

# OpenTheo

## Judging (Part 2)



### **The Life and Teachings of Christ** - Steve Gregg

In "Judging (Part 2)", Steve Gregg discusses the idea of judging others from a spiritual perspective. While Jesus teaches us to judge righteously, he also warns against judging based on appearances or having a double standard. Gregg emphasizes the importance of having our own spiritual act together before trying to help others who may not welcome correction or appreciate the value of the truth. He highlights the necessity of recognizing that some people may simply not want to be reprovved, and that we should not waste our time trying to convince them.

### **Transcript**

And there needs to be judgment on a spiritual level. You should have discernment or judgment about things you're told that profess to be from God. You're not supposed to believe everything you're told.

Test the spirits. See whether they're of God. There's many false prophets out there.

Don't despise prophesied, but test all things and hold fast only to the ones that are good. There is a judging function in your spiritual life that has to be there. And as far as discerning good from evil, as Hebrews talks about, the man who has his senses exercised to discern good and evil, that's making judgments too.

So there's a lot of positive things the Bible says about judging. And a lot of them are in 1 Corinthians, as I pointed out. He's always advocating, you guys got to judge this, judge that, judge this.

And judging yourselves. I've judged already. Is there not someone who can judge such matters among you? Clearly, judging is a right thing to do in certain ways.

However, Jesus in this context is talking about judging in a way that isn't right. Now, his opening words in Matthew 7, judge not, have a parallel or actually a repeat in John of all places. There's very little in John that overlaps what's in the synoptic gospels.

And what we do find in John that I'm alluding to is not the exact same statement, but it

starts out the same. It's a different statement made on a different occasion. But in John 7, 24, it starts with the same words, judge not, or do not judge.

Another way of arranging those words. But Jesus specifies a particular judgment not to make and a judgment to make in that passage. In John 7, 24, Jesus says, judge not according to appearances, but judge righteous judgment.

Now here we have Jesus starting a statement very much like Matthew 7, 1, judge not. But before he's finished, he says, but judge. And he tells what not to judge and what to judge or rather how not to judge and how to judge.

Don't judge according to appearances. Don't judge on a superficial basis, but judge righteously, judge rightly and according to what is true and correct. Now, of course, in that passage, Jesus doesn't say an awful lot about what the right way to judge is.

He says, judge righteous judgment. One thing we can say, though, even from that passage, is there's a judging that we're commanded to do by Christ. Judge righteous judgment.

And there's judgments that we're commanded not to make. So the question then becomes, when is it right? When is it wrong? What kind of judgments are we supposed to make? And so forth. Now, we certainly are not to judge prematurely things before we have all the evidence.

That's one thing we shouldn't do, although that's not what Jesus is specifically criticizing in Matthew 7. But one of the things that the Bible itself tells us to be aware of doing in terms of judgment is making judgments based on inadequate research, inadequate information. Sometimes we'll hear somebody's side of the story and immediately take their side, and we've never heard the other side. And we take a side on a matter when we've not done enough investigation into the question to know whether we're hearing from the party who's a righteous cause or not.

It says in Proverbs 18, verse 17, Proverbs 18, 17 says, The first one to plead his cause seems right until his neighbor comes and examines him. So the first person you hear can make a good case for what he wants to say, but you better hear his neighbor's side too before you make a decision about it. It's Proverbs 18, 17.

The first one to plead his cause seems right until his neighbor comes and examines him. In the same chapter of Proverbs, a few verses earlier in verse 13, Proverbs 18, 13 says, He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him. So once again, to judge prematurely, to give an answer on a matter before you've really heard the whole story, you end up being ashamed and foolish and have to make those kinds of snap judgments.

Snap judgments, premature judgments, certainly those are wrong to make and foolish to

make. We're not supposed to judge by appearances, as we just mentioned, Jesus said that, but Matthew 7 is talking about something even different than either of those two things, a very different kind of judging. And you can understand it by his use of the word hypocrite in verse 5, Matthew 7, 5, hypocrite.

Now we can see that basically what he's criticizing here is judgment that is hypocritical. He gives an example, for example, in verses 3 through 5 of a person who's finding a speck in his brother's eye, but himself has a beam in his own eye. Now, of course, the speck or the beam in the eye is meant to refer to a fault, a character fault or a fault in behavior, something where a person needs to be confronted and corrected.

