

***PRECEPTS FOR LIFE***  
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**SERIES: Matthew (The King, His Kingdom And Me)**

**TITLE: Program 11 – The Straight And Narrow Way**

**MONDAY**

**OPEN**

O Beloved, do you feel like you're out of sync with the culture? Do you feel like your life compared to the world is so narrow? You're not zooming down that broad freeway but you're taking a narrow path? You're taking a path of righteousness that makes you out of sync with the culture. You've chosen a way of righteousness and the world looks at you as if you are crazy. O Beloved, you're not. You've chosen the narrow way that leads to life. Don't get off the path. We'll talk about it today.

**PART ONE**

If the world knows any verse of scripture, they know Matthew chapter 7 verse 1. “[Judge not], **lest you be judged.**” (Matthew 7:1) So many times we quote that verse and we say we have no right to say something is right or something is wrong. But is that what the verse means? When we stop and look at it, in the context in which it is said, we'll get a new and deeper

understanding of it. In Matthew chapter 7 verse 1 he says, **“Do not judge so that you will not be judged. For in the way [that] you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it [shall] be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck that’s in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ and behold, the log is in your ...eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.”**

(Matthew 7:1-5) Is He saying you cannot judge? No, He’s saying that you have to be careful in your judging. You have to make sure that your eye is clear. Because if you’re looking at something in your brother and there’s something wrong and you have not judged yourself, then you are going to damage them while you have a log in your own eye trying to take a speck out of your brother’s eye. So He is not forbidding judging. And we know that because He says in the next verse. **“Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.”** (Matthew 7:6) So obviously, when you’re dealing with people, you have to know who you’re dealing with. What is this person like? If they’re a dog, you do not want to take and give precious things, holy things, to dogs because they have no appreciation of them. You do not want to take pearls and cast them before swine because the swine will turn around and trample those pearls. They have no idea of the value of those pearls. So it’s such an important lesson for us, Beloved, that when we’re looking at a scripture that we look at it in its context, that we keep reading, that we don’t pull one verse out and make it say something that it does not say. Now as we study the Sermon on the Mount, we have to remember what preceded this. We have to remember that John the Baptist went and was baptizing and the Pharisees and the scribes came to him for baptism. And he called them a **“...Brood of vipers....”** (Matthew 3:7) And he told them to **“Bring forth...fruit [worthy of]**

repentance.” (Matthew 3:8, KJV) We have to remember that Jesus went out, too, and He brought the same message. **“Repent....the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”** (Matthew 3:2) We know that at the beginning of this message of the Sermon on the Mount, this first teaching discourse that Matthew records in his gospel, we know that He was telling them that [their righteousness had to exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 5:20) So He was looking at their righteousness. He was evaluating their righteousness. But also, we know and we’ll see it confirmed over and over and over again as we study the Gospel of Matthew, we know that it was the Pharisees that were the judges. It was the Pharisees that were critical. It was the Pharisees that had a log in their eye and were trying to take a speck out of someone else’s eye. And so they were constantly criticizing. And if you remember the context of the whole and interpret the Sermon on the Mount in the light and the setting in which it was set, then you’ll have a far greater understanding of what God is doing in this. Now as I told you, Beloved, I’ve written a study course on the Sermon on the Mount. And if you want to go into it in greater depth, then that study course is available to you. And I will tell you this: people have done it and it has been life transforming. Because they understood the righteousness that God is calling us to, the righteous lifestyle. And so He wants them to know and to understand that you’re not to go around judging. First judge yourself. Get your eyes clear so that you can clearly see to help another brother. But it’s not in the act of condemning; rather, it’s in the act of helping. Now, after He talks about judging and He says in verse 7, **“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.”** He says, **“Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone?”** (Matthew 7:7-9) Now their bread was round in those days. And it could look very much like a stone. So he says, “Your son asks you for bread and you’re going to

