

Scripture Reference: Matthew 7

Date: July 20, 2014

Title: "Living Amidst Others"

Focus: You cannot determine who a person is by what they do

One Bible passage that gets abused is found here in Matthew 7. Verse 1 tends to be shared in an effort to stop a person from judging the actions of another. The usage of Matthew 7:1 in this way, leads people to think it is never right to bring attention to the sinfulness of what someone is doing. The problem with this application is, believers are told to call sin out (Matt. 18:15; Gal 6:1; 1 John 5:16). So, if Jesus is not saying sin should not be identified, what is His point in this teaching?

Remember the practice of the Pharisee, the religious leaders of Jesus' day? They would call out sin in such a manner that denigrated the person, while at the same time, elevating themselves (Lk 18:10-12). Sin needs to be identified, confronted, and challenged. Why? Because sin is always a damaging and destructive act. But, in confronting sin, it is never right to judge the person.

Keep this in mind when confronting sin:

- 1) Do it in a manner that reflects the character of God (lovingly and gently).
- 2) Take into the account the human frailty, yours and the other person's.
- 3) Rebuke in a way that provides for the person to be restored to a relationship with God and others.

This is what Jesus is teaching in Matthew 7.

### **vv. 1-6; Do Not Judge**

A look at vv. 2-6 is needed to understand what Jesus is talking about.

vv. 2-5; How you judge others, will impact how you are judged.

We want mercy when we sin. Why? Because, being aware of all our extenuating circumstances, we see our sins in a larger context. With others, we focus only on the sinful acts. We label the person in light of one event.

While sin is sin, show mercy to the person, because sin is not all there is in their lives.

v. 6; Sometimes judging sin is wasted effort. People can be so carried away by their sin; they are unappreciative of their situation. In those cases, have pity, mercy and love for the person, but avoid the pigpen.

### **vv. 7-12; Intercede for the person.**

All behavior is intended to accomplish a purpose. People do not do bad because they think it is bad, unless they are a sociopath or possessed. Most people are trying to be happy and fulfilled.

The problem is, they are blind to the destructive path they have turned to.

So, pray for them, that God would make them aware, quicken their souls to the situation they are in. Pray God would open the door for you to talk with them and walk with them out of their situation.

In response to your intercession, God will move. Take the energy you spent criticizing them, and instead, pray.

## **vv. 13-14; Living the Right Way is Difficult**

If living righteously was easy, anyone could and would do it. If avoiding sin were simple, the cross would not have been needed.

It is simple to sin. It is fun, enjoyable, and satisfies the natural desires everyone has. It is alluring. However, it is also destructive.

Living contrary to the pull of our fallen natures is difficult. Walking in relationship with God is humanly difficult. It is unnatural. Saying "No" to what we innately want is not easy

Jesus said, "*few find it*" (v. 14). But, when they do, it is a blessing.

## **vv. 15-23; Don't Be Fooled by the Outside**

It is insufficient to look only at what people say and do. Everyone has good days and bad. It is hard to judge a book by its cover.

It is not people's activity that makes them righteous or a sinner.

Instead, words and actions, sin and righteousness, merely express who people are at the seat of their being (Matt. 15:11; Mk 7:15-20). What people do and say, only reflects who they are at the core of their being.

Who people are at the seat of their being is the greater issue than what they say or do.

## **vv. 24-29; What God Looks For**

In life, it is impossible to avoid being judged. Whatever you do, someone will find reason to fault you.

Ultimately, God's is the only one whose judgment people need to concern themselves with.

Notice what God seeks. It is people who live their lives based on what they hear Him saying. These people, because they walk in relationship with God, are in a good position to face what life brings.

Those who do not heed God's voice, or who only act like they are following what God says, are ill prepared for life.

## **The Last 18 Inches**

By this passage, Jesus is not warning against calling out sin, He is saying people should not judge others.

What people do is secondary to the greater question of why they do it. It is for this reason we are ill-equipped to "judge another."

There is only One who is fit to judge people, that is God. Before Him all people will one day give an accounting.

The question that really matters is, what will God find when He judges you? Are you one who walks in relationship with God, living your life based off of what He says? Or, will you be a person who does what is "right in his own eyes"?