

# HONEST JUDGMENT THROUGH HONEST PRAYER

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## HONEST JUDGMENT THROUGH HONEST PRAYER

### Matthew 7:1-12

<sup>1</sup>*Judge not that ye be not judged.*

<sup>2</sup>*For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.*

<sup>3</sup>*And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?*

<sup>4</sup>*Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?*

<sup>5</sup>*Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.*

<sup>6</sup>*Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.*

<sup>7</sup>*Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:*

<sup>8</sup>*For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*

<sup>9</sup>*Or what man is there of you, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?*

<sup>10</sup>*Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?*

<sup>11</sup>*If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?*

<sup>12</sup>*Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.*

Divine assistance is necessary if we are to meet Divine requirements as laid down by the King of Divinity in His Kingdom's Manifesto. Nothing about the things of God are either palatable to or possible for any of the sons of Adam. Jesus is acutely aware of both the infinite, holy stipulations and the finite, fleshly limitations concerning conditions for life in His Kingdom. The King's intentions for and designs of His Kingdom and its subjects are clearly beyond human achievement. Consequently, as Mediator and Redeemer He graciously includes in His Kingdom's Manifesto a provision for satisfying both God's requirements and man's inadequacy; His provision meets the former and overcomes the latter. That provision is, and is met through, honest prayer.

### **Disturbing and Comforting Contextual Realities**

To the natural man much of this unique Sermon from the Christ is substantially like the Ten Commandments. God's Holy Decalogue is impossible of fulfillment for us fallen creatures. It requires obedience to sacredness that is far above those whose nature is itself of a tainted character and whose subsequent actions are thus influenced thereby. Accordingly, Christ's Sermon is parallel to the Holy Law as both are the Expression of the Righteousness of God, the one through Moses, the Sermon through the Son, thus rendering their moral scope as utterly unattainable by mere fleshly men. Throughout the Sermon is its forbidden abusive word or banned malignant wish, is its prohibited impure desire or revengeful notion, is its commanded love for enemies or blessing those who curse us, and all its other unattainable "love-manifestations." But now Christ adds a paradoxical and nearly antinomous, and to some a contradictory, requirement "to judge not" any at all but "to judge" some to be dogs and swine. The King requires both. This is outside man's capacity. Christ's Sermon places us all under God's censorious judgment from our total inability to attain to such precise discerning righteousness. The one possible remedy disclosed to us by our gracious Savior/King is honest prayer—it is a conduit from earth to heaven, opened up on both ends. From its opening on earth travel the confessions of our inadequacies and pleas for our spiritual needs, while from its opening in heaven travels God's grace of spiritual gifts of enablement in His Holy Spirit, and only by honest prayer.

### Analysis of the Text Verses

A new section of the Sermon begins with this paragraph, “and may be described as a summary of principles of action,”<sup>1</sup> namely love. Primary to Jesus’ teaching throughout the Sermon and here particularly is His subjects’ attitude to those brothers inside and those heathen outside the Kingdom.

According to Jesus the Kingdom attitude must be free of censoriousness (*vs. 1-5*), and yet full of careful discrimination (*v. 6*). The agency that appropriates this difficult-to-attain attitude is prayer that *asks, seeks, and knocks* continuously (*vs. 7-11*). In other words, the greatly felt need *asks* of God’s in continuous prayer, *seeks* to have what he asks through continuous searching, and *knocks* at God’s opportunistic door by making continuous contact with His Spirit. Only in this fashion can one attain to the Kingdom attitude. The subjects of the Kingdom who thus pray to, search for, and contact God will indeed receive the ultimate good gift from our Father in heaven, namely the powerful zenith of the Kingdom attitude, love. Love is the only Fulfillment of the Supreme Rule of Kingdom Conduct (*v. 12*). Christ has succinctly summarized the ultimate Kingdom attitude in one Kingdom ideal. The ultimate Kingdom attitude within oneself, and its power without to others is “to do so to others as you would they do to you,” to love others as you love yourself.

In accord with this analysis we would divide our study thusly,

#### I. Christ Announces the Kingdom Attitude in 7:1-6

#### II. Christ Allocates the Power for Appropriating the Kingdom Attitude in 7:7-11

#### III. Christ Adjudicates the Ultimate Fulfillment of Kingdom Attitude in 7:12.

<sup>1</sup> Campbell Morgan, Studies in the Four Gospels (Fincastle: Scripture Truth Book Co., n.d.) p. 73.

