

# Dr. Bill Mounce, Sermon on the Mount, Session 14, Matthew 7:1-6, Do Not Judge Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

## 1. Abstract of Mounce, Sermon on the Mount, Session 14, Matthew 7:1-6, Do Not Judge, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Bill Mounce's lecture on Matthew 7:1-6 from his Sermon on the Mount series explores the meaning of "Do Not Judge." He examines different interpretations, including dismissing judgment entirely, avoiding a censorious spirit, and the idea of not judging individuals. **Mounce highlights the dangers of a critical spirit within the church and emphasizes the importance of love and discernment over condemnation.** He discusses exceptions to the "do not judge" command in the context of relationships and church leadership, referencing Greg Boyd's perspective and other biblical passages. **Ultimately, the lecture encourages self-reflection and cautions against judgmental attitudes, emphasizing grace and the recognition of our limited knowledge.**

**2. 15 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Mounce, Sermon on the Mount, Session 14 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Gospels → Sermon on the Mount).**



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### 3. Briefing Document: Mounce, Sermon on the Mount, Session 14, Matthew 7:1-6, Do Not Judge

#### Briefing Document: Dr. Bill Mounce on Matthew 7:1-6, "Do Not Judge"

**Main Theme:** This lecture by Dr. Bill Mounce delves into the meaning and implications of Jesus' command, "Do not judge" in Matthew 7:1-6. Mounce explores various interpretations of this passage, emphasizing the dangers of a critical spirit and advocating for an understanding that focuses on refraining from judgmental attitudes towards individuals. He also addresses the nuances of discernment, confrontation within relationships, and the concept of corporate judgment within the church.

#### Key Ideas and Facts:

##### 1. The Pervasiveness and Harm of a Critical Spirit:

- Mounce highlights the destructive nature of a critical spirit within the church, stating, "I think a critical spirit slowly, patiently chooses its way through the very fabric of the church."
- He quotes Don Carson, saying some people are so critical they "feast on roast preachers every Sunday lunch."
- Mounce asserts that once a critical spirit takes hold, it is "almost impossible...to get rid of it" and that it "pushes out grace."

##### 2. Debunking the Misinterpretation of "Do Not Judge":

- Mounce refutes the common non-Christian interpretation that "do not judge means you have to be an opinionless, spineless, weak, wishy-washy jellyfish."
- He argues that this interpretation is impossible, citing numerous instances in the Sermon on the Mount and other scriptures where judgment and discernment are necessary (e.g., exceeding the righteousness of the Pharisees, being aware of false prophets in Matthew 7:15, Nathan judging David, 1 John 4:1 "test the spirits," Paul judging the sexually immoral man in 1 Corinthians 5). "So, there's no way that 7:1 just means you and I can't have an opinion about anything. Judgment has nothing to do with our lives as Christians."

### 3. Exploring Interpretations of "Do Not Judge":

- **Interpretation 1 (Rejected):** Being opinionless and weak.
- **Interpretation 2: Do Not Be Censorious:** Mounce credits Martin Lloyd-Jones with this view, defining "censorious" as "fault-finding, severely critical, and judgmental," assuming a position of authority to condemn. He suggests censorious people "enjoy finding fault" for a sense of power, contrasting this with discernment: "A censorious person enjoys looking for faults. A discerning person sees faults when necessary." A discerning person aims to be constructive and balances grace and truth.
- **Interpretation 3: Do Not Judge a Person:** This is Mounce's preferred interpretation, aligning with Greg Boyd's perspective in "Repenting of Religion." It emphasizes that we often judge others based on our own self-serving definitions of acceptable and unacceptable sins, making us feel superior. "We pass judgment on what we determine are unacceptable sins in order to feel better about ourselves."

