

Matthew 7:1-12

“Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? 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. 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. Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? 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? 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.”

How to and not to judge, correct others

“Judge not, that you be not judged”---what does that not mean?

Matthew 7, verses 1-2, “Judge not that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge you’ll be judged, and with the measure you use it’ll be measured back to you.” But as we continue to study through these verses, we’re going to find, you know the Bible is always very balanced. And right here God says, Jesus says, **“Judge not”**. And one thing he’s not saying, he’s not saying, and some people would like us to believe he’s saying this, and this is, *‘Don’t ever give your opinion about me and my life, don’t ever say anything that would make me uncomfortable. You have your life, I have mine, and let’s leave it at that.’* And that’s not what Jesus is saying at all when he says **“Judge not...”** He’s not saying *‘Zip up the lip, be quiet,*

keep it to yourself. That's not at all what he's saying. As we go on, in fact we'll see that there is certainly a place and a time to express the truth and stand on an issue, and in love to go to an individual and say *'Hey, there's a concern here, and I just love you, and I want to tell you that, and I love you enough to tell you that.'* Paul, for instance, to the church in Galatia, he says to the church in Galatia, he says to Christians, **"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of gentleness, considering yourself, lest you also be tempted."** So Paul says to the church in Galatia, ***'Hey Christians, at times you'll see a brother whose struggling with a sin or an issue or struggle, and you who are spiritual go to them seeking to restore them.'*** Paul says to his protégé Timothy in his second letter to Timothy, **2nd Timothy chapter 3, verse 16, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."** He says, the Word of God is profitable, not only so that we would know our theology about God and ourselves, but it's also profitable for reproof. And what is reproof? Correction, admonishment. But admonishment, the definition in the dictionary if you're wondering what admonishment is, just taking it straight out of the dictionary, it says "Mild, kind yet earnest reproof." Coming to somebody in gentleness and in love, and reproving them and correcting them. "Cautionary advice or warning," coming and saying *'Hey, you're on a certain road, and I love you enough to tell you that if you continue on that road, there's going to be pain and destruction in your life.'* So Jesus says **"Judge not"**, and as we go on, he's not saying there's not a place for reproof, that we should not admonish one another and correct one another, that's not it at all. I want to start with that, because so often people say *'Judge not, judge not, don't give me an opinion, you're making me uncomfortable, judge not.'* And that's not at all what he's saying. No doubt about it, the Bible makes it clear, there is a need, if I truly love people, then I'm going to speak the truth, and I'm going to do it in a certain way. And the Bible, you know, we have that ministry, spiritually. We have that responsibility, we're salt in this world, and to come and say *'Hey, there's a spiritual smudge there, there's some darkness and ugliness, and man, God would like to work there, it's not good, and just letting you know,'* and point it out in a loving way. So, admonishment, balancing out, responding to those

who say *'Judge me not, just zip the lip and don't be saying anything,'* that's not what he means.

"Judge not, that you be not judged"---what does Jesus mean by that?

So what does he mean, then, when he says **"Judge not"**, what he means here, is the heart and the way we do it. And that it's important when we do express the truth and opinions about issues and struggles and sin and trespasses, it's vitally important that we're coming at it the right way and doing it the right way. And so, that's what we see here in verse 1 and 2, **"Judge not that you be not judged."** And then he goes on to say, *'understand, when you judge, with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.'* It's important that I go about this the correct way. When he says the word **"judge"**, the Greek word for "judge" is *krino*. When he says "judge", the point here is that of a criticism, judgment of a critical nature. In fact, in English our word "critic" comes from the very word *krino*, the Greek word, it's derived from that word. But there is, in this, when he says "judge not", he's speaking in this sense of condemnation. In **Luke chapter 6, verse 7**, Luke records it, he says **"Judge not, and you shall not be judged"**, and then his next words were, **"condemn not, and you shall not be condemned."** So the point is here that of condemnation, of condemning, of looking at somebody's struggle or issue or sin and it's done in a way that's damning them, it's sentencing them, righting them off, that sort of criticalness in judging. To look at others in that way, we understand that the measure you use, it'll be measured back to you. Now considering the religious leaders, there are many people who are in their own pride, and in their religious way, as the religious leaders of this time who think *'I've got God figured out, I've got this religious system figured out, and I've got this standard.'* And generally when people are like that, they then look at that standard, and they look at others based on that, and then they judge you, *'I mean, you're not meeting the standard.'* And they judge you, they look down on you, they right you off. And the religious leaders of the day, that's exactly what they were doing, they have this self-imposed righteousness, and so they look at others, and they look down on people because *'You did not meet this incredible system we've developed, of self-righteousness.'* And so Jesus is dealing with these guys, and trying to get through that hardness of heart. **'Judge [condemn] not, and the way you judge, and the measure you use will be**

