these words from Jesus. Verses 28, 18 through 20 say, To suppose that Matthew 7, 6 would stand the whole new time, John Calvin urged that it is our duty to present the doctrine of salvation indiscriminately to all.

The dogs and pigs with whom we are forbidden to share the gospel are not just unbelievers. They must be those who have had ample opportunity to hear and receive the good news, but have decisively and even defiantly rejected it.

It ought to be understood, Calvin wisely continued, that dogs and swine are names given not to every kind of debauched men or to those who are destitute of the fear of God and true godliness, but to those who, by clear evidences, have manifested a hardened contempt of God so that their disease appears incurable.

That leads to another obvious question. What are we to do with people who appear to be the dogs and pigs that Jesus illustrates here?

Well, the answer is simple. We are to continue to pray for them while at the same time turning them over to God. We are to leave them to the Lord, trusting that somehow His Spirit can penetrate their hearts, as He apparently did with some of those who at first rejected the preaching of Paul and the other apostles.

[39 : 55] Or if they continue to reject it, then we are to leave them to the just judgment of God. Titus chapter 3, verses 10 and 11 say, As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is warped and sinful, he is self-condemned.

Paul and Barnabas also demonstrated the principle taught in Matthew 7-6 when they spoke to the unrepentant Jews. Listen to what happened in Acts chapter 13, verse 46.

Acts 13-46 says, And Paul of Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you, since you thrust it aside and judged yourselves unworthy of eternal life. Behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. Paul and Barnabas first presented the gospel to those Jews and gave those Jews the opportunity to repent before moving on to the Gentiles.

We see Paul demonstrate the same behavior in Acts chapter 18, verses 5 and 6. Acts 18-5 and 6 say, The balance called for in Matthew 7-5 and 6 is a hard balance to achieve.

[41 : 38] That's why before we classify anyone as fitting the dog or pig examples, we must first make sure that our motives are pure and that we have first dealt with sin in our own lives.

Jesus commands believers to judge appropriately, and so to apply that main idea correctly, we must depend upon God's guidance. We saw earlier in the lesson how Psalm 51 illustrates how our judgment must achieve the proper balance between humility and helpfulness.

That is a New Testament concept taught in more places than just the Sermon on the Mount passage that we cover tonight. Think about what Jesus told Peter after warning Peter that Peter would deny Jesus three times.

This is Luke chapter 22, verse 31. Jesus said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you that he might sift you like wheat.

But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail, and when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers. Peter could strengthen his brethren only after he repented and had turned from sin himself.

[42 : 52] Listen to what Paul wrote in Galatians 6.1. He said, Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness.

Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. When we look at verses 7 through 12 next week, we'll see what Jesus says about how to treat others when we execute judgment.

In the meantime, we can hold on to Jesus' words in verse 2. That, of course, is where he said, For with the judgment you pronounce, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Let's pray. Father, thank you for the reminder of how important it is for Christians to judge and for Christians to be discerning, as long as we do it with the proper motives.

Help us always look to you for the proper motives and guidance when we get into a situation that calls for discernment. Help us never to shy away from being discerning, but always help us approach that situation with the proper spirit.

[44 : 09] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Thank you.