



The Sermon on the Mount Study
Bible Study Session 21
Matthew 7:1-5

Study By
Lorin L Cranford
 cranfordville.com

Greek NT

7.1 Μὴ κρίνετε, ἵνα μὴ κριθῆτε· 2 ἐν ᾧ γὰρ κρίματι κρίνετε κριθήσεσθε, καὶ ἐν ᾧ μέτρῳ μετρεῖτε μετρηθήσεται ὑμῖν. 3 τί δὲ βλέπεις τὸ κάρφος τὸ ἐν τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου, τὴν δὲ ἐν τῷ σῶ ὀφθαλμῷ δοκὸν οὐ κατανοεῖς; 4 ἢ πῶς ἐρεῖς τῷ ἀδελφῷ σου· Ἰαφεὺς ἐκβάλω τὸ κάρφος ἐκ τοῦ ὀφθαλμοῦ σου, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἡ δοκὸς ἐν τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ σου; 5 ὑποκριτά, ἔκβαλε πρῶτον ἐκ τοῦ ὀφθαλμοῦ σου τὴν δοκόν, καὶ τότε διαβλέψεις ἐκβαλεῖν τὸ κάρφος ἐκ τοῦ ὀφθαλμοῦ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου.

La Biblia de las Américas

1 No juzguéis para que no seáis juzgados. 2 Porque con el juicio con que juzguéis, seréis juzgados; y con la medida con que midáis, se os medirá. 3 ¿Y por qué miras la mota que está en el ojo de tu hermano, y no te das cuenta de la viga que está en tu propio ojo? 4 ¿O cómo puedes decir a tu hermano: “Déjame sacarte la mota del ojo”, cuando la viga está en tu ojo? 5 ¡Hipócrita! Saca primero la viga de tu ojo, y entonces verás con claridad para sacar la mota del ojo de tu hermano.

NRSV

1 Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. 2 For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. 3 Why do you see the speck in your neighbor’s eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your neighbor, “Let me take the speck out of your eye,” while the log is in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor’s eye.

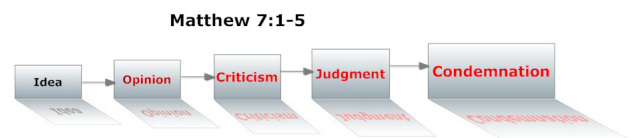
NLT

1 Stop judging others, and you will not be judged. 2 For others will treat you as you treat them. Whatever measure you use in judging others, it will be used to measure how you are judged. 3 And why worry about a speck in your friend’s eye when you have a log in your own? 4 How can you think of saying, ‘Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,’ when you can’t see past the log in your own eye? 5 Hypocrite! First get rid of the log from your own eye; then perhaps you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend’s eye.

The Outline of the Text:¹

While several other verses in the Sermon are well known and often quoted, Matthew 7:1 is perhaps the most often ‘misquoted’ verse in the entire sermon. Non-Christians living in deep immorality know this verse and quote it often to others in order to justify their lifestyle.² Even many Christians do not understand what Jesus was talking about, and so make the same mistakes in using the saying of Jesus that their pagan neighbors do. This makes it all the more important for us to look closely at Jesus’ words so that we can understand them correctly.

On the other hand, western society engages in evaluation of other persons at virtually every level of society. We like this person, but don’t like that person. What’s the difference? We have ‘judged both of them’ with different judgments! Teachers give exams to students, and the students either pass or fail on the basis of the ‘judgment.’ Supervisors at work give performance evaluations of their workers, and salary raises and promotions depend on the ‘judgment’ of these evaluations. Forming opinions³ about other individuals and



¹Serious study of the biblical text must look at the ‘then’ meaning, i.e., the historical meaning, and the ‘now’ meaning, i.e., the contemporary application, of the scripture text. In considering the historical meaning, both elements of literary design and historical aspects must be considered. In each study we will attempt a summary overview of these procedures in the interpretation of the scripture text.