give him a stone and say, ha ha you just broke your teeth?” No, a father’s not going to do that. And then he goes on to say, **“Or if he asks for a fish, ...will... [he give him] a snake?” (Matthew 7:10)** Obviously “No” A father is not going to do that. He’s pointing out that a father cares for the good of his children. And so if you ask your heavenly Father for something, then He’s not going to give you something bad, something that’s going to hurt you. He’s going to give you something that’s going to benefit you. And so he says, **“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father...,”** there’s Father again and we’re marking “Father.” **“... who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!” (Matthew 7:11)** What is he telling us at this point? At this point in the Sermon on the Mount, in this discourse that He’s giving to them on the kingdom of heaven once again, He’s showing our total and absolute dependence upon the Father. Remember this message opened up with the statement, **“Blessed [happy, content] are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of [God].” (Matthew 5:3)** And remember that poverty was such a deep poverty that you couldn’t even look up. And so you were totally absolutely brought low, totally absolutely humbled. And in that humility of being brought low like that you’re dependant upon your Father. So He’s showing us how we are to live in the kingdom of heaven. It is so precious. He says “ask,” “seek” and “knock.” Now “ask,” “seek” and “knock” in verse 7 is all in the present tense. And the present tense in the Greek is that of habitual acting. It’s: “keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking.” It’s to be a life of absolute and total dependence. It’s a life like Jesus lived. When we go to John chapter 5 it said that: [Jesus did nothing apart from the Father], (PARAPHRASE, John 5:19) absolutely nothing apart from the Father. And so we lived in constant dependence upon the Father. When He was here on earth he lived the way that you and I are to live. He lived by the power of the Holy Spirit. He did not live independently. Remember before the Sermon on the Mount when Jesus is tested by the devil in the

wilderness? Remember how the devil tells Him, you're hungry, turn the stones into bread? Well Jesus was able to do that because He was God. But He was to live in total and absolute dependence upon God and that's why He responded. Is it not written **"...That man does not live by bread alone, but...by [every word] that [comes] out of the mouth of [God]."**

**(Deuteronomy 8:3 or Matthew 4:4)** And He's quoting Deuteronomy chapter 8, verse 3 where He's saying that He gave them manna in the wilderness. He made them go out and get it every morning because it showed their dependence upon God. So what is God's lesson to you and to me today, Precious One? Well besides the lesson on judging and making sure that our eye is clear and understanding that we're not to take what is holy and give it to dogs, and we're not to take what is sacred like pearls and cast them before swine, God wants you and me to understand, Beloved, that we are to live in this total dependence upon Him. We are to "keep on asking." We are to "keep on seeking." We're to keep on seeking God. And we are to "keep on knocking." Keep on knocking. (See Matthew 7:7) He says, **"Ask, and [you will receive], seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you."** **(Matthew 7:7)** And all of this is going to happen because you have a Heavenly Father. You're a human parent. You would do the same for your children. And how much greater is God than you? O Beloved, you and I need to live a life of total dependence upon God. And the greater dependence, the greater will be his power and the manifestation of who He is in our life. He says in verse 12, **"In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets."** **(Matthew 7:12)** So He's coming back down, again, to relationships. He's saying, don't judge. He's saying don't give what's holy to dogs, don't cast your pearls before swine but then He says, **"In everything ... [I want you to] treat people the...way you want them to treat you...."** **(Matthew 7:12)** Now that's a good reminder, isn't it? As you're irritated with someone, do you want that person to explode at you if

they're irritated at you? No you don't. So you stop and you put yourself in the other person's position and you treat that person the way you want to be treated.

## **PART TWO**

Welcome back, Beloved. We have come to the final portion of the Sermon on the Mount. And in this final portion he's going to talk about two gates and two ways. He's going to talk about two kinds of fruit. And he's going to talk about two foundations. And in all these he's going to give us a very important illustration. The first one is found in verse 13 and it says, **“Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter... it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and [few there are] who find it.”** (Matthew 7:13-14) Well as He talked to this audience they certainly could understand what He was saying because every city had a wall. Every city had a gate. And that gate was to keep the enemy out. That gate was to help them check out who was coming into the city. And so the gate would be small. It would not be terribly broad because they don't want the enemy to come in, in mass. That is the gate that leads to life. It's small, it causes you to bend over. It is a gate that leads to a very narrow way. Jesus wants us to understand that the way that He's calling us to live is a narrow way. It's a way of righteousness. [It is a righteousness that has to exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 5:20) It's a righteousness that is internal and because it's internal, because it's a matter of the heart, it affects the way we behave. And, consequently, there are very few that find this way. There's very few that take it because it's narrow and because the gate is small. Now if you want to go to hell, (*Kay laughs*) the way's very broad. You can go any way you want to go. You can choose your way. But remember, if you want to go to heaven, it's God's way. Jesus is the one that said, **“...I am the way, [I am] the truth, and [I**

