

Lesson 14: Judgment vs. Discernment

Matthew 7:1-6 & 13-20

I. JUDGMENT (1-5)—*negative*

A. The Definition of Judging (Rom 14:10; James 4:11-12)

Self-appointed, self-righteous, critical or condemning judgment of another person, motivated by pride

B. The Audacity of Judging –What Jesus Is Forbidding

1. Judging Hypocritically (Rom 2:2-3)—*not holding yourself to the same standard*

2. Condemning Others (Rom 1:1; James 2:10, 12-13)—*accusing & giving the verdict on someone else*

C. The Necessity of Self-Examination—*the log in your own eye*

1. For Your Own Sake (Psalm 4:4, 139:23-24; 1 Cor 11:28) Your faults *need* your attention.

a. Recognize your own issues. We all have blind spots.

b. Deal with yourself first. You are primarily responsible for you.

2. For the Sake of Ministry (5)

a. Provides Perspective—so you can see clearly enough to help someone else

b. Cultivates Humility—can't effectively minister from a position of pride/superiority

c. Compels Compassion—our own struggle makes us identify with others who struggle

II. **DISCERNMENT** (6, 13-20; Jn 7:24; I Cor 2:14-15)—*positive*

Discernment distinguishes and seeks to understand something; motivated by wisdom, not superiority.

We must discern:

A. **Spiritual Condition** (6; Mat 10:14)—*dogs and pigs*

1. **Attitude/Receptivity to spiritual things**—Be sensitive; if hostile, don't push!
2. **Appropriateness of what you share**—Don't say everything to everyone every time!

B. **Spiritual Truth** (13-14)—*the wide and narrow gates*

God's way is:

1. **Not Easy**—Doing the right thing is often difficult and demanding.
2. **Not Popular**—Don't confuse the will of the majority with the will of God (Coleson).
3. **Not Obvious** (I Cor 2:14)—it cannot be discerned without the Holy Spirit.

C. **False Prophets** (15-20)—*a tree and its fruit*

1. **The Warning** (Acts 20:28-31; 2 Pet 2:1-3; Jude)—They *will* come; don't be naive!
2. **The Disguise** (2 Cor 11:14)—*wolf in sheep's clothing* (angel of light) ; attractive, fit in
3. **The Fruit** (1 Tim 4:16)
 - a. **Evidence of His Character** (1 Tim 3; Titus 1:6-9, 16)—relationships and behavior
 - b. **Results of His Ministry** (1 Tim 5:22; 6:3-5)—discord and upheaval in the church

III. **FINDING THE BALANCE**

A. **Extend Grace to Others.** (empathy)

B. **Search your own soul.** (humility)

C. **Test the Spirits.** (discernment)