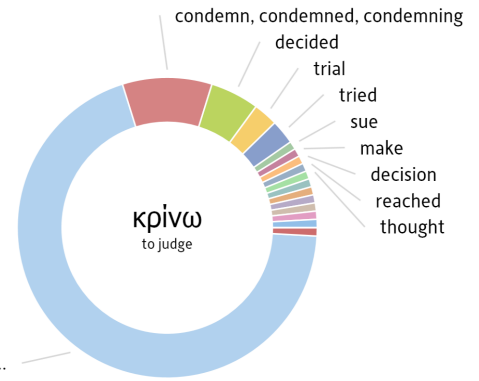
²Just a Google Search of the phrase “Judge not lest ye be judged” generated over 184,000 hits. A high percentage of these web sites are non-religious. This concept is often used in the homosexual world to justify its immoral lifestyle, as well as organizations of professional prostitutes.

³An opinion is a subjective statement or thought about an issue or topic, and may be the result of emotion or interpretation of facts. An opinion may be supported by an argument, although people may draw opposing opinions from the same set of facts. Opinions rarely change without new arguments being presented. However, it can be reasoned that one opinion is better supported by the facts than another.

then expressing those views stands as a risky endeavor among humans in much of western society. Particularly if the opinions are negative, then the expression of them takes on the nature of criticism.⁴ Some have read this text in Matthew superficially and then concluded that Jesus completely forbids such actions. But this is far from the truth as the exegesis below will demonstrate, and elsewhere in the New Testament not only does Jesus himself engage in severe criticism but He demands as much from His disciples. Even in the Sermon do we find such.

Evaluation of the ideas, attitudes, words and actions of other people is fundamental to most cultures in our world.⁵ This is particularly true in the educational world. Extensive systems of grading students are built off this presupposition that evaluation is essential to learning and skill development. Since the 1700s, the major ways of studying the Bible across the theological spectrum⁶ fall under the umbrella label of ‘critical studies.’⁷

How did the ancient world view forming opinions of others? Especially, how did they respond to negative criticism leveled at others? And how does that way of thinking differ from modern western approaches? Such an inquiry will help set the background for our study. Ancient Greek philosophy⁸ tried to distinguish between knowledge and opinion.⁹ To be sure, the determination of ‘knowledge’ in the ancient world differed radically from modern western culture.¹⁰ Plato saw two levels of reality: the visible and the invisible. This way of thinking would find little acceptance in the modern world, either in technical circles or at the popular level. Only the



other by analyzing the supporting arguments.” [“Opinion,” Wikipedia online]

⁴“Criticism is the judgment (using analysis and evaluation) of the merits and faults of the actions or work of another individual. Criticism can mean merely to evaluate without necessarily finding fault; however, usually the word implies the expression of disapproval.” [“Criticism,” Wikipedia online]

⁵Modern critical theory stands as one of the foundations of western culture and has played a major role in the advancement of scientific knowledge in most every field of research. For details, see “Critical Theory,” Wikipedia online. Modern critical thinking has much of its foundation in the work of Immanuel Kant who in 1781 published his *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Eng. title: *Critique of Pure Reason*).

⁶For a detailed study see “Biblical criticism,” Wikipedia online.

⁷Modern biblical critical studies have their origin in the literary criticism of the nineteenth century. For details, see “Literary theory,” Wikipedia online.

⁸“Ancient philosophy is the philosophy of the Graeco-Roman world from the 6th century [circa 585] BCE to the 4th century CE. It is usually divided into three periods: the pre-Socratic period, the periods of Plato and Aristotle, and the post-Aristotelian (or Hellenistic) period. Sometimes a fourth period is added that includes the Christian philosophers as well as Neo-Platonist ones (some of whom also called themselves ‘Philalethians.’) The most important of the ancient philosophers (in terms of subsequent influence) are Plato and Aristotle[7].

“The main subjects of ancient philosophy are: understanding the fundamental causes and principles of the universe; explaining it in an economical and uniform way; the epistemological problem of reconciling the diversity and change of the natural universe, with the possibility of obtaining fixed and certain knowledge about it; questions about things which cannot be perceived by the senses, such as numbers, elements, universals, and gods; the analysis of patterns of reasoning and argument; the nature of the good life and the importance of understanding and knowledge in order to pursue it; the explication of the concept of justice, and its relation to various political systems[8].