Now, it's generous of him to refer to it as a speck in the eye. It suggests the person has a blind spot. Sometimes people do things knowing full well that they're in the wrong thing, but you give a person the benefit of the doubt.

When you see someone doing something wrong, you assume there's something impairing their vision. They've got a blind spot. They probably don't know that what they're doing is wrong.

Give them the benefit of the doubt at the beginning, but this is symbolized by a person saying, let me get this speck out of your eye. In other words, you obviously aren't seeing clearly enough. Let me help you because I can see more clearly than you can.

If I can remove that obstacle to your vision, you'll certainly walk better than you're walking now. You'll be able to just stop having this flaw in your life. But Jesus said there are people who go about with such a mission to remove specks out of people's eyes, that is to correct them about everything they do and make judgments about their behavior and criticize.

But the parties making the judgment have the same problem or worse. And the case he gives is much worse, a speck of sawdust versus a beam of wood. I mean, it's intended to be a laughable illustration because one can literally have a speck in the eye, but there's no way they could have a beam in there.

I mean, it calls to mind mental pictures that are fairly ludicrous, but and intentionally, so I'm sure. But the idea is, of course, that if you had a beam in your eye, your vision would not be a little obstructed. It'd be totally obstructed.

And, you know, you don't do something delicate like eye surgery. Here, let me get this thing out of your eye, this little tiny thing, you know. No, thanks.

You know, if you're a blind eye surgeon, you know, I think I'll look somewhere else for help. But if you've got a beam in your eye, you certainly can't help someone get a speck out of their own. And of course, the underlying message there is if you're hoping to correct people, make judgments about their behavior, make criticisms of them and, you

know, rebuke them or correct them or criticize them for what they're doing, but you're worse off, you're being a hypocrite.

And that's the word he uses. Hypocrite. First, get the beam out of your own eye.

Now, Paul picks up on this, too. This is another kind of judging that is not to be done, namely hypocritical judging, judging on a double standard. That means I judge you by a certain standard, but I wouldn't fare well if you use the same standard against me.

I'm obviously using a different standard to judge myself because, you know, I do the same thing and I don't blame me for it. In Romans chapter 2, would you look there for a moment, please? In Romans chapter 2, Paul is rebuking the Jews for having this very flaw. In fact, I suppose the Jews of Jesus and Paul's day were particularly offenders in this matter because they believed that because they had the law of Moses, they were better than most.

And they looked down their long noses at Gentiles who, you know, didn't do everything right and who didn't have the law. But both Jesus and Paul point out, well, having the law doesn't help you an awful lot if you don't do it. You've got as many flaws as the Gentiles do.

In Romans 2.1, he says, Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge. For in whatever you judge another, you condemn yourself, for you who judge practice the same thing. But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things.

Do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? Now, look further down in the chapter. He says in verse 17, Indeed, you're called a Jew and you rest on the law and make your boast in God and you know his will and you approve of things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, but are and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law. You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? You who say, do not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who have horn idols, do you rob temples? You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law? Now, obviously, those are rhetorical questions.

Paul expects that the answer would at least frequently be yes. They do those things. Some Jews do steal.

Some Jews do commit adultery. Some Jews do rob temples. There was a notable case that Paul knew about only a few years earlier than this.

All the Jews in Rome knew about it because a couple of Jews from Jerusalem had come to

Rome professing to be teachers of Gentile converts to Judaism. And a particular famous lady, Josephus tells a story, a woman who is the wife of a Roman senator, wanted to convert to Judaism. And so these men became her tutors.

And she was very wealthy. And they persuaded her to give a large donation to the temple in Jerusalem. And then they absconded with the money.

And so in a sense, they robbed the temple. And this became public knowledge, so much so that Claudius banished all the Jews from Rome over it. Now, it was a great scandal in Rome.

Every citizen in Rome, when Paul wrote this letter to Rome, knew about this case. And so when he says to the Jews, you say people shouldn't, you abhor idols, but do you rob temples? Now, of course, he doesn't mean does every Jew rob temples, but you Jews, you claim you're better than other people. Are there any Jews who rob temples? That would be a stinging question because there was a recent case in public memory where Jews showed themselves to be not better than Gentiles.

But the point Paul is making is the same one Jesus is making. You think you're better than others, and you judge people for certain behaviors, but you do the same things. And in so doing, you condemn yourselves.

