

Matthew 7

Bible Study

By Gary Eugene Howell



Verses 1-5

Ask for a volunteer to read aloud Matthew 7:1-5.

Observation: These verses are not instructions on how to treat other people. Rather they are a lesson on how to think critically about your own sins, and the need to repent of your

sins before telling other people to repent of theirs.

Discussion:

Discuss the difference in interpretation and meaning when the statement “Do not judge” is understood within the full context of Matthew 7:1–5, as opposed to how it is often taken out of context and used as a defense for sin. How does reading the surrounding verses clarify what Jesus actually meant when He said, “Do not judge”?

Verse 6

Ask for a volunteer to read aloud Matthew 7:6.

Discussion:

Matthew 7:6 calls for discernment, not dismissal. We can’t just wash our hands of every person whose initial response is to mock Christianity. After all, don’t forget that Nathanael’s first response to hearing about Jesus was to ask, “Can anything good come from Nazareth?” (John 1:46).

What kind of person is Jesus referring to in this verse? How can we discern when to continue sharing the gospel with someone and when to recognize that they may be like the “dog” or “swine” Jesus described?

Verses 7-11

Ask for a volunteer to read aloud Matthew 7:7-11.

Discussion:

What do these verses tell us about God’s character and His response to those who sincerely pursue Him?

Verse 12

Ask for a volunteer to read aloud Matthew 7:12.

Discussion:

How might this principle guide your behavior in situations where others are unkind or unfair to you? How could applying this principle affect your relationships at home, at work, or in your community?

Verses 13-14

Ask for a volunteer to read aloud Matthew 7:13-14.

Observation: Do all roads lead to heaven? No.

Discussion:

Why is the way that leads to life small and narrow?

Ask someone to turn to John 14:5–6 and read it aloud.

“Lord,” said Thomas, “we do not know where You are going, so how can we know the way?” Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. (John 14:5-6)

All other religions, and even some Christian denominations, teach a salvation by works. But that is rooted in pride. Anything you can accomplish through your own hard work and diligent effort will ultimately cause you to feel proud of yourself. Yet pride is the very thing that got Satan kicked out of heaven (Isaiah 14:12–15). Therefore, we can not conclude that pride is somehow going to get us into heaven.

Jesus Christ died for you. He took your sins upon Himself on the cross and received your death penalty. If a person is unwilling to receive this gift, who else will pay for their death penalty? No one.

In what ways can pride hinder a person from accepting the gospel message?

Why do you think some people prefer to believe they can earn their way to heaven rather than receive salvation as a gift?

How does understanding that Jesus paid the death penalty for our sins affect the way we view our relationship with Him?

Verses 15-20

Ask for a volunteer to read aloud Matthew 7:15-20.

Discussion:

All false teachers hold a low view of Scripture. This is one of the fruits by which they can be recognized. However, it may be more subtle in some cases than in others. Some false teachers are ashamed of the Bible, believing it to be overly judgmental to tell people about their sin and

their need of a savior. Other false teachers may claim the Bible is flawed; contains errors or is outdated. Still others discourage their congregations from reading the Bible, insisting it's too difficult for the average person to understand and that any questions they have should instead be brought directly to them (the false teacher).

Ask for a volunteer to turn to and read Hebrews 4:12.

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it pierces even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It judges the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)

Now ask for another volunteer to turn to and read John 1:1-5.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made, and without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Any spiritual leader who holds the Bible in high regard will repent when they recognize they have spoken falsely.

How would you describe your own view of Scripture? Do you believe your actions reflect a high or low view of God's Word? For example, if in your free-time you have a choice between reading the Bible or mindlessly scrolling the internet, which one would you prefer?

John 1:1–5 equates the Word with Jesus Himself. How does that truth influence the way you approach reading or studying the Bible?

Have you ever heard someone downplay the authority or accuracy of Scripture?

Jesus said they will be recognized by their "fruit." What kind of fruit does a genuine love for God's Word produce in the life of a believer?

Verse 21

Ask for a volunteer to read aloud Matthew 7:21.

Observation: "only he who does the will of My Father in heaven" can not possibly be referring to a works-based salvation of good deeds because of what Jesus said in the book of John;

For it is My Father's will that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:40)

Thus, the one who does the will of the father is the one who puts their faith in Jesus Christ.

Discussion:

Talk about the differences between someone who has placed their faith in Jesus as opposed to someone who attends church faithfully, serves regularly, helps the homeless, and does many other good deeds, yet sees Jesus only as a historical figure or good teacher and has not put their faith in Him.

Verses 22-23

Ask for a volunteer to read aloud Matthew 7:22-23.

