



Lesson 3

Chapter 7: Putting the Gospel into Practice

Judging Others (7:1-6)

In the Sermon in the Mount Jesus shows us how important it is that we treat others properly. In chapter 7 he warns us that we should not judge others; we need God's mercy and forgiveness ourselves and so must show mercy and forgiveness to others.

SOME REASONS WHY WE SHOULD NOT JUDGE OTHERS

- We may have misunderstood them.
- We probably do not know all the facts.
- Our understanding of what God requires of the person may not be correct.
- We ourselves are often wrong in what we do and say and would not want others judging us.
- Our sins may be far greater than the problem we think the other person has and so we may be like the hypocrites (7:4, 5). If we judge others harshly then God will not show mercy when He judges us (7:2).
- We often excuse ourselves but make no such allowance when others do the same wrong. We are not fair in our judgement!

The Golden Rule (7:7-14)

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you."
(Matthew 7:7)

In three different ways (*ask, seek, knock*) we are provided with reassurance that God will provide "*good things to those who ask him*". So if we genuinely seek to find Bible truth, God will help us.

Matthew 7:12 sums up the attitude a Christian should have towards others – the Golden Rule:

"...whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them."

We should treat people as we ourselves want to be treated and show them more love and understanding. We should help when we see them struggling in life, and forgive them without being asked.

The Apostle Paul told the believers at Rome:

"We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbour for his good, to build him up."
(Romans 15:1, 2)

Verses 13 and 14 of Matthew 7 remind us that true Christians can expect to be in a minority (a small group). We should not be afraid to be different when loyalty to Jesus demands it; sadly most people still reject the ways of God.

False Claims (7:15-23)

In verse 15 Jesus warns us to beware of false prophets, (or teachers) who appear to be his disciples (or sheep) but they are not what they appear to be. They are described as 'wolves' who will destroy the faith of others. Some people claim to be disciples of Jesus but their actions (their 'fruit' in verses 16-20) do not match their words. We should always compare what they do and what they believe with what the Bible tells. God's Word is the only authority for our lives.

When the Lord Jesus Christ returns he will not accept all those who say that they are his disciples. It is not enough to say we are disciples; we must do what God requires:





"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."
(Matthew 7:21)

There are people today who claim to use the Holy Spirit to prophesy or work miracles. Jesus warns us (Matt. 7:22, 23) that such false claims would be made and so we need to be careful that we are not taken in by them:

"... many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'"

Those who claim to have Holy Spirit gifts are false and often show this by their wrong beliefs. So, for example, anyone who says a person continues to exist in some form after he has died is teaching error. God would not allow him to use His Holy Spirit power to perform miracles. Similarly a person who does not recognise that Jesus Christ came in human form cannot be working on God's behalf (see 1 John 4:1-6). Holy Spirit gifts do not exist today (see Lesson 21 of the 40 Lesson course).

A Good Foundation (7:24-27)

The Sermon ends with a vivid parable about wise and foolish builders. Both types of builders represent people who hear the words of Jesus. Disaster comes upon the one who builds his faith on uncertain foundations and fails to **do** what Jesus says.

Notice how Jesus' hearers react in verses 28 and 29 and why they did this. Jesus showed the authority he had received from the Lord God.

Which of these houses would you rather live in?