## I. CHRIST ANNOUNCES THE KINGDOM ATTITUDE

*Matthew 7:1-6*

<sup>1</sup>*Judge not that ye be not judged.*

<sup>2</sup>*For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.*

<sup>3</sup>*And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?*

<sup>4</sup>*Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?*

<sup>5</sup>*Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.*

<sup>6</sup>*Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.*

Jesus kindly and graciously announces His Kingdom's attitude by utilizing mankind's foremost lacking and thereby man's most easily understood and identified needed area of correction—judging others, disparaging others, and condemning others. Jesus deals with an area in men so unlike Himself and so unlike His Father and so antithetical to love, which God is fundamentally, in order to emphasize what real Kingdom ideal love positively is. Love is the Kingdom attitude.

### A. JUDGMENT WITHOUT THE KINGDOM ATTITUDE

<sup>1</sup>*Judge not that ye be not judged.*

<sup>2</sup>*For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.*

*Matthew 7:1-2*

### The Judging that is Prohibited

We shall attempt to outline briefly what Christ prohibits when He warned, *Judge not*. **First**, He means that any judgment that is not in our realm of responsibility is forbidden. *Study to be*

quiet and to do your own business, *I Thessalonians 4:11*, means not to intrude into others' affairs when they are of no real concern of yours. *I Peter 4:15* reads, Let none of you suffer...as a busybody in other men's affairs." Churchy Pharisaism is forbidden along with vigilantism, placard marches, and general attacks upon the actions, modes, or beliefs of others, which are beyond our own private sphere of duty, province, or usual course of life.

**Second**, we Christians are not to judge motives as if we could judge as only God can judge. Since we see not the inside of the heart as God sees, we are only presuming upon others and upon God when we form harsh opinions about the motives of others. The Devil judged Job in this way when he accused Job's intentions and motives for serving God, *Job 1:8-11*. Therefore, judging the motives behind the actions of others is actually devilish in origin.

**Third**, we Christians are not to judge harshly in others what we have in ourselves. This is the significance of the teaching of Christ in the verses immediately following His prohibition against judging, *7:2-5*. Jesus admits of two different kinds of judgments with the words of *7:2*, *For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged*. There is the censorious judgment and there is the righteous judgment, two kinds. When we judge harshly what we have in ourselves—a censorious judgment—we condemn ourselves to the same kind of harshness from God—His righteous judgment. But when we judge others fairly and with mercy, we reflect a heart of love and understanding which pleases God.<sup>2</sup> The *beam* and the *mote*<sup>3</sup> are both portions of the same material, wood from trees, the one a log, the other a chip or grain of sawdust. When a piece of wood (sin) is judged to be in others, it is the same wood (sin) that is in all. The size is the only difference. It is wrong to judge and condemn in others what we have in our selves. Human nature works just the opposite; it always seeks to condemn in others what is most in error in self, and in that way alleviates the guilt of one's

<sup>2</sup> See *Romans 2:1-6* <sup>3</sup> *Beam*, Gr. δοκον, "the squared off trunk of a tree"; *mote*, Gr. καρφος, "any small, dry thing, a chip."

own faults. By judging it strictly our Id or Ego is telling the Self: “You are better than before you judged that evil in them, because you did it with authority and without deviation. You really do know what is right even if you fail to do it. You are better for having condemned that error of yours in others, because in that way you are showing your concern about the hideousness of it.” Jesus condemned that kind of inner justification. We are not to judge others when we are guilty of that error ourselves. Our objectivity is warped, and our judgment will not be *righteous judgment*. .

**Fourth**, we are not to judge quickly or thoughtlessly. The Wisdom stated: *He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him, Proverbs 18:13*. It is a fool’s errand to seek to judge an issue or to arbitrate between sides, or to form an opinion about a dispute or to make a wise discernment about some critical question if one has not all the facts. This is especially a danger when one hears only one side of a dispute, question, issue, or idea. Judgment, in the very meaning of the word, is to arbitrate between two or more differing matters. Whether it be the issue of good versus evil, or smart versus dumb, or wise versus foolish, or liberty versus legalism, or love versus hate, whatever the issue or question, judgment requires all the matters pertinent to the issue be known before making a judgment. Since only the Omniscient God knows all the issues in any case, we never fully *heareth* any *matter*. *Judge not* any matter not fully known or understood. This will when heeded greatly limit one’s judging of others.