measured back to you.' These guys like to play the role of God. [The Westboro Baptist church out in the Midwest that condemned Heath Ledger to hell, saying he is now burning in the hottest part of hell upon his death, all because Heath had played the part of a gay person in one of his movies. It was purely condemnation, not loving correction. I am afraid this wacko pastor has brought serious condemnation back upon her congregation in the exact same measure that she measured it out, and that condemnation in the end will come from Jesus Christ himself. This situation fits what Jesus was saying about condemnation type of judgment. Where was the application of "love the sinner, yet hate the sin"? No they were hating both the sinner and the sin, as Jesus said they weren't supposed to do. Jesus is saying, **'Christian, be careful in how you correct, how you admonish, don't be condemning of the individual, only the sin. Admonish, correct in love, or not at all.'**] It's very clear in the Bible that there's one Judge, and God sits upon his throne, and he's the Judge. Romans chapter 2, verse 1, this type of heart that really shows the attitude that turns God off, see **Romans chapter 2, verse 1**, Paul says the same thing in referring to this. **"Therefore you are inexcusable oh man, whoever you are who judge."** That word again, *krino*. **"For wherein you judge another you condemn yourself, for you who judge practice the same things."** Paul goes on in **Romans chapter 14, verse 10**, **"But why do you judge your brother, or why do you show contempt for your brothers,"** that condemning attitude, **"for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."** And then James chapter 4, verse 11, he so boldly puts it, writes so boldly, he says, **chapter 4, verse 11**, **"Do not speak evil of one another brethren. He who speaks evil of their brother and judges his brother speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you're not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver who is able to save and destroy. Who are you to judge another?"** So that sense of thinking evil of them, and speaking evil of them, and condemning them. Man, Jesus is saying, **'That's not cool. Don't do that. It's offensive to God.'** **"With the measure you use it will be measured back to you"** that statement in **verse 2**. When you have a certain criticalness to you, you look down and you condemn, write others off, standing there in your pride---with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

Be Careful How You Judge Society

One of the areas where we can often be guilty of that is in the context of society and the world. We were once in the world. But God so graciously came and saved me and loved me. But I'm not sure what it is, I get all cleaned up and have this new life, and then later on I'm starting to look out at the world going 'Ah, man, those terrible whatever,' you know. And I have this attitude and this issue in my heart. And Jesus is saying **'Judge not, judge not, you know I love those people. I love those people desperately. Judge not, lest you be judged.'** [btw, God chose the right pastor and church denomination to purchase and set up a Christian radio broadcasting station just one town over from Provincetown, Massachusetts, no hatred of gays here, just love and concern for their welfare, their eternal welfare, without condemnation. That's the whole meaning Jesus is conveying right here in these verses.] Doesn't matter what the struggle or issue or lifestyle is, doesn't matter. It's about the Gospel and Jesus Christ and loving people. Jesus says **'Judge, (krino, condemn) not.'** Who am I to judge in a condemnation kind of way, who am I to look down on anybody? Man, look at what the Lord's done in my life. I think of the same-sex marriage thing, and last year God had us involved in different ways, just standing, I believe very clearly that marriage is supposed to be a certain way according to the Bible. And I believe that when you have same-sex marriage, God loves everybody, but that particular institution I believe in time is going to undermine marriage. You look in northern Europe where they've had it for awhile, and what's happened in time is that less and less people marry, in general, because it's making marriage out to be something that God never intended it to be. And so, there's a concern, certainly in my heart about it. But at the same time, I have to look at my heart, and that is, I want to show everybody that I love them. And that's a challenge we have, isn't there, as Christians? *'I love you, I'm burdened for you.'* But on the Cape, there is an FM application that has become available, and it's only going to be around for another year [the application], and it'll disappear. And there's a possibility of building a little tiny FM radio station at the very end of the Cape. [btw, they now have it up and running.] Getting right into P-town, and you've got Jon Courson on the radio, a lot of us were listening to him, Chuck Smith, [broadcasting to] people that at any moment, not threatening, just turn it on and listen to the Bible, the Word of God, and listening to how much God loves them, wants to work with them and heal their lives. I know that's what he's done in my life, he's touched my life and he's healed my life. But that's something that may start to stir as we try to get this little