“In this period the crucial features of the philosophical method were established: a critical approach to received or established views, and the appeal to reason and argumentation.” [“Philosophy,” Wikipedia online]

⁹“Historically, the distinction of demonstrated knowledge and opinion was articulated by Ancient Greek philosophers. Today Plato’s analogy of the divided line is a well-known illustration of the distinction between knowledge and opinion, or knowledge and belief, in customary terminology of contemporary philosophy. Opinions can be persuasive, but only the assertions they are based on can be said to be true or false.” [“Opinion,” Wikipedia online]

¹⁰Plato’s approach to determine knowledge was the use of the “divided line” theory. For a detailed explanation see “Analogy of the divided line,” Wikipedia online.

negative assessment of ‘opinions’ over against ‘knowledge’ or ‘facts’, in the modern label, have had a lingering influence from the ancient world. Yet, the post-modern world of today continuously blurs the distinction between these two, knowledge and opinion, and superficially elevates opinions to the level of value as facts or knowledge. Not so in the ancient world. Only knowledge counted as having value.

In the Jewish world of Jesus a different approach dominated. Knowledge was based on and determined by the Law of God, the Torah.¹¹ Here was the origin of Truth. The quest was to determine this truth through careful interpretation of the Law by rigidly following prescribed methods of exegesis. In the Halakha sections of the Talmud one finds the discussions and debates among ancient rabbis about the meaning of the Law. Opinion could carry much weight, if it came from a widely recognized rabbi and was presented with persuasive arguments following accepted methods of exegesis of the biblical text.

Critical opinion of the beliefs and behavior of other people was commonplace among the Jews, and usually was based upon an interpretation of the Torah. This provided the necessary validation for any criticism leveled at others. The religious leaders, particularly the scribes and Pharisees, considered themselves to pretty much be the only individuals qualified to express valid critical opinions and judgments, since they were the experts in the Torah. Although little direct documentation exists in the literature, I’m confident that this did not keep other Jews from expressing critical opinions of others.¹² The legalistic orientation of first century Judaism promoted such critical assessment and expression.

Also important to the understanding of Mt. 7:1-5 is the Lukan parallel in Luke 6:37-42, which is placed in Luke’s version of the Sermon but at a different point than in Matthew’s account.

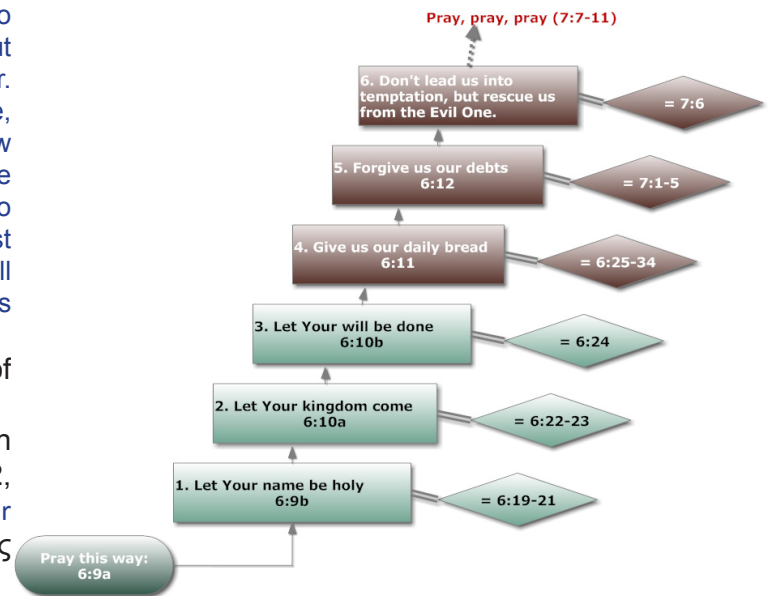
37 “Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; 38 give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”

39 He also told them a parable: “Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit? 40 A disciple is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully qualified will be like the teacher. 41 Why do you see the speck in your neighbor’s eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? 42 Or how can you say to your neighbor, ‘Friend, let me take out the speck in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the log in your own 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 neighbor’s eye.”¹³

Both Matthew and Luke have made different uses of their Q source for presenting this teaching of Jesus.