Now, I asked you a long time ago to put your finger in Luke 6. It's probably getting numb there now, maybe cut off circulation. We might have to amputate if it causes you to offend. But we have in Luke chapter 6, the parallel to these verses at the beginning of Matthew 7. And this will make it very clear that the judging that Jesus is forbidding here is judging by a double standard.

In fact, it's clear enough in Matthew 2, but it's even more clear, if anything, in Luke 6, in the parallel to this. Luke 6, 37 and following. Judge not, and you shall not be judged.

Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you'll be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you.

Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will men put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you. And he spoke a parable to them.

Can a blind man lead the blind? Will they not both fall into the ditch? A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfected or perfectly trained will be like his teacher. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, brother, let me remove the speck that is in your eye, when you yourselves do not see the plank that is in your own eye? Hypocrite. First remove the plank from your own eye, then you will see clearly to remove the speck that's in your brother's eye.

Now we can see this very clearly the same passage. But whereas Matthew only has Jesus saying, judge not that you be not judged, for with what judgment you judge, you will be judged. And with the same measure you use, it would measure back to you.

Luke has it much more expanded. He has him saying, judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned.

Forgive, and you'll be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be poured into your bosom.

For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you. Luke's version of it applies it to things besides judging, but including judging. The idea is what? You dish it out, and someone's going to take the same measure and dish it back to you, the same stuff.

Now, by the way, if you look at Matthew 7, Matthew 7, 12 says, therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the law and the prophets. A very famous passage, usually called the golden rule. A couple things you'll observe about that, Matthew 7, 12, the golden rule there.

It's, on the one hand, it's just another way of saying, love your neighbors yourself. What do you like done to yourself? Do that to your neighbor. Love your neighbor the way you love yourself.

And it's interesting that he says about it here in Matthew 7, 12, for this is the law and the prophets, because that's what Jesus also said about love your neighbors yourself. He said, you know, on these, love God and love your neighbors yourself, on these two things hang all the law and the prophets. So he's saying the same thing another way here.

It's the essence of Jesus' teaching is, you know, love your neighbors yourself just means whatever you like done to you, do it to other people. But that's also what he's saying in the judge not passage. How would you like to be judged with this particular standard that you're using? Don't judge by a standard that you wouldn't want to be judged by.

Don't condemn if you don't want to be condemned. Don't be reluctant to give if you would not want people to be reluctant to give to you. Don't be slow to forgive if you would want others to be fast to forgive.

Do to others what you want done to you. That's basically, this is just another way of saying love your neighbors yourself. The only judging he's forbidding here is when you judge someone by a standard that you would not want somebody to use in judging you.

Now, many times people will not be as eager to be judged as you might be eager to be judged. There might be a time when you'd like to be, you know, you love the truth and you're humble and you don't mind being corrected. Not everyone wants to be corrected.

Not everyone's that humble, but there's still a place to go into and to fix things in people's lives when they're doing the wrong thing. That's what Jesus said in the passage here in Matthew 7, 5. First, remove the plank from your own eye and then you'll see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother's eye. Now, remember removing the speck from your brother's eye is his way of talking about judging someone and correcting someone.

He doesn't say you should never do that. He just says you should never do that if you yourself are blind. You should never do that if you have a beam in your eye.

Now, if you get that out of your eye, that's another story. Then you can help your brother out. The idea is that going and correcting your brother and, you know, judging his mistakes for him and so forth and correcting him, that is a good thing to do, but don't do it if you can't stand the heat yourself.

If the searchlight you're putting on him would turn back on you, how good would you look? You might be worse than he is in that respect. Now, on the other hand, if you're not, if you've got that beam out of your own eye, if you've got your own act together, then you can see clearly enough to go and help him out of his problems. But it's clear that if you're seeing a fault in somebody else, one of the possibilities is you're so irritated about it because you have the same fault in your own self, and many times that's the case, and you're not objective.

You're convicted about the same thing in you, and that conviction makes you critical of that kind of behavior. And, you know, once you get over it yourself, you can be a little more objective. When you get yourself out from under that conviction of personal guilt that you have, then you can be more dispassionate.

You can be more objective and you can see more clearly to help your brother get the speck out of his eye. Now, the point here is, of course, whatever measure you use will be measured back to you. How would you like to be judged? Well, it goes, you know, something like this, you know, am I going to judge people by the way they look? Well, how would I like it if people judged me by the way I look? I might not do too well.