station on the air. Jon, doing some leadership training, Jon Courson, and during the leadership classes that we were going through, he was just teaching, really. At the end there was an opportunity to ask questions, and one man stood up and said, “Jon, I’d like to know your opinion on this. Let’s say you have a family member or friend that’s homosexual, and they’re going to get married in the State of Massachusetts to somebody of the same sex. What would you do, would you go to the wedding?” Now that’s an interesting question, and this can reveal what’s in the heart. But the point is, what’s in the heart. Because it does create a little bit of a dilemma. And Jon initially, he says, “If they’re not Christians, I’d just go.” But then as we talked about it, all the issues, I mean, he said, “Well I’d have to really pray about it.” And so in that dilemma, what do you do in that situation? I’m not going to answer it, because I’m sure no matter what my answer would be, I’d probably split the church. Right? [laughter] I mean, there’s a spirit that he’s speaking about, the heart. And so often as the Church [greater Body of Christ] we can be guilty of that with the people in society we come across, that attitude of *Ahhg!* But God loves them so much. And he proved it by sending his Son to die on the cross. Judge not, as you measure out it will be measured back to you. Not only are we at times guilty of judging society [in a condemning way], we shouldn’t be, we should be giving them the truth, we need to be giving the truth to them, but given in love, the Gospel too, given in love, the tears, the compassion, the prayer.

Being guilty of being critical of other Christians in other churches, denominations

Also we can be guilty of being critical as the Church, as Christians of other Christians in other churches [or denominations is what he also means]. ‘We’re a Calvary Chapel, we’ve got Jesus figured out, and you know that church down the road, you know, they’re ok, they’re ok, we pray for them [laughter].’ And we get into this deal, like suddenly, we’re it, and we start to judge the Bride of Christ [other parts of it, that is], God’s kids, God’s people. Jesus says **“Judge not.”** [Let’s pull up two glaring examples of this. The Sabbath-keeping Churches of God, down through the ages, but even in our 20th and 21st centuries, have withstood severe judgment, being libeled as “legalists” or “heretics, cults,” derogatory terms, by their Gentile Sunday/Christmas/Easter observing Christian brothers and sisters in Christ. But on the other side of the

fence, that Sabbath-keeping Churches of God, almost without exception, have libeled the Sunday-keeping Christians as “false Christians” because they don’t keep the 4th Commandment, because they’re only observing 9 out of the Big 10. There is a strange dichotomy of beliefs wrapped up in this controversy, to be sure (see <http://www.unityinchrist.com/author.htm>). But a lot of it boils down to some pretty nasty judgmental attitudes, on both sides of this doctrinal fence. Notice I used the word “libel” instead of “labeled,” due to the severity of these judgmental attitudes, that what each side is doing amounts to libel, and not merely a labeling.] Judge not, condemn not. Here we are a part of Calvary Chapel, Calvary Chapel began, you know, initially the way God worked was with these Hippies [on Huntington Beach, California], and the Church at large was saying to the Hippies, *‘Go get a haircut, you go get a haircut and get some shoes, and then we’ll reach out to you.’* And with this little church [with Chuck Smith as pastor, initially starting out with 25 members], Calvary Chapel, and there were other churches like that, that said *‘Wait a minute, just love these kids, and reach out to them.’* And then due to Chuck Smith’s reaching out to them in love, without a judgmental attitude, then lots of them started to get saved, and God started to do a powerful work in their lives. That was Calvary Chapel’s beginning, but so often now, with God’s blessing comes pride. *‘We’ve got the right theology, we’ve got the proper worship format, man, we’ve got the Dove, we’ve got style,’* and now we’re looking down at others from wherever they are as Christians, rather than *‘This is the beautiful Body of Christ, the Bride of Christ, doesn’t matter what your label is, doesn’t matter what your denomination is, you may be more liturgical, you may be more Pentecostal, you may be more fundamental, doesn’t matter.’* [To see how the Calvary Chapel’s got started, see <http://www.unityinchrist.com/history/smith.htm>] I pray in our hearts as a congregation, what comes forth from this building and our ministry, is love for all the Church, man, the Church, the Bride of Christ, those who know Jesus. Certainly I can look at other churches and go *‘I don’t know if that’s good doctrine over there, I don’t know if that’s the best practice,’* and I can believe that (in all sincerity), yet at the same time still love, still love. [And that is the exact same intent and practice of this website, for even within what we may consider the dead and dying past revivals which are now older denominations, there still are precious believers in Jesus who are still alive and well spiritually. Ours isn’t to condemn. Tell the truth in love, but never condemn. Encourage, provide spiritual nourishment, and

