

Kingdom Culture

sermon on the mount series

November Reflections & Questions

Matthew 7

The format of this study guide is different, in that it has cut Matthew 7 into sections and asks a couple of questions to discuss or reflect upon for each. It does not follow the usual weekly blocks. Just go through these sections, wandering through them at your own pace over the coming days and weeks.

7 “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. 2 For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

True story: I was trying to evangelise someone in a Manly outdoor carpark many ago when I was as a young Christian I insensitively “Bible bashing him” he kept saying Matthew 7:1 – just the reference not the quote. He eventually turned his back and walk away.

Isn't all evangelism judging someone for where they are at?

Is there a difference between judgement and judging?

Discuss: A pious Christian at a youth group once said “I’m not judging, I’m just a “Fruit Inspector”

3 “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? 4 How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

How do you react when someone “who has issues of their own” starts harping on one of your faults?

Can you think of examples where the Christian Church has “majored on the minor and minored on the major”?

Are there any current issues that fit this category?

6 “Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

How can you know when its safe to share personal issues with someone, and not risk them throwing back in your face or judging you?

Have you ever had someone breach your confidentiality? How did that make you feel?

Without mentioning the issue - Has there been a time when you have overshared? What went through your mind when you realised you had done so?



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Ask, Seek, Knock

7 “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

How would you answer Ben Bittertwist who says “Well this just shows that prayer doesn’t work – So many times I have asked of God, knocked on his door, wanted answers and begged for situations to resolve – the result – nothing; zip; zero. I have given up on prayer, and for that matter God also”?

9 “Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? 11 If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! 12 So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

What do you think might be meant by ‘good gifts’?

Read Hebrews 12:9-11 - what contrast is made there about human and divine fathering?

How does the above passage link with Matthew 6:33-34?



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The Narrow & Wide Gates

13 “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. 14 But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

Discuss “Christians have been, are, and will always be a minority. They should never expect society to see or do things their way”.

Are Christians in politics wasting their breath?

Luke 18:8 Says in part “However when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?” Some people believe (Postmillennialism) that there will be a global turning toward God before Jesus returns. Is this just fanciful thinking?

Discuss: The words “broad, many and destruction” leave me with a sense of sadness and pessimism as I look at all those around me who are heading to hell and don’t know it.



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True & False Prophets

15 “Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. 16 By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? 17 Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

How do we grapple with the issue of “taking people at face value” and knowing that some people are wolves in sheep’s clothing?

Read Galatians 5:19-23

List three acts of the flesh and three fruits of the Spirit that particularly stand out to you in these current days. What examples do you see of these?

True & False Disciples

21 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ 23 Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’

In what way is this passage related to the previous five verses?

How can someone perform acts of ministry "in Jesus name" and still never really know him?

What motives might a person have to do great Christian deeds if their motivation is not Jesus?



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The Wise & Foolish Builders

24 “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

Some Christians emphasise that teachers and preachers should preach and teach in order that people will hear the word of God. How is this statement both true and inadequate?

Look up James 1:22. How can a person deceive themselves?

An often quoted is a passage at the end of Mattews Gospel Ch 28 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

What does Jesus say about the purpose of teaching here, and how does this link back to the two builders in Jesus’ parable?

28 When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, 29 because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

Discuss: what do you admire most about Jesus as a teacher?