You know, in fact, I know for a fact there are some people who judge me about the way I look, and that's, you know, unavoidable, no matter what I look like. But I don't prefer that they do. It'd be nice if they didn't, and since I'd prefer that people didn't do that, I shouldn't do that to them.

Would I wish for people to judge me on the basis of the mistakes I make as opposed to things I consciously and deliberately do wrong? Would I wish for people to give me the benefit of the doubt, for instance, if they see me doing the wrong thing and figure that maybe I'm, maybe I got a blind spot here? Well, then I better extend the same mercy in judging others. Forgive and you'll be forgiven. Condemn not and you'll not be

condemned.

There is, in a sense, a teaching here about the way you relate to other people's faults, and the way you show mercy, in other words, to them. This is an expanding on the beatitude, the blessing of the merciful. They shall obtain mercy.

You judge mercifully if you want to be judged mercifully. Now, if you're perfect, then you can hold up a strict standard to people. If you've got all the beams out of your eyes, then you can go after all the specks in other people's eyes.

But if you are perfect, you'll also be gentle. I mean, Paul says in Galatians 6.1, Brethren, if any of you are overcome in a fault, if you see a brother overtaken in a fault, you who are spiritual, restore such one in the spirit of meekness, considering yourself, lest you also be tempted. You should go, and if you're spiritual, that is, if you've got the beams out of your eye and you're walking in the spirit and so forth, then you should be able to go and restore a person who is in error.

But you do it in the spirit of meekness, that's an aspect of spirituality, because the fruit of the spirit is meekness. And you go in the spirit of meekness, considering yourself. If you're really spiritual, you're not proud, you're humble.

You know your own weakness. You know your own propensity to sin. And you also go to the person out of love, not out of irritation, because you know that it's bad for that person to go uncorrected.

It's not good for him. And while you may be spiritual enough to endure his irritating behavior or wrong behavior, it's not good for him. So you go out of love for them, realizing that they're no worse than you.

If you're more spiritual, of course, that's something God has blessed you with. But the point being, if you don't have the beams in your eye, if you're spiritual, if you can go in meekness and so forth, then you are to do it. Go help remove that speck from your brother's eye, because that's what the regulations of 6.1 indicate.

But just realize that whatever you criticize him on the basis of, that same ladle that you're dishing it out with can be put into the other guy's hand and ladle it back to you. The same yardstick that you're measuring his behavior with is going to be set up against you. And if you can't stand to be judged by that, then don't be judging others by that.

That's what Paul says when he expands on this. That's what the general teaching here is. So what he's forbidding here is not all judgments.

Far from it. He's talking about hypocritical judgment, where you'll judge somebody by a certain standard, but you yourself would not do well if you're judged by the same standard. It's judging with a double standard.



Jesus pointed out this hypocrisy on the part of the Pharisees on many occasions when they criticized his disciples for eating with unwashed hands in Matthew chapter 12 in the Parallels. Jesus said, well, how come you don't judge David for doing something similar when he ate the showbread? That wasn't any more lawful than eating with unwashed hands is. How come you judge one, you don't judge the other? You judge my disciple because you don't like him, but you don't judge your hero because he's your hero.

But he did essentially the same kind of thing, did he not? And he said, if you had gone and learned what this means, I'll have mercy not sacrifice, you would have not condemned the guiltless. Now you misjudged him. You've been by a double standard.

And frequently Jesus pointed out the hypocrisy of the wrong judgments that Pharisees made by pointing out that they allow similar things in other circumstances when it's their friends or their heroes doing it. When Jesus healed on the Sabbath, he said, well, which of you would not take your ox out and water it on the Sabbath day? Or which of you wouldn't pull a lamb out of a ditch on the Sabbath day? Well, you do that. Why wouldn't you, you know, why do you criticize somebody who does this on the Sabbath day? Something even better than that.

Anyway, the idea is to show that people often, carnal people at least, or sinful people often judge, but they judge with a double standard. Now, if I tell somebody on the street that his homosexuality is wrong and that it's not pleasing to God, I should not be very critical of him if I'm a closet homosexual myself. I might still tell him it's wrong, but I should be very honest and say, well, but I've got problems the same way and I'm fighting it too, but we got to lick this thing together.

But maybe we shouldn't do it together, but we both got to lick the same problem. Fact of the matter is, fact of the matter is, I'm not a homosexual and I, you know, and I, you know, if I say, listen, homosexuality is an abomination to God and you got to stop. If someone says, judge not that you be not judged, they're not paying attention to what Jesus is saying here.