**Fifth**, Christians are not to judge recklessly, that is, in matters not specifically commanded or condemned in Scripture. This is to be *righteous over much*, *Ecclesiastes 7:16*. This is to be sitting in judgment concerning such things as eating and drinking, or as to this day above that day, or according to tradition of this way or that way, *Romans 14:1-12*. When we judge our brother in areas with which Scripture does not deal, we are guilty of judging the law and of speaking evil of the Law, *James 4:11*. We have become guilty of condemning God for not specifically prohibiting what we judge

to be evil. Since He left it out and we judge His children as guilty for violating it, we are actually judging His Law, His Word, (and God forbid) God Himself, when we judge a brother in an area not dealt with in Scripture. "He who quarrels with his brother and condemns him for the sake of anything not determined in the Word of God, does thereby reflect on His Word, as if it were not a perfect rule."<sup>4</sup>

**Sixth,** Christians are not to judge blindly, not considering what is really good in others. It is far too easy to form an opinion of another person by what is wrong, rather than seeing what is right. Godly love *thinketh no evil* (*I Corinthians 13:5*), that is, love is not quick to see the evil in others to the exclusion of the good in them. Too often Christians fail to remember that this brother or sister does believe in Jesus Christ, does love Him, does support the church, does refrain from the world's way of life. The law of love instructs Christians to put the very best interpretation on the actions of others. We should never see only the evil, but should seek to see the good as well. "We are not to go about with our eyes closed, nor wink at sin when we see it, yet it is equally wrong for us to hunt for something to condemn and seize upon every trifle and magnify molehills into mountains."<sup>5</sup>

**The Threat, 7:1-2, Judge not, lest ye be judged.**

Luke recorded a comparable Sermon of Jesus' in *Luke 6:37-42*, but one that was quite different in many respects. Given on an entirely different occasion, Luke's Sermon relates to the appointment of His Apostles (*Luke 6:12-16*). The Sermon there has more to do with the duties of His Apostles as His messengers. The threat of punishment for judging others in Luke's Sermon is the harsh judgments one would receive from other men. In Luke Christ is recorded as saying, *Judge not, and ye shall not be judged:*

<sup>4</sup> Matthew Henry, Commentary on the Whole Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1960) p. 1936

<sup>5</sup> Arthur Pink, An Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1950), p.263.



condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive and ye shall be forgiven, Luke 6:37. Luke's Sermon has promise of obtaining the favor or the wrath of our fellow man, according to how we judge them. If we are harsh toward them, we receive the same; if we are gracious toward them, we receive the same. When we judge, we are judged the same, and when we forgive, we are forgiven the same. However, that is not what Christ means in our text. This is a different Sermon altogether. In Luke Jesus is the Perfect and Ideal Man among men. He emphasized man and his relations with man. But in Matthew Jesus is presented as the King Whose authority alone is to be reckoned with. *Judge not, lest ye be judged* by the King and in accord with His high ethical standards. This references judgments of lost at the end,<sup>6</sup> and of the saints at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

***For we all shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.***  
**II Corinthians 5: 10**

This *lest ye be judged* is a solemn reminder of the scrutiny of Jesus' piercing eyes of judgment with which He shall look deep into our very souls, *Revelation 1:14*. This does not suggest an "easy eye" for those who do not judge others improperly, because Scripture warrants no such idea of any works-provided shield from Christ's scrutiny. But what Jesus threatens is the searching light of the Christ's all-seeing gaze that shall review those judgments of ours that were merciless, overly harsh, and unwise. This will not be the only test of one's life at Christ's Judgment Seat, but will constitute a part of how we will be judged by Jesus; namely, how did one discern and judge others. Was one's judgment of others out of a proper motive of love for them and for truth's sake, or out of an improper motive of envy and judicious pride?

***<sup>10</sup>But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.***

<sup>6</sup> *Revelation 20:11-15.*

<sup>11</sup>*For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.*

<sup>12</sup>*So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.*  
*Romans 14:10-12*

This is a serious and terrible affair, this judgment before our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

<sup>24</sup>*Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.*

<sup>25</sup>*But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.*

*Colossians 3:24-25*

To receive for the wrong which we have done in judging others when we had no business doing so will not be a joyous experience. To receive for the wrong of judging others for the very things we ourselves do, for all the thoughtless and hasty judgments we wrought, or when we judged recklessly and legalistically, or when we judged others with a blind eye to their good, will be a woeful time of severity. No wonder it will be followed with a time for His grace to wipe away all tears from our eyes, *Revelation 21:4*.