love, that's what this website is all about.] Paul exhorted the church of God in Rome, **Romans 14, verse 4**, he says, **"Who are you to judge another man's servant, to his own master he stands or falls, indeed he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand."** He works for somebody else, what place is it for you to judge? Let his boss be the judge [and his boss is Christ] and give the review. It's not your place, it's not your place. Though not only can we be critical of society, and critical of other churches, but the truth is, we can be critical right in our own church. Right? Judge not, he says, judge not, in that sense of being critical and condemning, judge not. I think of the President, and we're so often so quick, *Boom! boom!* just rattling off our opinions about his decisions, and maybe some are good and maybe some are bad, but yet at the same time I realize, I've never been in any of his staff meetings, I've never seen all the information and all the data that he has access to that we don't, I've never been through all the reviews from that stuff. How could I possibly judge his decisions, you know? I might have a little opinion, but how could I know? And the same happens in all sorts of areas of life in the church, where you are judging, but yet you never really, really knew what the person was going through, and all their reasons and their motives and thought processes for doing what they did. So Jesus comes and he says **'Judge not'** in that sense of that condemning, and having that sting and that criticalness. Do not do that, for in the measure that you do it, it'll be measured back to you. That's why it's so key that humility is in our hearts, and that's why we go back to Matthew chapter 5, and we learn through the Beatitudes that humility, that brokenness. When there's humility, then you're not going to be too often tripping over chapter 7, verse 1 here. Brokenness and humility will keep you from that. **"Judge not lest you be judged."** But also he takes note, and he's certainly going to deal with it, **"in the measure you use will be measured back to you."** We're not to judge, in a condemning way, but as I began, we are to admonish, we are to correct. There is certainly a place for going to somebody, Galatians, and saying, *'Listen, listen, God loves you, and I love you, and here's an issue, you're struggling, and what can I do? Can I pray for you? And you know if you continue on that road you're going to hurt yourself. You're going to hurt other people.'* There's certainly a place for that. And we'll see as you go on, verse 3, there's a place for admonishment. But as he's sharing here, there's the proper way to do it. How do we do it? Well he gives us the sense of doing it correctly.