I don't have a beam in my eye in that respect. I may have some others and you're welcome to point them out to me if you see them. But where I can see clearly, because I don't have guilty conscience in myself on the same issue and I can objectively see the issue for what it is without self-justification or self-condemnation, but just objectively and dispassionately view the thing and judge it, then I should do so.

Now, as I pointed out a moment ago, many things in the remainder of this chapter in Matthew 7 require the making of judgments. In fact, maybe that's why Jesus gave this opening verses. He's asking the disciples to start making some judgments, but he wants them to know what not to do in making judgments.

He says, very next thing in verse 6, do not give what is holy to dogs, nor cast your pearls

before a swine, lest they trample them under their feet and turn and tear you in pieces. Now, it's all figurative, of course, although you could, you could take that literally. You don't take the holy bread, you know, from the showbread table and feed it to dogs.

You don't take something of value but which a pig can't recognize the value of and give it to the pig. The pig would just trample on it like does everything else and show no appreciation whatsoever. But of course, beyond the literal meaning of these words, what does it mean? What's he talking about in terms of behavior? What's the lesson here? Well, obviously, what Jesus is talking about is that some people are analogous to swine and to dogs with reference to their ability to appreciate holy things.

Not in every respect, of course. Even the worst person is made in the image of God and is therefore better than a dog or a pig in that respect. But in some respects, they are like dogs and pigs in that they cannot appreciate and are not entitled to spiritual and holy things.

They simply have no appreciation for them. They don't care for them. They don't value them.

And therefore, you shouldn't give them to them. Now, this can be understood in a variety of applications. One of the applications that is probably the very closest is found in Proverbs chapter 9. I'd like to show you some others, though, as well.

But in Proverbs chapter 9, we have what would appear to be the same lesson, only in slightly different words. Proverbs 9, verses 7 and 8 says, He who reproves a scoffer gets shame for himself, and he who rebukes a wicked man gets himself a blemish. Do not reprove a scoffer, lest he hate you.

Rebuke a wise man, and he will love you. Now, this makes requires that you distinguish between who's a wise man and who's what the Proverbs calls a scoffer or a fool, the opposite of a wise man. It means you make a judgment of certain parties.

And you make this judgment when it comes to reproving, when it comes to correcting, when it comes in others to judging their behavior and telling them what the truth is and what's right and what they're doing wrong. And you don't reprove a person who cannot appreciate reproof because you'll just incur his hatred. Isn't that what Jesus said? You don't cast pearls before swine.

They'll trample on them and come after you. That's the same idea. There's certain persons who simply do not want to be reprovved.

Don't waste your time on them. Now, sometimes you don't know who they are until you reprove them, but you can soon find out. And it's as I've said to you all along this year, and it's one of my slogans, that there's only two kinds of people, the people who love the truth more than anything else and people who love something else more.

And the ones who love the truth are the ones who are God's people. They become Christians. And even if they haven't become Christians yet, they will.

If a person loves truth more than all things, God will certainly lead him to the truth. But the persons that the Bible says God's wrath blazes hot against are those who suppress the truth in their unrighteousness, those who have not received the love of the truth. So he sends them strong delusions and so forth.

The love of the truth is the issue. Now, if you love the truth, whether you're converted yet or not, you're going to appreciate anyone who tells you the truth, even if it's an unflattering truth. Even if the truth is you're going the wrong way and doing the wrong thing.

Still, you'll appreciate the fact that it's the truth and it's the truth you needed to know. That's why it says in Proverbs 9, 8, rebuke a wise man and he'll love you. A wise man will love truth.

It may sting. Rebukes always sting. Paul had to rebuke Peter publicly.

That must have really hurt Peter's pride. But Peter showed no anger toward Paul or no malice toward him. In fact, he seemed to receive it, probably with a great deal of humiliation.

But the fact is a wise man will receive rebuke and will love you for it. But the fool is the man who doesn't love truth so much as he loves something else. He loves his sin.

He loves his pride. He loves something else. And he doesn't like to be told that he's doing the wrong thing.

And not only does he not like it, he's not the least bit interested in the truth. He wants to live in darkness. And therefore, if you try to pursue him with the truth, he may in fact come at you.

And you may find you're giving your pearls to swine. And the pearls are not appreciated. Swine can't receive it, can't appreciate it.

