



Matthew 7:1-12

THE HUMILITY OF RELATIONSHIPS

What is this danger against which our Lord is warning us? It is a kind of spirit, a spirit which manifests itself in certain ways. What is this spirit that condemns? It is a self-righteous spirit. Self is always at the back of it, and it is always a manifestation of self-righteousness, a feeling of superiority, and a feeling that we are all right while others are not. That then leads to censoriousness, and a spirit that is always ready to express itself in a derogatory manner. And then, accompanying that, there is a tendency to despise others, to regard them with contempt. The man who is guilty of judging, in the sense in which our Lord uses the term here, is the man who is hypercritical, which means that he delights in criticism for its own sake and enjoys it. I am afraid I must go further and say that he is a man who approaches anything which he is asked to critique expecting to find faults, indeed, almost hoping to find them.

—D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus confronts us with the fact that something is wrong with our hearts. We try to lower God's standard to our own level and pretend that we are righteous by our superficial spirituality, ritualistic religiosity, and outward good works. But God sees past all of our masks into the very motives of our heart.

Five questions help expose the motives of our heart:

1. Where is my treasure? (6:19-21)
2. What do I see? (6:22-23)
3. What dictates my choices in life? (6:24)
4. What am I anxious about? (6:25-34)
5. How do I treat others? (7:1-12)

THE PROBLEM WE HAVE (7:1-4)

Matthew 7:1 is often misused as a way of saying that we should tolerate every action and never confront anyone. But the context shows that this is not true (7:6, 15-20; 18:15-20; cf. John 7:24; Titus 3:10-11). Instead Jesus is confronting a critical, judgmental spirit.

- I _____ as if I am God (cf. Rom. 14:10-13; Jam. 5:11-12).
- I _____ the faults of others (cf. Rom. 2:1).
- I _____ my own sin (cf. 2 Sam. 12:1-14; Prov. 16:2).

Our judgmental attitude invites the judgment of God. By treating others without mercy and graciousness, we are asking God to treat us in the same way (cf. Matt. 18:32-35; Rom. 2:1-5; James 2:13).

Faultfinding is the venom of the soul. It destroys our joy, drains our happiness, and prevents us from having close friendships... Like the vultures of the air that live off dead, rotting flesh, these sad individuals thrive on the mistakes and sins of others.

—Ray Pritchard

Do not set yourself up as a critic, especially in the act of worship. There is probably no greater destroyer of profit in the hearing of the Word than the spirit of carpentering criticism. —Charles Spurgeon

Judge. Greek, *krino*, "passing a personal judgment on someone's actions *judge, criticize*; often in a negative sense *condemn, find fault with*" (cf. Rom. 14:13; Jam. 4:11). —Friberg Greek Lexicon

It is impossible to develop the characteristics of a saint and maintain a critical attitude.

—Oswald Chambers

The cynic is the one who never sees a good quality in a man and never fails to see a bad one.

—Henry Ward Beecher

THE PRACTICE WE SHOULD FOLLOW (7:5-6)

- I should humbly _____ my own sin first.
- I should gently _____ to those caught in sin.
- I should wisely _____ how to approach those who are antagonistic to the truth (cf. Acts 13:46; 19:9).

THE POWER WE NEED (7:7-11)

Matthew 7:7-11 is not a carte blanche invitation to get whatever we want from God—*name it and claim it!* Rather, in the context of the Sermon on the Mount, it is a humble recognition that we fall way short God’s righteousness in our lives. We simply cannot live the Sermon on the Mount in our own strength. Thus, we pray!

- It is _____ prayer.
- It is _____ prayer.
- It is _____ prayer.

God is a good Father who loves to give good gifts to His children! His best gift to me is His _____ which joins me to Him and enables me to live for Him (Luke 11:13; Ezekiel 36:26-27).

THE PRINCIPLE WE SHOULD LIVE (7:12)

In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets. (NASB)

Instead of treating others the way they have treated me, I am to treat others the way that I want to be treated.

What do I desire from others?

How should I then live?

There is nothing in the human body more sensitive than the eye. The instant we touch it, it closes up. What is required in clearing an eye is gentleness, carefulness, patience, and sympathy for the other person. In the spiritual realm, the care is even more delicate, for we are handling a soul.

—R. Kent Hughes

Unless we are willing to help a person overcome his faults, there is little value in pointing them out.

—Robert J. Hastings

Insensitive evangelism often proves harmful not only to the obdurate whose heart is hardened by the undifferentiating evangelist, but harmful also to the gospel that is force-fed. Aggressive evangelism gets converts and counts them, but we are never able to count those turned away from the gospel for the numbers of the offended are never tallied.

—Dale Bruner

Prayer is the first thing, the second thing, the third thing necessary to minister. Pray, therefore, my dear brother, pray, pray, pray.

—Edward Payson (1783-1827)

Asking suggests dependence; seeking suggests yearning; knocking suggests persistence.

—Disciple’s Study Bible

We are called to fulfill the love command precisely because the Father is generous and will give us the necessary resources.

—John Piper

The negative form of the Golden Rule could be satisfied by doing nothing. The positive form moves us to action on behalf of others.

—Robert Mounce