

## Handout 1: Matthew Lesson 12

Matthew 6:19-34 Jesus is concerned with the Christian disciple's public life, addressing issues concerning material possessions, food and drink, clothing, and worldly ambition. He addresses these issues by contrasting the choice between:

The two treasures (6:19-21)	Earthly possessions: Corruptible, insecure	Heavenly treasures: Eternal, secure
The two eye conditions (6:21-23)	Blindness: Darkness to the body	Sight: A light to the body
The two masters (6:24)	The World: The false, temporary master	God: The true, good, eternal master
The two life goals (6:25-34)	Earthly ambition	Godly ambition
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Jesus' emphasis on relationships is the connecting thread that runs through chapter 7:

1. Matthew 7:1-5: to our brothers and sisters in the faith community in whom we may discern a "splinter," of sin and to whom we have a responsibility to help and not to judge unless we are innocent of the same sin.
2. Matthew 7:6: to a group of people designated as "dogs" and "pigs" who in their animal nature refuse a share in the Kingdom.
3. Matthew 7:7-11: to our heavenly Father to whom we are commanded to pray in confidence.
4. Matthew 7:12: to everyone in general with the "golden rule" as the guide in our attitude and behavior towards them.
5. Matthew 7:13-14: in our relationship with our fellow pilgrims who in this earthly exile enter with us through the Narrow Gate and walk the more difficult and less traveled Narrow Path to heaven.
6. Matthew 7:15-20: in our encounter with false prophets who we are to recognize and avoid.
7. Matthew 7:21-27: in our relationship with Jesus as our Lord and Savior. It is to His teaching that we are commanded to faithfully commit ourselves and to unswervingly obey.

In 7:1-5 Jesus forbids two actions and encourages a third in how Christians act and react to other Christians.

1. The Christian shall not judge sin in someone if he/she is guilty of that same sin in his/her own life (7:1, 5).
2. The Christian shall not be a hypocrite who pretends to be holy while living with unconfessed sin in his/her own life; such a person will receive a harsher judgment themselves because they are fully aware of the sin (7:5).
3. The Christian shall be a loving and concerned guide to brothers/sisters in the Christian family, in helping them avoid sin and to live righteously (7:3, 4 & 5).

Four ways in which we cooperate in another person's sins:

1. When we participate directly and voluntarily in another person's sin.
2. When we advise or approve or praise another person's sins.
3. When we protect the sin by not disclosing or hindering the person from committing the sin when our action to prevent the sin could make a difference.
4. When we protect someone who has committed an evil act and prevent them from being brought to justice.

## Handout 2: Matthew Lesson 12

In Matthew 7:7-8 Jesus gives three direct commands and three promises if one follows these commands in connection to how we should pray.

COMMAND:	PROMISE:
Ask	<i>everyone who asks receives</i>
Seek	<i>the one who seeks finds</i>
Knock	<i>to the one who knocks, the door will be opened</i>

Jesus illustrates His promise to answer prayer in a parable of a child coming to a father with a request (Mt 7:9-11). The fish is a smooth, scaleless fish called a *barbut* that is found in the Sea of Galilee.

Contrast in the parable of Matthew 7:9-11	
Loaf of bread	Stone
Fish without scales	Snake
Heavenly Father	Unrighteous father

All of these things are somewhat alike, but they are not the same; one is definitely better for a child than the other. Like an earthly parent, God the Father knows what is best for His children even when they do not know themselves.

Matthew 7:13-29 is composed of a series of antitheses which contrasts the choice between living in obedience to the teachings of Jesus and going one's own way:

- The Narrow Gate/Path verses the Broad Gate/Path
- The False Prophets verses the True Disciple
- The Wise Man and the House Built Upon The Rock verses the House Built on Sand and the Fool

The two paths offer three definite, inescapable choices each of us must make:

- **Two ways or paths:** The hard, less traveled way which is entered through the narrow gate, and the easier, more popular gate leading to the wide path.
- **Two gates:** The gate leading to the easy way or path and the narrow gate leading to the hard way.
- **Two destinations:** Eternal damnation or eternal life.

In Matthew 7:15-20 Jesus makes a series of contrasts between the false prophet and true disciple concerning the "fruit" they bear:

True Prophet/disciple	False Prophet
Grapes	Thorn bushes
Figs	Thistles
Good tree/Good fruit	Rotten tree/rotten fruit

In Matthew 7:21-28 Jesus contrasts the true/faithful disciple with the false disciple:

The Faithful Disciple	The False Disciple
Listens and hears = does the will of God	Does not listen = does not fulfill God's will
Builds on Rock which lasts forever	Builds on sand which collapses