And therefore, you're wasting your time. Now, with reference to evangelism, it would seem that this would mean that if you sense when you're speaking to somebody that they just want to argue, they just want to attack, they just have, I mean, they may enjoy sparring with you as a Christian opponent, but they don't care about truth. And if you had proved your case beyond a shadow of a doubt, they'd walk away feeling as if they'd lost the argument.

They couldn't care less about your point, because they don't care about the truth. They just like to argue or they like to resist. And I'd say it's not too hard to discern when you're

talking to somebody like that after a short time.

And I think what that applies to that situation, that you don't give that which is holy to dogs. You don't catch a crow for swine. Now, as far as other applications of the same idea, I was reminded when I read this today of Isaiah 39, where Hezekiah showed all of his treasures to the Babylonians.

In Isaiah chapter 39, verses 2 through 6, it says Hezekiah was pleased with them when the Babylonians, I should say, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he had heard that he'd been sick and had recovered. And Hezekiah was pleased with them and showed them the house of his treasures, the silver and gold, the spices and precious ointments and all his armory, all that was found among his treasures. There was nothing in his house or in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them.

Then Isaiah the prophet went to the king Hezekiah and said to him, what did these men say? And from where did they come to you? And Hezekiah said, they came to me from the far country, from Babylon. And Isaiah said, what have they seen in your house? So Hezekiah answered, they've seen all that is in my house. There is nothing among my treasures that I have not shown them.

Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, hear the word of the Lord of hosts. Behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house and what your fathers have accumulated until this day shall be carried to Babylon. Nothing should be left, says the Lord.

You know, there's some things that a man of discretion will not reveal to parties whose character is yet untested, uncertain. You get gifts from someone, you think, oh, they're on your side. The fact of the matter is the guys came to spy out the treasures and, and seeing it all made them lust after them.

And eventually the Babylonians came back and took them. Not in Hezekiah's day though, but a few generations later. But the point is that's what Isaiah is saying.

He showed them too much. As Christians, there's things that we should not disclose to unbelievers, I think. It's hard sometimes to know what they are, but there are strategies of the kingdom of God, which are not best disclosed to persons who are going to be enemies.

That's not as obvious today here as it is in countries where Christianity is persecuted outright, but it's nonetheless always the case that disclosing everything that you do to people who can't appreciate it and are simply enemies can result in their turning on you. This is particularly true, I mean, as a parent, this comes to my mind as a first example, you know, when it comes to child discipline. Well, you may talk very freely and rightly about the need to discipline children and so forth because the Bible says it's right to do so.

But the world, they don't appreciate discipline. They don't see that as a pearl or as a holy thing. They see it as something that they could in fact use against you.

And there are Christians who've had their kids taken from them or threatened to have them taken from them because someone reported them as disciplining their children. It's a sad thing. If we lived in a world where everyone loved God and loved the truth, we could just speak our whole minds.

Proverbs says the fool speaks his whole mind. The wise man holds it in till afterwards. And there's times when you just don't speak everything you know, just because you have to consider your audience.

You know, Jesus, not to suggest at all that his disciples were swine, yet Jesus was very sensitive to who he was speaking about and how much he told them. In John chapter 16, he said to his disciples, I have many other things to tell you, but you're not yet ready to bear them. You're not yet able to bear them.

But he did indicate when the Holy Spirit comes, the Holy Spirit will fill them in on the things that he hasn't, that they're not ready for yet. And while again, as I said, it's not suggesting that they are swine, it is suggesting that Jesus was aware of how much they could appreciate of the things he'd like to tell them. And he didn't tell them the things that they couldn't handle or the things that that would do them no good to know.

He was reticent to speak more than was, than they could receive and could gain from. I'm talking about John chapter 16. I think that's, I think it's verse 13.

No, 12. I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when he, the spirit of truth comes, he'll guide you into all truth.

Jesus in telling his parables to the multitudes did so because he said unto them, it's not given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. The disciples said, Lord, why do you speak to those people in parables that you speak plainly thus? Well, they're not, they're not given the privilege of knowing the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. You are.

Why? The disciples could be trusted. The multitudes were untested. He wasn't going to give away all his strategies to a group of people that he didn't know their character, didn't know how they'd respond.

