



Week 7: Matthew 7:1-12

In Weeks 4–5, we went through Jesus’ teaching on religious rituals (Matt 6:1-18) and handling treasures and worries (Matt 6:19-34), both centered on our heart and our priority: Are we focusing on our self-interest on earth, or are we willing to “seek first his kingdom and his righteousness” (Matt 6:33)?

In the coming two weeks, we will cover Matt 7 which is the last chapter of the Sermon on the Mount. This week’s focus is on **“judging”** and **“asking”**, both illustrating **our interactions and relationship with God**.

It is important to read through “Introduction” and previous weeks’ guides beforehand, as the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5–7) is one coherent sermon on one consistent theme: Christian living is not about behavioral modification but heart transformation through faith in Jesus Christ.

Warm-up question

If a colleague / friend / classmate of yours is not performing up to standard, how would you let him / her know without sounding “judgy”? Share a past experience if any.

Read Matt 7:1–6

The Greek word for **“judge”** (krinō) means deciding one thing over another, or determining the correctness of a matter.

1. Consider Matt 7:1-2 together with James 4:11-12. What is the heart issue of judging others? Are all forms of judgment forbidden?

- Hint: Matt 18:15-17 speaks of the need to point out the fault of a brother or sister, and Eph 4:15 talks about speaking the truth in love. How is that different from what Matt 7:1-2 is forbidding?
- Note: The Sermon on the Mount often stresses the importance of one’s motive in respect of a behavior, because the intention matters more (recalling the application of laws in Matt 5:21-48 and the performance of rituals in Matt 6:1-18).

2. Explain in your own words what Jesus was criticising in Matt 7:3-5 when he used metaphors of “sawdust” and “plank”. In particular, what is the person in Matt 7:3-4 truly concerned about? How can you “take the plank out of your own eye” in practice?

- Hint: Jesus did not prohibit the removal of sawdust *per se*; but removing sawdust from a person’s eye is a delicate procedure, and there is no way that a person with a plank in his eye can do it.

3. The “sacred” and the “pearls” in Matt 7:6 represent the good news of the Kingdom of God, while the “dogs” and “pigs” are people who reject it. What was Jesus’ attitude towards them? How do you reconcile this with the call to spread the gospel?

- Further reading: Matt 10:12-14 and 2 Tim 4:2-5.

4. How can spiritual disciplines and Christian communities help you counteract a judgmental spirit and cultivate a loving spirit towards others?

Read Matt 7:7-12

The Greek verbs for “ask”, “seek” and “knock” are all *imperatives* in Greek which signify commands. The progression from “ask” (present our requests), to “seek” (desire for His will), to “knock” (yearn to enter into His Kingdom despite circumstances) points to an increasing intensity and persistence of seeking and relying on God.

Further note: Matt 7:7-11 mirrors almost completely with Luke 11:9-13, except that Matt 7:11 refers to the “good gifts” given by the Father to us, while Luke 11:13 refers to the “Holy Spirit” given by the Father to us. So the ultimate “good gift” is actually the Holy Spirit, and we are all given the Holy Spirit when we put our faith in Christ (Eph 1:13-14). The best gift we can ever ask for is our salvation through Christ, and for us to be drawn closer to Him (echoing Matt 6:33).

5. Matt 7:7-11 doesn’t mean you will get everything you asked for, so what did Jesus really mean? In light of the Sermon on the Mount that you’ve studied so far (especially Matt 6), what shall we ask / seek / knock? What will we receive in return?

- Hint: Consider Matt 5:3-10, 6:8-13, 6:33.

6. In Matt 7:9-11, Jesus drew an analogy of us granting our child’s wishes and our Heavenly Father granting our wishes. Is it easy or hard for you to view God from this perspective? What are some struggles or challenges in trusting God to “give good gifts” to you?

7. Matt 7:12 serves as an interim conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount. Explain in your own words why Matt 7:12 explains the heart of the Sermon on the Mount.

- Hint: Read the Great Commandment in Matt 22:36-40.