## B. JUDGMENT WITH THE KINGDOM ATTITUDE

*Judge not* cannot be understood in its widest possible latitude. Christ's forbidding us to exercise and pass judgment upon others cannot be taken absolutely if one knows the general tenor of God's Word.

### Righteous Judgment

*Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.*  
*John 7:24*

In *John 7*, Jesus had healed an impotent man on the Sabbath. To His superficial critics it seemed a breach of Sabbath law, but in reality it was done to promote good; therefore it was itself also good. Righteous judgment is the fair and loving judgment of the God class, of the God sort, of the God kind. It is the judgment that is by

right principles and for proper reasons, which reasons are to promote the right and to demote the wrong. Righteous judgment is not God's judgment performed by us, but is judgment by His principles, precepts, His way, will, and Word. These Jews in *John 7* performed hasty and partial judgments of Jesus' actions. Christ did not condemn them for making the judgment, but rather condemned the spirit and motive behind their judgment. They were looking for something that they might condemn in Him, and so seized upon this one thing. Their judgment was an evil judgment because it was unfair, prejudicial, and performed for improper reasons with an improper spirit. In *John 7:22-23*, Jesus exhorted them to weigh all that God's Word revealed about the Sabbath Law. *In it thou shalt not do any work* [added emph.], but this is not to be taken absolutely. Other Scripture concerning love modified the Sabbath precept. So also is this *Judge not* precept from the King to His subjects to be similarly understood. There are other modifying qualifications that alter any absolute restriction against judging others, but it must always be *righteous judgment*. That *righteous* concept requires more from natural men than what they naturally possess.

### Christian Liberty

It is always correct to promote good and to demote evil regardless of any rules or even "the letter of the law." That freedom which every Christian has is fundamental to the Holy Spirit's leadership and presence within us. We have freedom from strict rules, regulations, and set modes of conduct except as Christ and the Word forbids or commends. This enables the Christian to be able to love people and to promote the Gospel of Christ as each opportunity presents itself. Our liberty in Christ, then, is to free us to use any and all righteous means to win souls to Christ.

*To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men that I might by all means save some.*  
*I Corinthians 9: 22*

Circumstances often do dictate and determine certain actions, whether they would be considered good or evil, but only on issues

that are not specifically commanded or condemned in Scripture. One such example of Christian liberty was in Paul's circumcision of Timothy, a half Jew, in order not to offend the Jews to whom he hoped to minister the Gospel unto salvation, *Acts 16:1-3*. But on another occasion certain false Jewish brethren *who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage*, could not compel Paul to circumcise Titus, *Galatians 2:1-4*. Paul had liberty in Jesus to *judge righteous judgment* so as better to promote the Gospel. On one occasion it dictated one action, and on another it dictated the complete opposite.

### The Spirit of the Law of Liberty

Christians are to rise above the letter into the spirit of the Law. "Spirit" usually stands in contrast to the "letter" of the Law. *Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life, II Corinthians 3:6*. Paul described the "letter" as demanding absolute obedience to every detail.

*For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.* [added emph.] *Galatians 3: 10*

Yet, Paul claimed life and liberty for Christians through Christ Jesus:

*Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty* *II Corinthians 3: 17*  
*Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.* *Galatians 5:1*

This liberty in Christ Jesus makes it possible and practical for Christians to *judge righteous judgment not according to appearance*, but according to the best use of the means at our disposal to promote the Gospel of Christ, as long as we obey His ways, His will, and His Word in the means employed by us.

### What this Prohibition against Judging Others is Not

**First**, this prohibition is not against forming an opinion about other persons' conduct. Jesus could not mean that it is not correct to discern evil in other persons. The writer of the Hebrew epistle correctly identified one's discernment and judging of good and evil with Christian maturity, *Hebrews 5:14*. The verses that follow Jesus' prohibition against judging in Matthew are full of Christ's understood acts of judgment on the part of His disciples. If we are to obey Christ, we must judge the conduct of others. In *verse 5* Jesus plainly suggests after the beam is removed out of one's own eye through self-judgment, that then one will be able to remove the mote from his brother's eye. Christ acknowledges the necessity for being able to discern that speck in the brother's eye, else how could one be instrumental in removing it? We must discern or judge what is evil in those around us if for no other reason than to be able to help them. Again in *verse 6*, Christ warns against giving what is holy to *dogs* and casting *your pearls before swine*. How are we to know who is a *dog* or a *swine* if we do not form a judgment about others? If we take this judgment prohibition too far, we could never obey Christ's commandment in *verse 6* that concerns the holy things and the pearls of His Kingdom. Therefore, *Judge not* does not mean that we are not to judge what is good and evil in a brother, or even who is or is not a *dog* or a *swine* in the sight of the King.

