

NOON BIBLE STUDY: MATTHEW 7 (PART 1)

THIS SECTION IS GOING TO BEGIN WITH OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS.

MATTHEW 7:1-5 - JUDGING

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO "JUDGE?"

JUDGE: (MERRIAM-WEBSTER) (VERB) - TO FORM AN OPINION ABOUT THROUGH CAREFUL WEIGHING OF EVIDENCE AND TESTING OF. TO FORM AN ESTIMATE OR EVALUATION OF. TO SIT IN JUDGMENT ON : TRY

OUR TENDENCY IS TO SEE THE FLAWS AND FAULTS IN OTHERS AND HAVE BLINDSPOTS TO OUR OWN SHORTCOMINGS.

THERE ARE TIMES WHEN WE NEED TO MAKE JUDGMENTS, HELP SOMEONE, CONFRONT SOMEONE, ETC. HOWEVER, JESUS TEACHES THAT BEFORE WE DO THAT WE MUST LOOK AT OUR OWN LIVES AND BECOME CLEAR ON THE THINGS IN OUR OWN LIVES FIRST. HE CALLS US TO LOOK AT THE BEAM IN OUR OWN EYE BEFORE WE CAN LOOK AT THE "SPECK" IN THE EYE OF SOMEONE ELSE.

JUDGMENTS CAN BE MADE, BUT ONLY AFTER WE FIRST TAKE STOCK OF OUR OWN LIVES SO WE CAN "SEE CLEARLY" (V. 5). WHEN JUDGMENTS ARE MADE, THE STANDARD WE USE IN JUDGMENT OF OTHERS IS CORRELATED TO THE STANDARD GOD WILL USE IN JUDGMENT OF US. HOW DO YOU WANT GOD TO DEAL WITH YOU AND YOUR FAILINGS AND FLAWS? THAT SHOULD GUIDE HOW YOU SHOULD DEAL WITH OTHER PEOPLE'S FAILINGS AND FLAWS.

Q - DO YOU RECOGNIZE AREAS IN YOUR LIFE WHERE YOU CAN BE JUDGMENTAL?

Q - HOW SHOULD YOU INTERACT WITH PEOPLE YOU SEE WHO ARE BEHAVING OR ACTING IN A WRONG WAY?

OTHER VERSES REGARDING JUDGMENT

GALATIANS 6:1-4 - BRETHREN, EVEN IF ANYONE IS CAUGHT IN ANY TRESPASS, YOU WHO ARE SPIRITUAL, RESTORE SUCH A ONE IN A SPIRIT OF GENTLENESS; EACH ONE LOOKING TO YOURSELF, SO THAT YOU TOO WILL NOT BE TEMPTED. 2 BEAR ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS, AND THEREBY FULFILL THE LAW OF CHRIST. 3 FOR IF ANYONE THINKS HE IS SOMETHING WHEN HE IS NOTHING, HE DECEIVES HIMSELF. 4 BUT EACH ONE MUST EXAMINE HIS OWN WORK, AND THEN HE WILL HAVE REASON FOR BOASTING IN REGARD TO HIMSELF ALONE, AND NOT IN REGARD TO ANOTHER.

ROMANS 14:10-13 - BUT YOU, WHY DO YOU JUDGE YOUR BROTHER? OR YOU AGAIN, WHY DO YOU REGARD YOUR BROTHER WITH CONTEMPT? FOR WE WILL ALL STAND BEFORE THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF GOD. 11 FOR IT IS WRITTEN, "AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD." 12 SO THEN EACH ONE OF US WILL GIVE AN ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF TO GOD. 13 THEREFORE LET US NOT JUDGE ONE ANOTHER ANYMORE, BUT RATHER DETERMINE THIS-- NOT TO PUT AN OBSTACLE OR A STUMBLING BLOCK IN A BROTHER'S WAY.

JAMES 4:11-12 (NLT) - DON'T SPEAK EVIL AGAINST EACH OTHER, DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS. IF YOU CRITICIZE AND JUDGE EACH OTHER, THEN YOU ARE CRITICIZING AND JUDGING GOD'S LAW. BUT YOUR JOB IS TO OBEY THE LAW, NOT TO JUDGE WHETHER IT APPLIES TO YOU. 12 GOD ALONE, WHO GAVE THE LAW, IS THE JUDGE. HE ALONE HAS THE POWER TO SAVE OR TO DESTROY. SO WHAT RIGHT DO YOU HAVE TO JUDGE YOUR NEIGHBOR?