### 4. Exceptions to "Do Not Judge" (According to Boyd):

- **Within Close Relationships:** Confrontation about sin is legitimate when a genuine, loving relationship exists, where the goal is restoration and growth, not condemnation. "If Seth and I were just okay, if Dave had a deal with Seth, he would never say, I'm going to confront you. He never can say, I'm going to judge you. He can say, Seth, I love you to pieces, and it really hurts me to see this behavior in your life. I think it's destructive. Can we talk about it?"
- **Leadership with Significant Influence:** When someone in a high position of authority in the church commits sin that has devastating effects on a large group, confrontation becomes necessary (e.g., Paul confronting the man in 1 Corinthians 5).

### 5. The Prohibition Against Judging (Mounce's View):

- **Because Jesus Commanded It:** "Jesus said, just don't do it. Don't do it."
- **The Principle of Reciprocity:** "For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." Mounce clarifies this isn't transactional but suggests our judgment influences how we are treated by others and potentially by God.

- **The Speck and the Log Analogy (Matthew 7:3-5):** It is hypocritical to focus on the minor flaws ("speck") in others while ignoring significant sins ("plank") in our own lives. "It's absurd to point out sin in someone else's life when, at the same time, you're blinded by your own sin." This passage emphasizes dealing with one's own sin first to gain a clearer perspective and the right position to help others. It does not imply we should never point out sin.

#### **6. Discerning Dogs and Pigs (Matthew 7:6):**

- This passage is not about calling people names but about discerning behavior. "He's not calling people dogs and pigs. He's saying, look at the behavior."
- "Dogs" and "pigs" represent those who would not appreciate or would even destroy what is sacred and precious.
- This calls for discernment in deciding when and with whom to share what is valuable, implying that sometimes it's better to refrain from confronting or sharing with those who will reject or misuse it.

#### **7. The Importance of Discernment vs. a Critical Spirit:**

- Mounce repeatedly distinguishes between discernment (a necessary ability to perceive and understand) and a critical, judgmental spirit.
- Discernment involves assessing situations and behaviors to know when and how to act, especially within relationships.

#### **8. God's Judgment:**

- Mounce suggests that critical people are judged by God in the present by experiencing the negative consequences of their critical spirit in their relationships and lives. "Judgmental people and critical people become angry, crusty people who simply can't see the good around them."
- He also believes our critical spirit may affect our final judgment, though he doesn't fully understand how.

#### **9. Corporate Judgment:**

- The lecture touches on the idea of corporate judgment within the church, particularly in the context of church discipline (referencing 1 Corinthians 5 and 1 Timothy 5). This is seen as a communal act of accountability, not driven by personal animosity or a desire to feel superior.

## Quotes:

- "I think a critical spirit slowly, patiently chooses its way through the very fabric of the church."
- "When a church becomes critical, and it eats its way through the fabric of the church, and it pushes out grace, it's almost impossible for that assembly of worshippers to ever move back into grace, to be a place of grace again."
- "Do not judge means you have to be an opinionless, spineless, weak, wishy-washy jellyfish." (Regarding a common misinterpretation)
- "So, there's no way that 7:1 just means you and I can't have an opinion about anything. Judgment has nothing to do with our lives as Christians."
- "The word means to be fault-finding, severely critical, and judgmental. It's to assume a position of authority where we can stand in judgment of the other person." (Defining "ensorious")
- "A censorious person enjoys looking for faults. A discerning person sees faults when necessary."
- "We pass judgment on what we determine are unacceptable sins in order to feel better about ourselves." (Regarding the third interpretation)
- "Maybe Jesus means, Do not judge."
- "For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged."
- "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank, to the log, in your own eye?"
- "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."
- "He's not calling people dogs and pigs. He's saying, look at the behavior."

**Conclusion:**

Dr. Mounce's lecture on Matthew 7:1-6 provides a nuanced understanding of Jesus' command not to judge. He argues against simplistic interpretations and emphasizes the profound danger of a critical spirit within the Christian community. While acknowledging the necessity of discernment and even confrontation within loving relationships and in specific leadership contexts, Mounce ultimately leans towards an interpretation that calls for a fundamental refraining from judgmental attitudes towards individuals, recognizing our limited knowledge and the destructive nature of such judgments. He highlights the importance of self-reflection and dealing with one's own flaws before addressing those of others, and the need for discernment in how we engage with those who may reject or misuse what is sacred.