am] **the life; [and] no one comes to the Father but [by] me.” (John 14:6b)** That’s how narrow the way is. Well then He says, **“Beware of... false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly [they] are ravenous wolves.” (Matthew 7:15)** They’re saying “ba-a-a-a” but inwardly they are a wolf and they want to devour you. **“You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.” (Matthew 7:16-19)** Now it ought to remind you of what John the Baptist was saying when the Pharisees came to be baptized. And he said, **“...You brood of vipers....” (Matthew 3:7b)** [The axe is laid at the root of the tree. And every bad tree is going to be brought down.] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 3:10) So this is what He’s teaching us here. He’s teaching them, watch people’s lives. Watch their lives and you will know if the tree is good or bad by the fruit that it produces. This is a good word for you. What is your life producing, Beloved? If it’s not producing good fruit it’s a bad tree and it’s going to be cut down. And then He goes on to say, **“So then, you will know them by their fruits.” (Matthew 7:20)** Now first of all, judge yourself. First of all, look at your own life. First of all, make sure there’s no log in your own eye. But then you are able to see, then you are able to discern. So once again He wants us to discern. He doesn’t want us to be stupid. He doesn’t want the blind to be leading the blind. He wants us to know and understand what is going on. And then He makes this statement, **“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.” (Matthew 7:21)** Have you got that? You’ve got to understand it, Beloved. Not everyone who says, Lord, Lord. Not everyone who professes Jesus Christ, not everyone who is worshipping God is going to enter the kingdom of heaven. Well you say, who is? I mean if they call

him Lord, don't they mean it? Well listen to what He says. He says, **"Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?'" (Matthew 7:22)** Now what day is he talking about? The Jews know and they understand. They understand that there is a day of judgment coming. They understand from the end of Daniel that there is a resurrection, a resurrection unto life or a resurrection unto judgment. They understand that they're going to stand before God and give an account. (*See Daniel 12*) He says, [They're going to say 'Lord, Lord...'] and watch what He says they did. ["...We prophesied in Your name, we in your name cast out demons, we in Your name did miracles."] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 7:22) And Jesus does not say to them, no you didn't. Listen to what he says, **"And then I will declare to them, 'I...,'** listen carefully, **"...never knew you..." (Matthew 7:23a)** I never knew you. It's not that I knew you and then I lost you. It's that I never knew you. **"Depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness." (Matthew 7:23b)** Be gone, be gone. Why? Because you are practicing, as a habit of life, lawlessness. [Remember, Jesus did not come to void out the law and the prophets. He came to fulfill the law and the prophets.] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 5:17) There's nothing wrong with the law. It leads us to righteousness. The problem is us. We can't keep the law apart from dependence upon God, apart from the spirit. In verse 24 he says, **"Therefore..."** a term of conclusion, **"...everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock." (Matthew 7:24)** There's lots of rocks around here. He says, **"And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall...it had been founded on [a] rock."** And then he says, **"Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built is house on the sand. [And] the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was**



**its fall.” (Matthew 7:25-27)** Are you a foolish man or a wise man? A foolish man builds his house on a rock. Now when you build your house on a rock, what is He saying that you are doing? He’s saying that you are listening to My words and you are living accordingly. You are acting on what I’m saying. If you are a foolish man, then you’re hearing My words but you’re not acting on them. Once again, it’s a matter of fruit. Once again, it’s matter of walking God’s narrow way of coming through that small gate. He’s showing the contrast and you and I need to see it. And that contrast is this, and it’s so important for them, because they’re dealing with the religious leaders. This is a religious people. They have a religion but they don’t have a relationship. And they’re watching these people with their religion and he’s saying, “I want you to know. Look at their fruit because their fruit testifies to the validity of their relationship, what they’re claiming.” So watch, Beloved. Not everyone who casts out demons, not everyone who prophesies, not everyone who does miracles is from God, it’s the person that does the will of God. That’s what you need to think about today. That, Beloved, is His precept that leads to life.