**Secondly**, this prohibition is not concerning church judgments of its members. Other Scripture modifies its interpretation and application in the area of the church. Judgment of the members is a given responsibility to its officers and to its members, but is to be carried out into practice by the spiritual members of the church, *Galatians 6:1*; *I Corinthians 5:1-13*.

**Thirdly**, the restriction does not apply to civil government. The government has the God-ordained and God-delegated right and responsibility to judge members of society, and to put to death those of its members who threaten its other members, *Genesis 9:6*; *Romans 13:1-4*.

Christ does not mean that individual Christians are not to judge another Christians' conduct as reprehensible to themselves or to others, but we are to go to the offending brother and to confront him with his offence, *Matthew 18:15-21*. This in no way protects anyone from honest appraisals of their conduct or affairs. *Judge not* does not apply to those guilty of gross outrages against society in general, or against other nations, or against the church, or against certain minority members of society. All offenders are to be judged by all in order that *we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty, I Timothy 2:2*.

### C. JUDGMENT OF MOTES AND BEAMS WITH THE KINGDOM ATTITUDE

—BIG SIN VERSUS LITTLE SIN BUT ABOUNDING IN LOVE

<sup>3</sup>*And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?*

<sup>4</sup>*Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?*

<sup>5</sup>*Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.*  
*Matthew 7:3-5*

This *beam* versus *mote* principle is meaningful.<sup>7</sup> This reference by Jesus concerns not only or even primarily different enormous and hideous sins as opposed to some trifle infidelity. The *beam* is not singly some vulgarity that is condemned by both the Law and the Prophets and Christ's Law of Love. That is not primarily at issue. This concerns inconsistencies common to all Christians. Every one of us is guilty of *beams* as well as *motes*. They are all of one and the same material—the flesh. We all have innate weaknesses in our Christian lives. Christ here deals with the difficulty of having a judgmental spirit—an unloving disposition—

<sup>7</sup> *Beam*, δοκος, "the squared-off trunk of a tree, a long, thick piece of wood."  
*Mote*, καρφος, "any small dry thing, a splinter, chip, or dust of wood."

which is itself the *beam* in one's own eye. The censoriousness of seeking to criticize and rebuke for some evil—whether great or small—is a large *beam* compared to the fleshly carnality in all Christians. Comparatively, the flesh is a small *mote* and censoriousness is a large *beam*. To judge others harshly without mercy is a greater evil than to indulge the carnal flesh in sins of the body. Criticism of others is a *beam* compared to a *mote*, a log compared with a speck of sawdust, bringing a greater guilt than the physical indulgences of the carnal flesh. The sins of passion are not to be compared with a spirit of censoriousness. The one is a *mote* while the other a *beam*. Even the omission of Christ's other commandments is not as great an evil in Christ's eyes as is this judgmental attitude.<sup>8</sup> The supreme rule of Christ is love, which finds its expression in a freedom from all judgmentalism and faultfinding in others.<sup>9</sup> The very principle of the Christian life is one of self-judgment before the cross of Christ. That fundamental is to make *motes* of others' sins, while it makes *beams* of our own. We should judge severely any issues of the censorious spirit in ourselves, and consider them to be just what they really are, sins of gigantic proportion when compared with the sins of the flesh. They are sins of the mind and of the heart, the inner self and hence the vital area of what one innately is.

A Christian can never see with proper focus the *mote* in his brother's eye, until and unless he deals with the *beam* of his own guilt from the censoriousness in his own eye. Jesus says clearly only the brother who has judged self is capable to judge his brother, *first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt*

<sup>8</sup> The lone exception of course being His repeated commands to love one another, *John 13:34-35; 15:12*.