## 4. Study Guide: Mounce, Sermon on the Mount, Session 14, Matthew 7:1-6, Do Not Judge

### Study Guide: Matthew 7:1-6, Do Not Judge

#### Key Themes

- **The Prohibition Against Judging:** The primary focus is Jesus' command not to judge others (Matthew 7:1).
- **Interpretations of "Do Not Judge":** Explores various understandings of this command, including the rejection of all opinions, the condemnation of a censorious spirit, and the direct prohibition of judging individuals.
- **The Critical Spirit:** The lecture emphasizes the destructive nature of a critical and fault-finding attitude within the church community.
- **Discernment vs. Judgment:** The distinction is made between being censorious (enjoying finding fault) and being discerning (recognizing faults when necessary for constructive purposes).
- **The Tree of Knowledge:** Greg Boyd's perspective connects judging others with usurping God's role in defining good and evil.
- **Judging Motives:** The lecture highlights that often, we judge others to feel better about ourselves and our own perceived righteousness.
- **Relational Context for Confrontation:** Confronting sin is presented as potentially legitimate within the context of loving relationships, with the aim of restoration.
- **Exceptions to the Rule:** The lecture discusses potential exceptions for church leadership addressing sin with widespread impact (drawing on 1 Corinthians 5) and the idea of corporate judgment by the church body.
- **The Principle of Reciprocity:** The idea that the way we judge others will be the way we ourselves are judged (Matthew 7:2).
- **The Speck and the Log:** This metaphor illustrates the hypocrisy of focusing on others' flaws while ignoring our own significant shortcomings (Matthew 7:3-5).
- **Discerning the Unreceptive:** The analogy of not giving sacred things to dogs or pearls to pigs suggests a need for discernment in sharing and confronting (Matthew 7:6).

- **God's Judgment:** While we are not to take on God's role as ultimate judge, the lecture suggests that our judgmental spirit can have consequences in our relationship with God and potentially in final judgment.

## Quiz

1. According to Dr. Mounce, what is the first topic addressed in Matthew 7:1-6, and why is it significant for those who understand chapters 5 and 6 of Matthew?
2. Describe the "ensorious" interpretation of "do not judge" and contrast it with being "discerning." What are the key differences in motivation and action between these two approaches?
3. Explain Greg Boyd's argument connecting the prohibition against judging with the "tree of knowledge of good and evil." What is the underlying problem Boyd identifies in how we often judge others?
4. What are the two exceptions to the general rule of not judging that Greg Boyd proposes? Briefly describe the rationale behind each exception.
5. Dr. Mounce asks, "Why do you think you have a right to an opinion?" In the context of Matthew 7:1, what is the challenge behind this question, particularly concerning judging individuals?
6. Summarize Bruce Waltke's point about universal knowledge and its connection to passing judgment. Why, according to Waltke, is it difficult for humans to make definitive judgments?
7. Explain the principle of reciprocity as it relates to judging others, according to Matthew 7:2. Is this presented as a quid pro quo exchange?
8. How does Dr. Mounce interpret the idea of being "judged by God" in the present? What are some of the potential consequences of having a critical spirit?
9. Explain the meaning of the "speck and the log" metaphor in Matthew 7:3-5. What is the primary lesson Jesus is teaching through this imagery?
10. What is the purpose of the analogy of not giving sacred things to dogs or pearls to pigs in Matthew 7:6? How does this relate to the preceding discussion on judging?

