

Informal Bible Study

Discussion Guide for the Gospel of Matthew

Chapter 7

Overview

Chapter 7 of the Gospel of Matthew presents the third and final installment of the Sermon on the Mount, preached by Jesus to His disciples.

In chapter 7, our Lord talks about several subjects. At first, they seem not to be very connected to one another. But as we live with the text, you start to see connections.

In fact, you start to realize that you are on a **journey** with Jesus. There are signs pointing you in the right direction. There are obstacles and dangers along the way too. His disciples faced them in that day, and we will face them in ours. And Jesus our guide gives us vital instructions that we'll need to learn well and put into practice if we want to reach our destination with a grand entrance. Can you discover from the text what the destination is?

Jesus gives seven major instructions for our journey in Matthew chapter 7:

1. **Do not judge.** Along with a memorable illustration! (7:1-4)
2. **Don't feed the wild animals!** That would be the dogs and swine (pigs). (7:5)
3. **Ask, seek, and knock.** Is Jesus merely repeating, or is there something else here too? (7:7-11)
4. **Treat people the same way you want them to treat you.** A flash card on the Law and the Prophets (7:12)
5. **Enter through the narrow gate that leads to the narrow way.** To get to- what? (7:13-14)
6. **Beware of the false prophets.** Don't let the splash fool you; look for the fruit. (7:15-23).
7. **Hear My (Christ's) words, and ACT on them.** That will be like - what? (7:24-27)

Big Picture Questions

1. Who is our Lord Jesus Christ addressing when He gives the Sermon on the Mount? If you are stuck, go back to chapter 5 verses 1-2. How does knowing the audience help you interpret passages that are more difficult to understand? Try interpreting Mat 7:13-14 with this in mind.

2. Read the entire chapter. Write down each of the verses that tell the disciples to be on the lookout to **discern** the difference between the good and the bad.

3. Make a list of the **obstacles and dangers** that Jesus tells us about in chapter 7 so we will be on the lookout for them as we take this journey.

4. Make a list of **guideposts** we need to follow in order to complete this journey safe and sound.

Questions, section by section

Verses 1-6

1. Read **Luke 18:9-14** and discuss ways that this parable illustrates what Jesus is teaching in Matthew 7:1-5.

2. Verse 6 is a bit of a puzzler. One thing that helps to get what it is saying is to learn what else the New Testament has to say about **dogs and pigs (swine)**. Check these verses and report on what you find: **Proverbs 26:11; Matthew 15:26-27; Luke 8:30-33; Luke 15:14-16; Philippians 3:2; 2 Peter 2:22; Revelation 22:15)**

3. What do dogs and pigs have in common?

4. Jesus tells us in verse 6 why we shouldn't feed the wild animals? What is the reason?

5. Read Matthew 10:14; Acts 13:44-51; and Acts 18:5-6. What caused disciples to stop preaching the gospel to a certain audience? Who did they turn to next to continue their witness?

6. Has God ever brought home the truth of what Jesus is saying in verses 1 -5 to you in a very personal way? What was that lesson like for you?

Verses 7-12

1. In verses 7 and 8, the disciples are told to ask, seek, and knock. What do these three words have **in common**? How are they **different** from one another? Is Jesus simply repeating the same command three times, or is there more to it?

2. How would your prayer life change if you were convinced that what we have here is ask, seek and knock in verses 7 and 8 is a **sequence** and not a repetition?
3. Can you see any **connection** between verse 6 (dogs, pigs, holy things and pearls) and verses 7 and 8 (ask, seek, knock)? Explain that.
4. Jesus told two parables that are found in Luke's Gospel which illustrate the principle that Jesus is teaching here in Matthew 7:7-8. Please read them; they are found in **Luke 11:5-13** and **Luke 18:1-6**. What is the lesson that both these parables teach? Did you notice anything new or noteworthy in these readings in Luke that sheds new light on our passage here in Matthew 7?
5. What kinds of things does God hope we will ask Him for? Use the context of chapter 7 and the other passages we have been to so far to guide your answer here. Like maybe Luke 11:13?!
6. Jesus talks about a loaf and a stone, and a fish and a snake. Discuss the similarities and differences between a loaf of bread and a stone. Ditto for a fish and a snake. What is Jesus teaching us about God here?
7. What is **the big story here** about **prayer** that Jesus hopes we will take away from this teaching?
8. Jesus has talked a lot about prayer in chapters 6 and 7. What has meant the most to you? Has it changed your prayer life in any way? How?

Verses 13-29

1. One way to examine this section is to notice **the pairs**. List all the pairs you can find in verses 13-29 (such as narrow gate/wide gate...).
2. In preparing for this week, I read some commentaries and study guides. One of them paraphrased verses 13-14 as follows: “All roads do not lead to heaven.” That is certainly a true statement. But is that what Jesus is saying here? What does Jesus say the narrow road leads to?
3. Let’s use what we have already learned in chapter 7 to help us in obeying verses 13-14. In particular, how does verse 7 help us to find the narrow way?
4. In **John 14:6**, Jesus is instructing his disciples at the end of his public ministry. He mentions three things. What are those three things? What does He say about them? How do they relate to Matthew 7? How does John 14:6 complete the picture for Matthew 7? Where should the eyes of the heart always be pinned to as we continue on our journey? Hint: Hebrews 12:1-3!
5. Compare Matthew 7:13-14 to **Romans 5:20-21; Romans 6:2-4, 6:20-23; Romans 8:1-2, 6, 11-14**. How does the book of Romans transform how we look at Matthew 7:13-14?
6. With regard to Matthew 7:15-20, let’s take a look at the kinds of **false prophets or false teachers** we find in the New Testament by looking at the following passages: Matthew 24:24; 2 Corinthians 11:4-15; 2 Peter 1:1-2; 1 John 2:22. Write down what you observe. What kinds of **false messages** have these false teachers and prophets proclaimed?

7. Read Matthew 12:33-37 where Jesus speaks directly to some false teachers. What is the good and bad fruit that Jesus is concerned about with them? Now return to Matthew 7 and look at verses 21-23. What is the **good fruit and bad fruit** here that we can observe?

8. In verse 21-23, how is it possible to prophesy, cast out demons and perform miracles in Jesus' name and yet not enter the Kingdom of Heaven? Suggestion: check out what we learned earlier (in questions 6 and 7). See also 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12. In light of this, what should we pay attention to when we are examining prophets and teachers?

9. Have you run into any false teachers lately? What was that like? How might you handle the situation more effectively next time because of what Jesus has taught you here in chapter 7?

10. In verses 24-27, Jesus issues his final and most urgent command of His sermon. What is it? Notice that He tells us to do two things. What are they? What is the trap that many people fall into? For more on this, read John 15:14 and James 1:22-25.

Wrapping things up

OK, we are being called back to run the race. You can take one flash card with three statements that will act as your summary to all that Jesus has taught us in the Sermon on the Mount in chapters 5, 6, and 7 of the Gospel of Matthew. What will be on your flash card?