Observation: Being a Christian does not mean you are saved. Many Christians will say to Jesus, “look at all the good deeds we did in your name” but he will say to them, “I never knew you.”

Discussion: This next question is similar to the previous one, but repetition can be an effective way to reinforce an important truth: Why can we not earn salvation?

Ask a volunteer to turn to and read aloud Romans 1:16-17

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who **believes**, first to the Jew, then to the Greek. For the gospel reveals the righteousness of God that comes by **faith** from **start to finish**, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by **faith**.” (Romans 1:16-17)

Verses 24-27

Ask for a volunteer to read aloud Matthew 7:24-27.

Observation: These verses remind us of what happened to the Jewish temple.

As Jesus left the temple and was walking away, His disciples came up to Him to point out its buildings. “Do you see all these things?” He replied. “Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.” (Matthew 24:1-2)

The Jewish people operated their lives, NOT according to faith. Faith in Christ is the rock on which we stand.

[Study-group leader — if you feel led, this is a great opportunity to show your group online images of the temple stones that were thrown down, which, still to this day, lie in piles at the base of the Temple Mount. Such images can help believers move from viewing the Bible as a story, to the vivid reality that these events actually happened, and that we can see it still to this day. Perform an image search using the phrase “temple stones Jerusalem”.]

Discussion: In its context, however, verses 24–27 continue Jesus’ teaching about those who try to practice Christianity through good works rather than faith. Anyone who does so is building a house that will ultimately collapse.

Ask your group whether they have ever heard of a pastor, elder, Christian music artist, or any other believer who was once passionate about Jesus but has since completely turned away and now rejects Christ. Such a person had built their house on good works rather than on faith.

Trying to earn salvation through good works equals death. Ask for a volunteer to turn to and read aloud Romans 7:9-13

Once I was alive apart from the law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. So I discovered that the very commandment that was meant to bring life actually brought death. For sin, seizing its opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through the commandment put me to death. So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous, and good.

Did that which is good, then, become death to me? Certainly not! But in order that sin might be exposed as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful. (Romans 7:9-13)

What is the difference between obedience that flows from faith versus obedience that attempts to earn salvation?

Verses 28-29

Ask for a volunteer to read aloud Matthew 7:28-29.

Observation: the crowds were astonished because He taught as one who had authority.

Ask for a volunteer to flip to and read aloud Matthew 28:18.

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.

Discussion: How much authority do you allow Jesus to have over your life? Are there areas where you tend to resist His authority? If so, why?

Bible Study Resources for Bible Study Leaders

By Gary Eugene Howell

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Dear Bible study leader: Here are a few tips on how to conduct a good Bible study that will foster spiritual growth in those attending.

First: Prepare for your Bible study by spending quality time in prayer in the days or week ahead of the study. Seek not to rely upon your own strengths and abilities, but instead rely upon the Lord.

Second: Begin your group bible study by taking prayer requests. If you have less than 25 people in your group, be bold by asking every individual, by name, what they would like prayer for. Then ask the group members to pray for one another. (You can ask, “who would like to pray for John?” or you can ask that everyone pray for the person on their left), however you choose to organize it is fine. Make sure you take notes on what people are asking prayer for. Then, before you begin the group prayer, ask if anyone needs a reminder of who and what they are praying for. If your group spends the whole hour praying and you never get to discuss the bible study, that’s perfectly fine.

Third: Don’t turn your Bible study into a sermon. Your attendees can hear a sermon on Sunday. Instead, aim to be the one who speaks the least during the session. When you ask the group a question, be comfortable with several seconds of silence while people gather their thoughts. If no one responds after a long pause, try rephrasing the question and ask it again in a different way. Then give everyone time to reflect and respond.

Fourth: Many Bible study sessions end up being shallow. This often happens when the leader asks simple questions that require only one- or two-word answers. Your goal, however, is to guide your attendees deeper into God’s Word. Lead the group in examining the context and meaning of the passage being studied. Then move on to application; but remember, the Bible is not a self-help book for behavior modification. It is the story of Jesus; what He has done for us, what He is doing in us, and how He saves us.

Fifth: Hopefully, two or three attendees will help carry the discussion; those who are eager to talk about the Word of God. However, be prepared in advance for the possibility that one person may try to dominate the conversation. If someone performs a five-to-six-minute monologue without allowing others to contribute, you’ll need to find a kind and respectful way to gently redirect the discussion and keep the conversations balanced.

Sixth: It’s perfectly okay if you don’t get to all the questions presented in this bible study. If you ask the first question and your group spends the remainder of the hour discussing it, your job is done. You had a successful bible study. Don’t be concerned that you didn’t get to the rest of the questions. The goal is for people to have had their faith encouraged.