Rules for proper judgment, admonishment

1. How can you correct someone else, when you're worse?

Verses 3-5, “And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your eye,’ and look a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite, first remove the plank from your own eye, and then you’ll see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.” Jesus here is addressing that attitude of when you see an issue in somebody else’s life, you come and have an attitude and you have an opinion about it, maybe even some words about it, but yet you haven’t truly allowed God to examine your own heart in your own life. And so it’s very hypocritical. So you come and say ‘*Look at that,*’ and they turn around and say ‘*Look at you!*’ When I come to correct and admonish, and to reprove and encourage, it is important I do the self-examination and allow the Holy Spirit to show what’s in me, and I therefore come in humility and brokenness. He says, ‘***You have a speck,***’ the NIV translates it “***a little piece of sawdust.***” And he says ‘***You see a speck in your brother’s eye, and it’s interesting, you see that, but you have a plank in your eye.***’ And if you notice the speck, the sawdust, and the plank, they’re both made of the same thing. It’s just a different degree. The other person has a little bit of that, but you’ve got a whole bunch. Understand that you also are a sinner, and you have all kinds of issues and struggles. And you’re broken, and you love your brother, and you’re coming broken and in humility, and you’re honestly not coming judging and critical, but you’re coming out of concern, genuine concern and love. So, when it comes to admonishment, the first thing, it’s important that I do it the right way, and that is that it starts with a sincere inspection of my own life. David, you remember, it’s like the speck and the beam thing, because David had committed murder, and he had committed adultery, king David. And he hid it for a year. And the prophet Nathan comes to him, and he says to him, ‘*I’ll tell you a story, David. There are two guys, rich guy, poor guy. Rich guy’s got everything, poor guy’s got one little lamb, rich guy needs to make a meal for some friends, and he goes and steals the poor guy’s little lamb that he loves so much.*’ David hears that and he says ‘*What?! That rich guy should be killed for doing that, that’s evil.*’ But you see, David is hiding murder and adultery. And Nathan comes back,

you remember the story, he says **'You're the man, David.'** But David came out with such anger for this rich guy. *'That's so awful that he would steal that lamb!'* but all the while, I mean, to steal a lamb wasn't the death penalty in the law. To commit murder and adultery was. And Nathan goes, **'You're the man, you're the one, dude.'** And we can be like that. And Jesus is saying, **'Hey man, you see the speck,'** and maybe there is a speck in your brother's eye, but make sure that your heart, your heart is also one that you've allowed the Holy Spirit to reveal what's in there, and that there's brokenness and repentance and forgiveness over your own sin. That's so vital and so important. Later, though, David gets it right. He's admonished by Nathan, now there's repentance in his life, God graciously spares his life. And then he pens Psalm 51. He says this, **"Behold, you desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden parts. You'll make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. Create in me a clean heart O God and renew a steadfast spirit within me."** He sees his sin for what it is, and says **'Oh, forgive me, cleanse me,'** and then he says a couple years later, same writing, **"Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners shall be converted to you."** Now he's at a different place. Self-inspection, Holy Spirit inspection, self-judging, the heart is right, *'Oh Lord, self-judging, and the cleansing, Oh Lord, use me like this, to go and help sinners.'* Being, his heart is right, and the heart is now right, *'O Lord, now use me to go and help somebody, a sinner, I can go and minister to them.'* So the question, so the question, here's the question, right, it's so simple, you, me, do we struggle with being critical? Do we struggle with, you and I, are we critical of people in society? Well the other things about admonishing and correcting, I'm not to judge and be critical of other churches or Christians. But I am to---as you noticed---he says first in verse 4, remove the log, and now you can go see clearly, and now go remove the speck. So clearly he's not saying you're not ever to go and remove the speck. Once you've got yourself dealt with, now you can go and help your brother remove the speck from his eye. First remove the plank from your eye, and then you can see clearly and then help him remove the speck. When it comes to admonishing and dealing with the speck in other's eyes, what's important is that I got my heart right, I've done the self-inspection, but secondly, I also need to be discerning.

2. Being Discerning

Verse 6, “Do not give what is holy to the dogs, nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet and turn and tear you in pieces.” Now what does he mean in verse 6? The heart of what’s coming up through here, discerning, being discerning. It’s vitally important that I’m led by the Lord, and that I know that I’m being prepared and led, and I’m going with the right words and the right message, so that it’s going to be received. Because maybe you’ve had this happen, but it’s very possible to go and minister (or witness) to somebody, and man, you’ve just created a whole mess, because they weren’t at a place where they were going to receive it. It’s important that I’m led and I’m discerning. That’s essentially what he’s saying, when he says **‘Do you give what is holy to the dogs?’** You’ve got this sacred holy Word in your heart from the Lord, and God’s prepared you, and you’re on your face praying for somebody, and you’re burdened for them, but they’re in a very different place. (And this is talking just as much for our witnessing to a non-believer as it is for admonishing a brother or sister in Christ, maybe even more so about our witnessing to a non-believer, by the wording of it.) And you’re thinking *‘Should I go and witness to them?’*, and if you’re discerning, and you go there, they’re just going to chew you up alive, because they’re not ready. That’s essentially the principle he’s saying there. He’s giving the picture of food, the priests had the food from the sacrifices, and if you study the Law there’s certain portions given to them, and it was considered holy, and it was for the priests, and it was for their families. And dogs would be considered unholy according to the Law, and you wouldn’t give holy things, in the Law, to the dog. And you certainly wouldn’t give what is for the priests, which is holy, to the dogs. He says **“you don’t cast your pearls before swine”**, just get the picture. You’ve got this beautiful pearl necklace. I saw the picture the other day in the newspaper, that really huge pearl, it’s been around for a long time, they were telling the story about people who had died, and committed crimes over it, this massive pearl. You wouldn’t take that if you had it, and throw it into a pigpen. The pig may play with it, toss it around, but he’s just going to end up stomping it in the mud. The point is, you see there’s issues, there’s the speck, and you have a burden for your brother, or your neighbor, or this person or society or that culture [talking more of non-believers here]. You’ve got your heart right, but is it the right place to say something? Is it going to be received? There’s times the Lord uses a passage in my life where I’ve been praying