<sup>9</sup> *Proverbs 10:12, Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth a multitude of sins. I Peter 4:8, And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover a multitude of sins. I Corinthians 13:5, Love,, thinketh no evil, i.e. does not ever see only the evil to the exclusion of possible righteous outcomes, or love always gives "the benefit of a doubt" to the possible evil present in others. See The Judging that is Prohibited, #6, p. .*

*thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.* Help is forthcoming to remove the *mote* through Christian love that judges only in order to minister and to bless the brother with an increased fellowship with his Lord. Help in removing motes will do that service to the brother and for Christ and will forget the judgments, but this forgetfulness is only when service is in the spirit of humility and love.

#### D. DEFINED JUDGMENT WITH THE KINGDOM ATTITUDE

*<sup>6</sup>Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you. Matthew 7:6*

This verse is the immediate and practical use of Christ's teaching on judging others with the kingdom attitude. *Dogs* and *swine* are judged to be such by a critical eye of what is good or evil. The censorious spirit is to be avoided, but the exercise of discrimination and discretion is an important factor in the King's work. The *holy* things and *pearls* of the Kingdom are great trusts to us by the King. Our use of them is to be with reverence and with an eye of watchfulness. Great care must be taken how one treats these *holy* things and *pearls* of the Kingdom. No *dogs*, nor unclean *swine*, are to be given these precious truths, lest the sacred veracity should be torn asunder and trampled under foot, and we as well be threatened.

These *dogs* are those who Peter said *return to their own vomit.*<sup>10</sup> *Swine* are those who *return to wallowing in the mire.* Therefore, *dogs* and *swine* are, among others, false professors of Christ's Kingdom. They are false teachers and traffickers in *holy* things and in kingdom *pearls* for worldly gain.<sup>11</sup> The Christian is not to enter into association with them. We are not carelessly to give *holy* things to them because they will consume them upon their own lusts. We are not incidentally to *cast our pearls before them*, lest they disregard the inviolable beauty of some

<sup>10</sup> II Peter 2:22 <sup>11</sup> See II Peter 2:12-22, and Acts 8:14-24.



Kingdom Jewel of Gospel truth and trample it and us under their feet, thus bringing discredit and dishonor to both it and us. To be able to heed this admonition from Christ requires a discernment, a judgment, a decisiveness regarding the lives and works of others around us. We must be able to judge wisely with merciful appreciation for truth, to be able to judge truth with love. That is a task hard of accomplishment. Therefore, Jesus instructs us as to how to be assured to be in possession of what is necessary to be enabled to judge with such wisdom and insight. We must pray.

## II. CHRIST ALLOCATES THE APPROPRIATING POWER FOR THE KINGDOM ATTITUDE

*Matthew 7:7-11<sup>12</sup>*

<sup>7</sup>*Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:*

<sup>8</sup>*For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*

<sup>9</sup>*Or what man is there of you, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?*

<sup>10</sup>*Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?*

<sup>11</sup>*If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?*

Jesus anticipates the subjects of His Kingdom having difficulty in obeying these precepts about judging others. It is difficult to *Judge not*, yet not to *give that which is holy to the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine*. The difficulty lies in doing both in love, and then in walking the fine line between a censorious spirit and the wise discernment of *dogs* and *swine*. Therefore, Christ assigns the means for His disciples' attainment to such a high ethic. It is prayer. As James stated, *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not.*<sup>13</sup> If on the one hand we are not to be making judgmental decisions outside the sphere of righteousness and love. While on the other hand we are to be making judgmental decisions within the parameters of His Kingdom's ministry, we indeed need prayer for the attainment of this kind of wisdom. The dogs and swine within the Kingdom are the ones about whom we must have a greater discerning sense of their evil. Jesus says that through continuous asking for, seeking to find, and knocking at the supplies of, His grace, we shall have this spiritual discernment. As we search for the grace, He will grant it. It is through prayer that we may learn to

<sup>12</sup> See Luke's record of this reference to prayer (*Luke 11:9-13*) explained in Chapter 4, *Honest Motivation for Honest Prayer*, p. . <sup>13</sup> James 1:5

appropriate this kind of judgment. "This fine distinction between censoriousness and discrimination creates a difficulty. How shall we know just where to draw the line?"<sup>14</sup> Jesus recommends, and as King authoritatively allocates, prayer.

