



**Part 42: Jesus and a Critical Spirit**  
Matthew 7:1-6

The beautiful Kingdom is a community of merciful and kind people like their King, who rescued them.

I. A Confusing Ethic in a Confusing Time

“Do not judge, or you too will be judged.” Matthew 7:1

This can be confusing for those of us who are sincerely trying to follow Jesus. Jesus and the rest of Scripture clearly call us to a holy and righteous life; clearly teach us there is good & evil, sin and righteousness, truth and lies.

What are we to do with this passage? What exactly is Jesus warning us against?

The sermon is Jesus’ most important and concise teaching on how we are to live as his disciples in the Kingdom of God. The way of the Kingdom flows from the very character of its King (Jesus).

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II. Jesus’ Prohibition and Warning

A. Jesus' Prohibition (Matthew 7:1)

"Do not judge, or you too will be judged." Matthew 7:1

A proper understanding of this passage depends on understanding the meaning of *krino*, which the NIV translates as "judge." Jesus says do not *krino*. What does he mean?

*Krino* has a wide range of meanings covering moral discernment, lawsuits, governmental direction, and God's final judgment of people.

Jesus cannot be teaching us that we are not to exercise moral discernment. Jesus rendered strong moral judgment of others (Matthew 6:1-18; 7:6, 13-27; 23:1-36). Moreover, Jesus teaches us to exercise moral discernment with one another in the Kingdom (Matt. 18:15-20) and Paul instructs the Corinthians how to exercise church discipline (1 Corinthians 5).

Clearly, we are called to exercise moral discernment in matters of conduct and doctrine.

What is Jesus prohibiting? He is prohibiting our personal condemnation of another person. We stand in God's judgement seat and assign God's judgment to them. Scott McKnight translates this verse: "Do not condemn or you too will be condemned."

B. Jesus' Warning (Matthew 7:2-5)

"For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." Matthew 7:2

This verse repeats and extends the prohibition with a warning. The standard that the condemner uses will be the standard God uses with the condemner (Romans 2:1-4; James 4:11-12).

There may also be another spiritual dynamic that Jesus is referring to. A spiritual dynamic where our critical spirit creates a kind relational dynamic where we experience the same way we relate to others (Galatians 6:7; Hebrews 12:14-15).

When we see the humorous image that Jesus uses to illustrate the folly of this, we can see that Jesus seems to be condemning a critical spirit that flows from our blindness to our true condition and our self-righteousness.

It's a tendency to exaggerate the faults of others and minimize our own faults (Proverbs 21:2).

"Correct him, but not as a foe, nor as an adversary exacting a penalty, but as a physician providing medicines." – Church Father Chrysostom

"For everyone you meet is fighting a battle you know nothing about." – C.S. Lewis

### C. Jesus' Puzzling Statement (Matthew 7:6)

"Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces." Matthew 7:6

The traditional view is that Jesus is speaking of those who despise the Kingdom and want nothing to do with the gospel. There is also probably a sense in which Jesus is advising us to use our discernment about who we try to correct. Not everyone is open to criticism and correction (Proverbs 9:7-8).

"Whoever corrects a mocker invites insult; whoever rebukes a wicked man incurs abuse. Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you; rebuke a wise man and he will love you." Proverbs 9:7-8

### III. Deep Heart Work

Often, we develop critical spirits, because we have been wounded in relationships (think of perfectionistic parents). We try to protect ourselves from further pain or rejection by judging others. We are applying the same standard that was applied to us.

Ministry Principle: Trace the fruit to the root.

The way forward:

- Confess our sin of judgment.
- Forgive the person.
- Renounce the judgment/ pray for any spiritual dynamic to be broken in Jesus Name.
- Bless the person.

Sample prayer:

Lord, forgive me for judging \_\_\_\_\_. I forgive them for \_\_\_\_\_ and the way their behavior hurt me. I renounce my judgments over this person, and by the authority of Jesus Christ I cancel and cut off all spiritual power those judgments had on us. Lord, would you bless \_\_\_\_\_.

In Jesus Name. Amen.

### IV. A People Overcome by Mercy

“Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” 1 Peter 2:10

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.” Matthew 5:7

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