

Jesus' House Rules – Lesson 6

“Discernment & The Right Foundation: Kingdom Wisdom”

Summary

Jesus ends the Sermon on the Mount by calling His followers to practice kingdom wisdom—relating with humility, discerning truth from deception, and building their lives on His teaching. In Matthew 7, He warns against hypocritical judgment, invites persistent prayer, describes the narrow way of obedience, exposes false prophets by their fruit, and contrasts wise and foolish builders. The message is unmistakable: kingdom life is not based on popularity, but it is built through obedience to Jesus' teaching.

Scripture

Matthew 7

1. Introduction

Opening Thought

As Jesus concludes the Sermon on the Mount, He shifts from kingdom character and kingdom devotion to kingdom wisdom—how kingdom people relate, discern, and build their lives. The Sermon ends not with admiration but with a call to action. Kingdom life is not merely heard; it is built.

Here Comes the Judge!

In Matthew 7, Jesus is not forbidding discernment—He is forbidding condemning, hypocritical judgment. To “judge” in this passage means taking the posture of a critic who elevates themselves above others while ignoring their own faults. Jesus exposes the danger of trying to fix someone else’s “speck” while refusing to deal with the “log” in your own eye.

He teaches that kingdom people must begin with self-examination, not accusation. Only after dealing honestly with our own sin can we see clearly enough to help others. Jesus also calls for wise discernment (v. 6), showing that the issue is not the absence of judgment but the presence of humility, clarity, and love.

Luke 6:44 – “For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.”

Biblical Illustrations

David and Nathan (2 Samuel 12):

- David condemns a fictional man harshly — unaware he is condemning himself.
- Nathan’s “You are the man!” is the perfect illustration of Matthew 7:1–5.
- We often judge others most harshly in the areas where we are blind to our own sin.

Jesus and the Woman Caught in Adultery (John 8:1–11):

- The crowd condemns; Jesus exposes their hypocrisy:
- “Let the one without sin cast the first stone.”
- Judgment without self-examination leads to cruelty, not righteousness.

2. Theological Focus

| Kingdom Idea | Kingdom Principles | Kingdom Truth |
|---|--|---|
| Judging With Humility (vv. 1–6) | Jesus does not forbid discernment—He forbids hypocritical condemnation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove the log from your own eye first then you can help others with clarity • Discernment requires humility, not superiority | Kingdom people correct others gently because they first confront their own hearts. |
| Asking, Seeking, Knocking (vv. 7–11) | Jesus invites persistent prayer rooted in trust. The Father gives good gifts because He is good. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking — dependence • Seeking — pursuit • Knocking — perseverance | Kingdom wisdom grows through persistent, relational prayer. |
| The Narrow Way (vv. 12–14) | Jesus describes two paths: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide gate - easy, popular, self-directed • Narrow gate - costly, countercultural, kingdom-shaped | The kingdom path is narrow because it is shaped by obedience, not convenience. |
| True and False Prophets (vv. 15–23) | Jesus warns that not everyone who looks spiritual is trustworthy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine fruit, not charisma • Fruit reveals roots • Even impressive ministry activity can mask a disobedient heart | Discernment evaluates character, not performance. |
| Building on the Rock (vv. 24–27) | Jesus ends with a vivid picture - storms reveal foundations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wise builder: hears and obeys • Foolish builder: hears but does not obey | Kingdom life is not based on <i>popularity</i> , but it is built through <i>obedience</i> to Jesus’ teaching. |

3. Practical Application

| Idea | Recommended Actions | Example |
|--|---|---|
| Practicing Discernment Without Condemnation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Start with self-examination - Ask questions before making judgments - Correct gently and privately | Before confronting someone, ask: “What log might be in my own eye?” |
| Developing a Prayer Life That Persists | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Set a daily rhythm of asking, seeking, knocking - Keep a prayer journal - Pray kingdom-first prayers (Matthew 6:9–13) | Choose one request to pray for consistently for the next week. |
| Evaluating the “Fruit” of Influences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Examine the voices shaping your life—podcasts, leaders, friends - Look for humility, integrity, and obedience - Ask: “Does this influence make me more like Jesus?” | Identify one influence you need to limit or remove. |
| Identifying Areas Where Your Foundation Needs Strengthening | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marriage - Finances - Thought life - Habits - Spiritual disciplines | Choose one area and commit to one act of obedience this week. |

4. Discussion Questions

- Where do you struggle more—condemning others or avoiding discernment?
- What does persistent prayer look like in your current season?
- Which gate—narrow or wide—best describes your daily choices?
- What “fruit” do you see in the influences shaping your life?
- What part of your life needs to be rebuilt on the rock of Jesus’ teaching?

5. Closing Thoughts

The Sermon on the Mount ends with a call to action. Kingdom wisdom is not passive—it is practiced. Kingdom people judge with humility, pray with persistence, walk the narrow way, discern truth from deception, and build their lives on the solid rock of Jesus’ words. The storms will come, but those who build on the Rock will stand.

Challenge for the Week

Reflect on this key question: *What part of your life needs to be rebuilt on the rock of Jesus’ teaching?* Choose one concrete step of obedience.