### **Asking, Seeking, Knocking**

Prayer is always the means to gain discernment of God's ways.<sup>15</sup> Here, prayer is the assigned medium to gain the faculties to execute God's way, but one must be **continuously** *asking, seeking, and knocking* in prayer. The immediate **interpretation** of this *asking, seeking, and knocking* concerns matters of discernment, of judgments, and wisdom in decision making. Their **application** is to all matters of prayer. But just as in Luke's account of Jesus' teaching about this kind of prayer,<sup>16</sup> so here the King is making a similar use of prayer. In Luke prayer was taught to be the means for gaining insight into that for which we are to pray. Jesus meant to motivate His disciples to more prayer by promising to answer affirmatively prayer which could be sustained unchanged over a period of time. As one is **continuously** *asking, seeking, and knocking*, the asker, seeker and knocker will slowly be changed through the continuous prayer as one progresses in prayer to precisely what God will grant. If God does not change the prayer, then He will grant the request as originally prayed. Consequently, prayer will always be affirmatively answered. He who continues to ask *receives*; he who continues to seek *finds*; and he who continues to knock has it (God and His will in the matter prayed about) *opened* up to him.

In our text here in Matthew, Christ is similarly promising affirmatively answered prayer, but this refers to wisdom in judging others. This wisdom will be granted to the **continuous** asker, seeker, and knocker. God is promising extra portions of His grace to the honest seekers of it. The wisdom of God and all its accompanying influences will be appropriated by the **continuous** asker, seeker, and knocker at God's prayer door. God will grant a loving and properly adjusted spirit toward others that will enable

<sup>14</sup> Morgan, loc.cit. <sup>15</sup> Q.v. Chapter 6, Honest Guidance through Honest Prayer

<sup>16</sup> Luke 11:9-10

His servants to make gracious yet tough judgments in Kingdom service. But this grace is only granted one through prayer. The one asking receives what was asked for. The one's seeking discovers with delight and surprise what he had sought. The one knocking will have opened the door of God's Presence so that he will have what he had sought when contacting God. God giveth liberally to all who seek His wisdom.<sup>17</sup>

The Lord Jesus provides assurance respecting the care with which our Father will handle these requests for wisdom in judging. God never gives evil that only appears as a good gift to His children. God will grant true wisdom in judging, even to the extent of being able to discern between very similar but somewhat differing points of view. The bread and fish are alike in appearance to the stone and serpent respectively. Bread as then baked looked like a small stone; the fish referred to was similar to a certain snake as designated. As close as some matters are, which make them hard for righteous judgment, yet through **continuous** prayer God will grant discernment to decide correctly. This is the strict interpretation of these verses on prayer. Their application might be much broader, but their meaning is as given above. God promises to the members of Christ's Kingdom a spiritual discernment that will judge between His children and *dogs* or *swine* who go in and out of His Kingdom's earthly habitations. The resources to be able not to judge anyone incorrectly and to refuse the curs and pigs in Kingdom guise is possible only for those who are **continuously** asking to receive and **continuously** seeking grace to discern, and **continuously** knocking at God's door (contacting God). The storehouse of grace is opened up without reserve for God's love to flow from Him into the soul of honest inquiry after it. The windows of heaven's treasures of love and grace are ours through prayer and heartfelt reverence toward God. His love and grace are the *good things* (gifts) to them that [are continuing to] ask<sup>18</sup> him.

<sup>17</sup> James 1:5. This entire section, Matthew 7:7-11, finds an interesting parallel in Proverbs 2:1-9. Please read.

<sup>18</sup> Gk. αἰτουσιν, a present active indicative, "asking continuously."

### The Good Things to Them that Ask Him

Christ's key "attitude changer" is prayer. A continuous asking exposes the supplicant to the contagion of God's love. These *good things*<sup>19</sup> found in prayer are the good gifts of the Spirit, which is primarily love.<sup>20</sup> These *good things* from our heavenly Father are essentially those spiritual virtues that adjust and correct our vision toward others. These *good things* exclude censoriousness and include the Supreme Rule of love to others from oneself as you would desire love from others to oneself.

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<sup>19</sup> The flesh would take these promised *good things* out of context to include everything, even things of the flesh. But the context determines what these *good things* are.