'Lord I'd really love to go to them.' More than once in my life, God has brought me here and told me *'No, it's not time, they're not ready. You're going to be like taking something and casting it to the dogs. You're going to take your pearl, and throw it, and it's just going to be chomped on.'* [also, pigs have been known to kill people, the larger ones, when you anger them.] **“lest they turn and tear you to pieces.”** Right? So, 1) self-examination, 2) discernment. There's a place for admonishment [and witnessing to non-believers], but I go in a certain manner [in both instances], and that's the manner I go in. So, self-examination, I want to make sure my heart is right. I want to make sure I come in humility, and I understand that I'm just a sinner, and I'm saved by the grace of God. Secondly, I also want to be discerning. You remember Jesus at times, that's the way he was. I mean, he had Herod in front of him one time, and Herod was mocking him, and Herod said *'Come on, Jesus, do a miracle Jesus.'* You remember Jesus does not say a word, doesn't say a word to him, because of the attitude there. I mean, how is it going to be received? He's just going to be mocked. He doesn't cast the pearls before the swine. Another time Paul, Paul in Acts chapter 13, people are there and he refuses to minister to them for that very reason. *'Their heart isn't right, I'm not gonna take these pearls and cast them before swine.'* Solomon shared in **Proverbs chapter 9, verse 7, “He who corrects a scoffer gets shame for himself, and he who rebukes a wicked man only harms himself. Do not correct a scoffer lest he hate you. Rebuke a wise man and he will love you.”** **Proverbs 23, verse 9, “Do not speak in the hearing of a fool, for he will despise the wisdom of your words.”** So, 1) right heart, I get my heart right, and then, 2) *'Lord, would you have me say something? Would you want me to go and minister to them?'*

3. Add Prayer To All This (Also the Bible way of praying)

Verses 7-12, “Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened to you. For whoever asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who if his son asks bread will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish will be given a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him! Therefore whatever you want

men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.” Now we see the next point here, in these following verses, verses 7 to 12. Now he speaks about prayer. [log onto <http://www.unityinchrist.com/prayer/bibleway.htm> to access Charles Stanley’s excellent sermon about these six verses.] You may read this and it’s possible on the surface to say ‘*Oh well, he’s changing subjects here [and he is, sort of], you know, he’s just been here, and now he’s going that way.*’ And he’s not, because he comes right back to the same thread, the same melody in verse 12. When he speaks of prayer here, I do believe, in this context of what he’s just said, it’s about this issue of judging (and witnessing to your non-believing family and friends). But as he’s speaking of prayer, the basic picture you see there is (in this context), ‘**Ask, seek, knock,**’ be persistent, the Greek tense is ‘**continue to ask, continue to seek, continue to knock,**’ and as you see there, those that do, hey, God loves you, and just as a son or a daughter goes to her dad, says, ‘*Dad, I need some bread,*’ the father loves that child, and he’s not going to give his son or daughter a stone. ‘*Hey dad, I need some fish, I need some food, can you give me some fish?*’, he’s not going to give him a snake, he’s not going to play tricks on him, that’s just evil. But we’re just weak sinners as parents, and yet we know how to love our kids in that way. How much more when I come as a child of God, and I come to the Father and say ‘*Lord, I need your help right now. I really need to know what to do, I need discernment, I need wisdom.*’ [Also, in context with this “ask, seek, knock” is our asking, seeking and knocking on God’s door for him to be calling those whom we’re asking discernment about in regards to our witnessing to them, asking, seeking and knocking for God to open their minds, and then helping us to discern when he has, so we know it’s the right time to witness to them. This is the context of this “ask, seek, knock” set of verses.] ‘*What’s up or down here? And so, lead me Lord, I need wisdom, show me Lord [that it’s time to witness to them]. I want to represent you in the heart and attitude, and in truth...*’ But in the same context, somebody’s got a speck in their eye [or you are praying the Lord call someone you love and want to witness to, but don’t know if they’re in a receptive attitude to receive the Gospel], somebody’s got a challenge. The Lord might have you say something, but man be led in the Spirit, be very discerning, and be prayed-up, man. Be prayed-up, be praying, be praying, praying for the situation, praying for wisdom. It’s so important, as we see in context here, that in these situations we do the right thing. You