Basically what Jesus is arguing for here, I think in Matthew 7, 6 is the need for discretion, the need not to be a blabbermouth and just speak your whole mind in every, in every situation where you find yourself, but to realize that there are persons who will take truth, even good things that you have, even holy things that you have, and they will not in any sense recognize them for the wonderful things they are and will attack you for them, will, you know, accuse you of wrong, will, will, will turn on you. And that there is a

need for discretion. You need to, Jesus was of course having to let his disciples know something they didn't previously know, and that is that not all the Jews were God's people.

Some of them were unclean, like dogs and swine, which are unclean animals. Now these men that he was talking to were clean, they were disciples of his, but they were going to be preaching and ministering and living among relatives and countrymen and even religious leaders in their own faith, who would not be on their side, who would have the nature of dogs or swine. Paul himself in Philippians says, beware of dogs, meaning Jews, Judaizers, calling them dogs.

It's ironic because the Jews called Gentiles dogs. Paul in Philippians 3 spoke of the Judaizers as dogs. But the thing is here, these people had to be warned, you know, you're now representatives of the kingdom of God, you're entrusted with the gospel of the kingdom, but realize there's going to be certain parties who are going to resist and persecute you for it, and there's certain things you're just going to have to watch yourself and hold your tongue in certain contexts and settings, because you'll be giving away too much of what's valuable to people who will not value it and who will in fact attack it and use it against you.

Now the image of throwing pearls before swine has sort of an analog, I think, in the Old Testament on a slightly different lesson, but perhaps vaguely related to this. In Proverbs 11, I realize the time is running a little late, we started a little late, I apologize, we'll just go a few minutes more. In Proverbs 11, 22, it says, as a ring of gold in a swine's snout, so is a lovely woman who lacks discretion.

Now how is it that a lovely woman, that is a beautiful woman, who lacks discretion? Now let me just clarify, discretion in the Proverbs is used synonymously with things like wisdom and prudence. These are all words that the Proverbs frequently make reference to, and the words, although when we think of wisdom, we think of someone who's real smart. Discretion, prudence, wisdom in the Proverbs usually speak of virtue.

Being smart enough to know to do the right thing is essentially what's underlying the idea. Fools, they don't know, you know, anything morally and they do stupid, terrible, wicked things, but wise people don't do those things. The person who's wise or prudent or just has discretion in the is a virtuous person.

So a woman who's beautiful outwardly but not a virtuous person is compared to a jewel of gold in the pig of a snout, the snout of a pig. Here I have a pig in my snout here, but they have, the imagery is very graphic, but the idea is, you know, women wear ornaments, because, you know, ornaments are supposed to make them pretty, I think. But you wouldn't put an ornament on a pig, because even if the ornament is a lovely ornament, the pig's natural repulsiveness somewhat overwhelms the effect, you know.

I mean, that's the idea. You don't put a jewel of gold in a pig's nose. A jewel of gold is for looks, and a pig looks so repulsive that a jewel of gold is not going to fix it.

It's not going to counterbalance it. You know, you're wasting your gold, you're wasting your jewels, because the pig is a repulsive animal. And, you know, a jewel of gold may be, you know, a redeeming quality to its looks, but not measurable, you know, negligible improvement.

And what he's saying is that a woman without discretion is repulsive, regardless if she's beautiful. Her outward beauty is no compensation for her inward repulsiveness. Her lack of discretion is like being a swine.

The jewel of gold in the swine's snout is like the outward beauty of the beautiful woman who lacks discretion. But the idea is, while many men who don't have any spiritual discernment value women on the basis of their outward look, the idea here is that if a woman, even if she's very beautiful, is lacking in virtue, well, then, you know, if you're enamored with her looks, you might as well be enamored with a jewel of gold when it's in the nose of a pig, you know. Now, that is a theme taken up in the New Testament.

The only reason I connect it to what Jesus said is not because I think it's teaching the same lesson, but because it likewise talks about valuable things in connection with pigs. I mean, obviously, a pig would not have more grace if you gave it a jewel of gold. It wouldn't even know what it was, you know, just like it doesn't know what a pearl is.

But I'm just moving from that proverb to a New Testament counterpart to it in 1 Peter chapter 3. 1 Peter chapter 3, beginning of verse 3, speaking to Christian women, it says, do not let your beauty be that outward adorning or arranging the hair, wearing of gold or putting on a fine apparel, but let it be the hidden person of the heart. There's virtue, discretion. The thing that Solomon said, a woman without it, though she is outwardly beautiful, if she lacks this inward quality, she might as well be a pig with a gold ring in her nose.