OTHER VERSES REGARDING THE STANDARD WE USE BEING WHAT WE RECEIVE

MATTHEW 5:7 - "BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL, FOR THEY SHALL RECEIVE MERCY.

MATTHEW 6:12 - 'AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE ALSO HAVE FORGIVEN OUR DEBTORS.

MATTHEW 6:14-15 - "FOR IF YOU FORGIVE OTHERS FOR THEIR TRANSGRESSIONS, YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER WILL ALSO FORGIVE YOU. 15 "BUT IF YOU DO NOT FORGIVE OTHERS, THEN YOUR FATHER WILL NOT FORGIVE YOUR TRANSGRESSIONS.

JAMES 2:13 - FOR JUDGMENT WILL BE MERCELESS TO ONE WHO HAS SHOWN NO MERCY; MERCY TRIUMPHS OVER JUDGMENT.

MATTHEW 7:6 - DISCERNMENT

ON THE HEELS OF JESUS' TEACHING ON NOT MAKING JUDGEMENTS, HE CALLS US TO MAKE JUDGEMENTS. THIS IS IN THE STYLE OF CLASSIC HEBREW PROVERBS. THE BOOK OF PROVERBS IS FILLED WITH INSTANCES THAT SAY A WISE PERSON SHOULD DO X AND NOT Y FOLLOWED BY A PROVERB THAT SAYS SOMETIMES YOU NEED TO DO Y AND NOT X. WISDOM IS NEEDED TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE AND DISCERNMENT IS REQUIRED TO BE A PERSON OF WISDOM.

HERE JESUS TELLS HIS DISCIPLES THAT WE SHOULDN'T GIVE WHAT IS HOLY TO DOGS OR PEARLS (SOMETHING OF VALUE) TO PIGS. DOGS AND PIGS DON'T HAVE A SENSE OF VALUE AND SO WILL TREAT A FILET MIGNON THE SAME WAY THEY TREAT KIBBLE. THEY WILL WALK WITH MUDDY FEET ON A PRICELESS MEDIEVAL RUG THE SAME WAY THEY WALK OVER A MAT THAT WAS \$4.88 FROM WALMART.

Q - HOW DO WE KNOW WHO IS A "DOG" OR "PIG"?

SOMETIMES THEY IDENTIFY THEMSELVES RATHER THAN US NEEDING TO MAKE THAT CLASSIFICATION OF THEM OURSELVES. IF YOU KEEP SPEAKING THE GOSPEL TO A NEIGHBOR WHO SAYS "I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ANY MORE ABOUT YOUR RELIGION", IT MIGHT BE BETTER NOT BRING IT UP FOR A BIT AND PRAY FOR THEM INSTEAD.

BEING JUDGMENTAL IS WRONG, HAVING DISCERNMENT IS IMPORTANT. IN FACT WHAT FOLLOWS IN THIS SECTION WILL BE A CALL TO IDENTIFY FALSE PROPHETS BY IDENTIFYING THEIR "FRUIT." WE NEED TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING JUDGMENTAL AND DISCERNING AND HAVE SPIRITUAL WISDOM TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE.

WE NEED TO TAKE THESE TEACHINGS OF OUR RABBI SERIOUSLY, ESPECIALLY IN THE MOMENT WE'RE IN NOW. WE LIVE IN A WORLD FILLED WITH JUDGMENT AND INVITATION TO MOCK, RIDICULE, DEMEAN AND DEHUMANIZE OTHERS FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS (APPEARANCE, OPINIONS, BACKGROUND, PREFERENCES, AND MORE). IT IS NOT THOUGHT OF AS WRONG TO BE A JUDGMENTAL PERSON IN THE WORLD'S EYES. NOT SO FOR THE PEOPLE OF JESUS.

AND AT THE SAME TIME WE NEED TO HAVE AND USE DISCERNMENT, ESPECIALLY IN OUR DISTRIBUTION OF THE PEARLS OF GOD'S WISDOM AND GOSPEL. TIME IS SHORT AND WE NEED TO MAKE THE MOST OF THE TIME WE ARE IN UNTANGLED IN WEEDS OF THE WORLD DESIGNED TO HOLD US BACK FROM BEING THE LIGHTS THIS DARK WORLD NEEDS.