remember James, James writes ***‘If anybody lacks wisdom, let him ask God, but he gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.’*** So we pray, ***‘Lord, show me, give me discernment.’*** There is a time, there is a place to admonish and correct [and to witness to others]. ***‘How do I know, what do I do, Lord? First thing, Lord, show me my heart. Secondly, I want to be discerning if you’d have me do this. And thirdly, I’m praying to you for wisdom, because I want to know exactly what to say and not to say.’*** Last thing, we need to be praying verse 12, we must be loving, of course. We must be loving. Right? ***“Verse 12, “Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”*** He gives us the golden rule. You see somebody struggling, you see issues in other people’s lives in other communities, societies, whatever, what do you do? Well, he says here, treat others as you would have them treat you. ***“Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them...”*** That’s interesting, it follows right after the statement of prayer. Clearly he’s continuing the same subject, he’s dealing with an issue here. And so, I need to be loving. And when you go to a brother or sister whose got a speck, they’ve got a challenge, you’ve made your heart right, you’ve been praying, you’ve been working through it, man, loving, loving, Galatians 6:1, go gently, go with love, go with tears, sit down. You know, Christian, non-Christian, whatever the situation, they see the tears, they hear the love, and you’re sitting there saying *‘I love you, and here, I have this to say this.’* ***“Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”*** He’s saying, ***‘Treat people in the same manner that you’d have them treat you.’***

In closing

It is so unfortunate when the Church, greater Body of Christ, there’s a criticalness that’s coming through toward the society. It is so sad in the community when churches are being critical of one another or of the society in a hateful way, it is a terrible misstatement of the love and power of God. And it is so unfortunate when even within a church there’s a critical spirit, and just a harshness that goes on. Man, there is certainly a place we need to be, if we love people we’re going to be truthful and we’re going to at times need to say things. But the ***way*** we do it, there’s a need for admonishment, but I need to go about it the right way, ***“judge not, lest you be judged.”*** I need to go about it correctly, and that starts with a right heart, man.

Sincere self-inspection, so I can see clearly, I've got the beam out so I can help you on your speck. I need to be discerning, I don't want the devil to get me into a trap, where I've gotten into a situation that's only going to make a mess. I want to be led, *'Is this the situation you want me to minister in, Lord?'* I need to be prayerful, man, it needs to be preceded in prayer, God will give wisdom, the wisdom that's needed. We need him, we're finite, he's infinite. And boy we need to be loving, golden rule applies, treating others always the way we'd want to be treated...[condensed from a connective expository sermon on Matthew 7:1-12, given somewhere in New England.]

related links:

Pray the Bible way, covering Matthew 7:7-11, for more specifics on that, see,

<http://www.unityinchrist.com/prayer/bibleway.htm>

My Christian walk has shown me two major sides of the Body of Christ that have been judgmental of each other. Both sides need to come to understand that the other side is composed of genuine Holy Spirit indwelt believers. see,

<http://www.unityinchrist.com/author.htm>

http://www.unityinchrist.com/romans/romans12-14_2.htm

Start of a new denomination, the Calvary Chapel revival:

<http://www.unityinchrist.com/history/smith.htm>