Let it be the hidden person of the heart with the incorruptible ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. So here, again, the same idea. A beautiful one without discretion doesn't have anything to be proud about, really.

It's the inner person of the heart. It's the ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit, not outward beauty that makes a woman a thing of value, a person of value. Now, in 2 Peter, we turn the heat off the women and look at men and people in general in this respect.

Here, another proverb of the Old Testament is quoted, and this is a little more closely connected, perhaps, with Jesus' statement about casting pearls before swine. He said in 2 Peter 2.20, For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and

overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning, for it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, not to have ever heard those pearls, than having known it to turn from the holy commandment, trampling those pearls, as Jesus said they would do, delivered to them. It has happened to them according to the true proverb, a dog returns to his own vomit, and a sow, or a pig, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.

Now, verse 22 there quotes two proverbs. One of them is from the Bible. A dog returns to his own vomit.

That's from Proverbs 26.11. The other statement, a sow, having been washed, returns to her wallowing in the mire, is not in italics. It's not in the Bible. It's not an Old Testament proverb, but it no doubt was the same, very much like the one about the dog returning to vomit.

The idea is, the pig that you wash, why wash it? Just let it run, even if you wash it, it'll go jump in the mud puddle again. It won't stay clean, because when you clean it up on the outside, that doesn't change its nature. It's still a pig by nature.

It's still a repulsive animal. You may clean it up and put a tuxedo on it, and it may in some sense be more presentable, but in its heart, it's still a pig. And if you let it have its way, it'll soon end up as dirty as it was before you washed it.

Now, he's saying, these people who fall away are like that. They've cleaned up their act outwardly, but inwardly, they were unchanged. They're still unclean inwardly.

They weren't truly converted, it would appear. They were really pigs who were just clean on the outside, but the fact that they go back and get entangled in the world again suggests that they were pigs all along. By the way, this is a very good argument for Calvinism, which I don't hold to in general, but this is a passage that works well with Calvinism.

I don't think it only goes well with Calvinism, but it's a good one in this case, because the particular people Peter's talking about appeared to be saved, but really weren't converted. And the fact that they fell away was the proof that they weren't converted. They were just like pigs cleaned up.

Now, what that got to do with casting pearls before pigs? Well, a great deal. What do you think it was that cleaned them up? What do you think these people did to clean up? It was the knowledge of Jesus. It was the pearls of the gospel.

Someone had presented these pearls to them, and they were really pigs. And they seemed to receive them initially, but soon turned from them and went back to their worldly ways. And as it turned out, they were pigs after all.



And he says, it would have been better for them not to have known, verse 21, it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than having known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. Don't give what is holy to dogs or pearls to swine. This is a holy commandment they've received, but they turn from it, they trample upon it, they go back to the mud puddle, and they would have been better off not to have ever had those pearls cast before them in the first place.

That's what it said there. Now, does this mean we shouldn't evangelize indiscriminately? Well, I think we must. We must proclaim from the housetops.

But we have to realize that we won't always discern who's a pig and who isn't. In some cases, even pigs, people who are like pigs, will in some measure appear to receive the pearls and won't immediately trample them underfoot. But we can't help that.

It's like the wheat and the tares, or it's like the sower, some seed falls on the hard ground, other doesn't. You can't help the fact that some of the seed, when you scatter it abroad, reaches people who are unworthy of it. But of course, what Jesus is saying, if you recognize someone to be such a person, such a person whose heart is not open to the truth, a person who just wants to argue or even criticize or even attack Christianity, don't give them any extra ammunition.

Just go find someone else who wants the truth and don't waste your time casting such holy things to dogs and pearls before swine. Interesting that although Peter is not quoting Jesus, he speaks both of dogs and swine. Again, the same two things Jesus spoke of, two unclean animals would do.

These people are like dogs who return their vomit, like pigs who go back to the mud. Jesus said don't give holy things to dogs and pearls to swine. The idea being that these are by nature inwardly unclean and cleaning them up or giving them that which is holy simply will not change their nature.

And the essential difference in the nature of a pig person and a non-pig person is the question of whether they have a craving for the truth, whether they will respond to truth or not. If you find that they are disrespectful of truth as you tell them, on a lower level, don't entrust them with more. They'll just twist and follow more.

Now we didn't comment on verses 8 through 11. We'll have to do that next time along with the rest of the chapter. So we'll take the rest of the chapter next time.

Hopefully I think we can get through it all.