## Quiz Answer Key



1. The first topic is judgment, specifically having a critical spirit. It is significant because if someone truly embodies the beatitudes and righteousness described in chapters 5 and 6, then the command in 7:1 to not judge will be an understandable and natural outflow of that transformed character.
2. The "ensorious" interpretation means not being fault-finding, severely critical, and judgmental, enjoying the act of finding fault and assuming a position of authority to condemn others. Being "discerning," on the other hand, involves recognizing faults when necessary for constructive purposes, aiming to build up and balance truth with grace, rather than taking pleasure in tearing down.
3. Boyd argues that the tree of knowledge symbolizes God's authority to define good and evil. When we judge others by our own standards and declare their actions unacceptable to make ourselves feel better, we are essentially repeating the sin of Adam and Eve by trying to redefine what is right and wrong, usurping God's role.
4. The two exceptions are when you have a loving relationship with someone where confrontation about sin can lead to positive change and restoration, and when someone in a high position of authority in the church commits sin that has a devastating effect on a large group of people, requiring confrontation for the sake of the community.
5. The question challenges the assumption that we inherently possess the right to form negative opinions and pass judgment on individuals. To truly judge a person fairly, one would need complete knowledge of their circumstances, history, and motivations, which humans lack.
6. Waltke argues that you cannot definitively pronounce something right or wrong without universal knowledge. Since only God possesses absolute and complete knowledge, our human judgments are always based on incomplete information, making it impossible for us to judge definitively.
7. The principle of reciprocity suggests that the way we judge others will, in some way, come back upon us; with the measure we use, it will be measured back to us. This is not presented as a direct transaction but rather as a principle that influences how we are treated by others and potentially by God.
8. Dr. Mounce interprets being "judged by God" in the present as God allowing the natural consequences of our critical spirit to take over. This can manifest as

becoming angry, crusty, and unable to see the good in others, negatively impacting relationships and overall well-being, representing a downward spiral.

9. The "speck and the log" metaphor illustrates the hypocrisy of focusing on minor flaws in others (the speck) while being blind to our own significant sins (the log). Jesus teaches that we must first address our own shortcomings before attempting to correct others, and that our own sin can distort our perception.
10. The analogy serves to warn against indiscriminately trying to point out the "speck" of sin in everyone's eye. Just as it would be foolish to waste something sacred or precious on those who would not appreciate or would destroy it, there are times when attempting to confront someone about a minor issue may be unproductive or even harmful, requiring discernment.

## **Essay Format Questions**

1. Discuss the three main interpretations of Jesus' command "Do not judge" presented in the lecture. Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of each interpretation and explain which interpretation Dr. Mounce ultimately seems to favor and why.
2. Explore the tension between the command not to judge in Matthew 7:1 and the necessity for discernment and addressing sin within the Christian community, as discussed in the lecture. How can believers navigate this tension in a way that honors both aspects of Jesus' teaching?
3. Analyze the role of motivation in judging others, according to the lecture. How does the desire to feel superior or more righteous contribute to the problem of judgmentalism? What alternative motivations should guide our interactions with those we perceive to be in sin?
4. Examine the implications of the "speck and the log" metaphor for how Christians should approach the sin of others. How does this teaching challenge common tendencies within the church, and what practical steps can individuals take to apply this principle in their lives?
5. Considering the lecture's discussion of exceptions and the concept of corporate judgment, what guidelines or principles should govern when and how the church as a body addresses sin within its community? How can this be done in a way that reflects both justice and grace?

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Censorious:** Characterized by a fault-finding attitude; severely critical and judgmental, often taking pleasure in pointing out the flaws of others.
- **Discernment:** The ability to make careful judgments; in this context, recognizing faults or inappropriate behavior when necessary for constructive purposes, balanced with grace and truth.
- **Beatitudes:** The blessings listed by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:3-12), describing the character of those who are blessed in God's kingdom.
- **Golden Chain:** A likely reference to the interconnectedness of the teachings in the Sermon on the Mount, suggesting that understanding earlier principles is foundational for grasping later ones.
- **Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil:** A symbolic tree in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2-3), representing God's prerogative to define what is right and wrong. Eating from it symbolized humanity's attempt to seize that authority.
- **Reciprocity:** The principle of mutual exchange or corresponding action; in this context, the idea that the way we treat or judge others will likely be reflected in how we ourselves are treated or judged.
- **Divine Passive:** A grammatical construction in which the subject of the verb receives the action, and the agent (in this case, God) is implied but not explicitly stated.
- **Quid Pro Quo:** Latin for "something for something," implying a direct and equal exchange. The lecture clarifies that the principle of reciprocity in judging is not necessarily a direct quid pro quo.
- **Hypocrite:** An actor; someone who pretends to be what they are not, often pointing out flaws in others while concealing their own.
- **Covenant Community:** In this context, referring to the community of believers or the church.