<sup>20</sup> *Galatians 5:22; I Corinthians 13:13b, the greatest of these is love.*

### III. CHRIST ADJUDICATES THE ULTIMATE FULFILLMENT OF KINGDOM ATTITUDE—THE SUPREME RULE FOR JUDGING OTHERS

*Matthew 7:12*

*<sup>12</sup>Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.*

This is the Supreme Rule for all judging<sup>21</sup> as enunciated by the Judge of God's Kingdom. Christ decides the official Kingdom Rule for His subjects' judgments in His Kingdom. The key word in this verse is *Therefore*. The *Therefore* connects this Supreme Rule as Christ's final words on judging those near us in this life. Christ's prohibition, *Judge not, yet do indeed judge between dogs, swine, and God's own children*, can be obeyed only through the light from discerning prayer. Prayer adopts God's spiritual gifts and His personal fruit of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, this Supreme Rule should be our exclusive precept or law by which to resolve our judgments of others. Actually this command from the King is to govern all areas of conduct toward others, but especially in the matter of judging. This widely applicable Supreme Rule is as difficult to obey as is His teachings on judging. In itself it requires asking, seeking, and knocking at God's door of prayer to find its fulfillment in our lives.

This Supreme Rule is not so much negatively related, but it is a positively related commandment from Christ. Jesus did not say, "Do not do to your neighbor what you would not like yourself."

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<sup>21</sup> Judging those near us in life is a key element in relations with others. If one's attitude is the correct love for others, it manifests itself most definitely in one's cheering judgment of others. Love finds a rather practical everyday test in this whole concept of judging others. In the King's spiritual rationale, love is best defined by the concept of how others appear to us. Thus this Golden Rule is by the King first pragmatically adjudicated with regard to, and then foremost applied to, judging others.

That is in the rule, but much more is said. He did not place before us a negative or passive rule only. It is a positive and active requirement. Our judgments of others must be alive, active, and a forward seeking of good for them. Treat others as you desire to be treated. Judge others with the same motive and spirit as you would desire from others. Seek to edify others through your judgments of others. Be alert to make all spiritual discernment through prayer in order to be productive for the good of the Kingdom's subjects as well as good for the King. They are one and the same. *Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.*

For the Christian, obedience to Jesus' Supreme Rule of Kingdom attitude, and of Kingdom service, requires prayerfulness. The flesh rises up and demands censoriousness toward every offending party, whether they are inside or outside the Kingdom. The evil heart loves to bring guilt, to bring judgment, to bring ridicule, and to bring hurt. The evil mind indulges a wicked rationale which justifies itself as having the proper conduct and the reasonable approach to evil. But the King disapproves that fleshly posture. His Supreme Rule requires love in the place of contempt toward the guilt of others. The King would have us love and forgive and overlook the deepest colored evils since by such graces we manifest His love, His forgiveness, His longsuffering to us. What would be the desires of our own heart if we were found guilty? Would we be as unkind to others if we would remember our feelings in such a dilemma? What if by God's Providence we were guilty as they? What form of response would we desire from our fellows if caught in such a Devil's trap? What do we think would be our concerns if we were in the straits caused by sin? Would not we be good toward ourselves? Would we treat ourselves with mercy and compassion? Do we treat ourselves like that when we catch ourselves in guilt? Jesus would have our desires toward others who are overtaken in a fault to be as ours would be toward ourselves in their place, *for this is the law and the prophets.*

### The Law and The Prophets

Is this Golden Rule really *the law and the prophets*? “Why,” says one, “I believe the law and the prophets to be ‘an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’” To some—far too many—that is *the law and the prophets*. But to Jesus this Golden Rule is *the law and the prophets*. What did He mean, and why did He say this? *Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them* is a gathering up into one compendious maxim all that the Old Testament teaches with regard to concerns, converse, and commerce with other men. This golden rule is the sum total of the law and the prophets, which is another form or expression of love.

*Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.*  
*Romans 13: 10*

This rule of Christ’s Kingdom requires judgments to be always in the resplendent light of love. Every claim made upon us as Christians must be pleaded by the voice in our own hearts.<sup>21</sup> That means when confronted by any need, or by any failure, or by any stark transgression by others, we must listen carefully to the pleadings of our inner soul’s desire as to what we would have done to or for us if this need, failure, or transgression were ours. That voice within our hearts is heard above the din of our flesh, which cries, “Crucify him.” But the inner inarticulate sound of our own finiteness and weakness could give voice to Christ’s Supreme Rule in our every judgment. When sensitized through continuous prayer, we can hear it echo off an old wooden cross, “Judge in this case as you would have others judge in this case if it were your case.” To perceive and secure that reverberation of love one must be in continuous honest prayer. Amen.

*Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*

*Galatians 6:1*

<sup>21</sup> Lange, John Peter, Commentary on the Holy Scriptures, Matthew (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1960), p.143.