

At the beginning of chapter 7, Jesus is beginning to draw to a close his teaching on how Christian believer is to live as citizen of God's kingdom, here on earth. As he does so, he once again challenges our attitudes towards others and towards God.

#1 - Be discerning, not judgmental (vv1-6)

Vv1-5 are not a command to never judge, but to not be judgmental. The reason for this is that if we look to correct the unrighteous behaviour of another, whilst ignoring our own unrighteous behaviour, all we actually do is highlight our own hypocrisy. However, if our desire to remove a speck from another's eye is genuinely for their benefit, we will ensure a thorough self-examination first. Our attitude should be one of generosity towards others, and swift judgment of our own unrighteous behaviour (Cf. Psalm 139vv23-24), rather than the other way around.

However, verse 6 is a helpful corollary as it reminds the Christian believer that they are not to show no judgment or discernment whatsoever. On the contrary, the Christian is encouraged to be discerning, especially when sharing the gospel with others. Jesus here teaches that if the gospel is continually rejected by someone then, at some point, the discerning thing to do is take the holy and precious message of the gospel elsewhere.

#2 - Live by God's grace each and every day (vv7-12)

Verse 12, like much of what Jesus teaches, does not come naturally to any of us, and we can easily recall times when we fail to keep this "Golden Rule" as it has become known. This means it serves as a great reminder, once again, of the purpose behind Jesus' teaching. Jesus is not offering advice on "how to enter" the Kingdom of God, but he is instructing how the Christian believer is to live "having already entered" the Kingdom of God, through placing their trust in Jesus.

This is why on approaching verse 12, we must not miss vv7-11, because they remind us of the daily grace we need if we are to live as Kingdom citizens, and the inexhaustible source of that grace - or loving Father in Heaven!

The command to ask, seek and knock, is a command from Jesus to ask and keep on asking... seek and keep on seeking... knock and keep on knocking. His point is clear, if you or I are going to live as Jesus instructs, then we cannot do it on our own! Each and every day, we need an attitude of humility, which recognises we are dependant on the grace that God gives to His people. And we need an attitude of confidence, which knows that our Father in heaven delights in answering our prayers for the grace to live as citizens of His Kingdom, each and every day.