## 5. FAQs on Mounce, Sermon on the Mount, Session 14, Matthew 7:1-6, Do Not Judge, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

### Frequently Asked Questions on Matthew 7:1-6 ("Do Not Judge") based on Dr. Mounce's Lecture

**1. What is the main topic being addressed in Matthew 7:1-6?** The primary focus of this passage is on how believers should relate to one another, specifically addressing the issue of a critical and judgmental spirit. Jesus begins by instructing his followers, "Do not judge."

**2. Dr. Mounce discusses three interpretations of "Do not judge." What are they?** The first interpretation, which Mounce deems incorrect, is that "do not judge" means Christians should be opinionless and unable to make any judgments whatsoever. The second interpretation, favored by many commentators (drawing from Martin Lloyd-Jones), is "do not be censorious," meaning not to be fault-finding, severely critical, and to avoid enjoying the process of condemning others. The third interpretation, which Mounce leans towards, is that Jesus means exactly what he says: "Do not judge" other people, understanding "judge" in the sense of condemning a person.

**3. If "do not judge" doesn't mean we can't have any opinions, what kind of judging is being cautioned against?** The caution is against a critical spirit that enjoys finding fault in others, assumes a position of authority to condemn, and does so often to feel superior. This kind of judgment often lacks full knowledge of the other person's situation, background, and journey. It is contrasted with discernment, which is necessary for Christians to navigate the world.

**4. What are the reasons Dr. Mounce gives for why we should not judge others?**

Mounce outlines three main reasons based on the passage: (1) Jesus explicitly commands us not to judge. (2) The principle of reciprocity: the way we judge others will, in some way, come back upon us, potentially both from people and from God. (3) The illustration of the speck and the log highlights the hypocrisy of focusing on others' flaws while ignoring our own, suggesting we need to deal with our own sin first.

**5. What is the significance of the "speck and the log" analogy in relation to judging others?** The analogy illustrates the absurdity of trying to correct minor flaws ("specks") in others when we have significant sins ("logs") blinding our own judgment. It suggests that we need to address our own shortcomings before we can help others with theirs and that dealing with our own sin can change how we perceive and approach the sins of others.

**6. How does Dr. Mounce explain the seemingly contradictory idea of needing to be discerning while also not judging, especially in light of the "dogs and pigs" analogy?**

Mounce explains that while we are not to have a judgmental spirit towards individuals, Jesus' analogy of not giving what is sacred to dogs or pearls to pigs requires discernment. This means assessing behaviors and character to determine when it is appropriate to engage with someone about their sin and when it is best to step back. However, this discernment should not be rooted in a critical spirit that enjoys condemnation.

**7. Are there any exceptions to the command "Do not judge" according to Dr. Mounce's interpretation?**

Yes, Mounce, drawing from Greg Boyd, suggests two potential exceptions: (1) within the context of a close, loving relationship where confrontation about sin can be motivated by genuine care and have a positive effect. (2) When someone in a high position of authority in the church is engaging in sin that has devastating effects on a large group of people. Additionally, the concept of corporate judgment within the church body is mentioned as another potential category.

**8. What are the potential consequences of having a critical and judgmental spirit, according to the lecture?** Having a critical spirit can lead to negative relational consequences, as others will likely be critical in return. Mounce also suggests that God judges censorious people in the present by allowing the consequences of their sin to take over, potentially leading to bitterness and an inability to see good. Furthermore, he believes that a critical spirit may affect our final judgment, although he doesn't elaborate on the specifics. Ultimately, a judgmental attitude hinders the love and unity within the church, which is meant to be a witness to the world.