Contextually Mt. 7:1-5 represents an extension of the fifth petition in the Model Prayer in Mt. 6:12, “and forgive us our debts” (καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν, ὡς

Role of Prayer in the Sermon on the Mount



¹¹For details see “Torah,” Wikipedia online.

¹²Indirect signaling of this tendency can be surmised from the extensive use of terms dealing with criticism of others. Primarily is the Greek verb κρίνω (krino) and its related terms: κρίμα (krima); κρίσις (krisis); διακρίνω (diakrino) etc. The background Hebrew terms include ‘shaphat’ (שָׁפַט), ‘pallyl’ (פָּלַל), ‘dlyn’ (דָּלַן). Also see “Judgment” Bible Study Tools online.

¹³Luke 6:37-42 (GNT): 37 Καὶ μὴ κρίνετε, καὶ οὐ μὴ κριθήτε· καὶ μὴ καταδικάζετε, καὶ οὐ μὴ καταδικασθῆτε. ἀπολύετε, καὶ ἀπολυθήσεσθε· 38 δίδοτε, καὶ δοθήσεται ὑμῖν· μέτρον καλὸν πεπιεσμένον σεσαλευμένον ὑπερεκχυννόμενον δώσουσιν εἰς τὸν κόλπον ὑμῶν· ὃ γὰρ μέτρον μετρεῖτε ἀντιμετρηθήσεται ὑμῖν.

39 Εἶπεν δὲ καὶ παραβολὴν αὐτοῖς· Μήτις δύναται τυφλὸς τυφλὸν ὀδηγεῖν; οὐχὶ ἀμφοτέρω εἰς βόθυνον ἐμπεσοῦνται; 40 οὐκ ἔστιν μαθητὴς ὑπὲρ τοῦ διδάσκαλου, κατηρτισμένος δὲ πᾶς ἔσται ὡς ὁ διδάσκαλος αὐτοῦ. 41 τί δὲ βλέπεις τὸ κάρφος τὸ ἐν τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου, τὴν δὲ δοκὸν τὴν ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ ὀφθαλμῷ οὐ κατανοεῖς; 42 πῶς δύνασαι λέγειν τῷ ἀδελφῷ σου· Ἀδελφέ, ἄφες ἐκβάλω τὸ κάρφος τὸ ἐν τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ σου, αὐτὸς τὴν ἐν τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ σου δοκὸν οὐ βλέπων; ὑποκριτὰ, ἔκβαλε πρῶτον τὴν δοκὸν ἐκ τοῦ ὀφθαλμοῦ σου, καὶ τότε διαβλέψεις τὸ κάρφος τὸ ἐν τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου ἐκβαλεῖν.

καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν). When we ask for God’s forgiveness, there must not be a spirit of condemning others present in us, or else our prayer has no merit before God whatsoever. Instead, our plea for forgiveness must flow out of a posture of seeking to help others find God’s forgiveness in their lives as well.

Thus in light of all this we need to clearly understand Jesus’ words.

I. Be careful about condemning others, vv. 1-2

1 Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. 2 For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get.

7.1 Μὴ κρίνετε, ἵνα μὴ κριθῆτε· 2 ἐν ᾧ γὰρ κρίματι κρίνετε κριθήσεσθε, καὶ ἐν ᾧ μέτρῳ μετρεῖτε μετρηθήσεται ὑμῖν.

These two sentences begin with an admonition that has an attached warning, and the second sentence provides a reason for the admonition set up in synonymous parallel expression.

Admonition, v. 1. The negative admonition can be translated either ‘don’t allow judging others to become a part of your lifestyle.’ Or, ‘stop judging others.’¹⁴ What is it that disciples must not do? The verb κρίνω is used 114 times in the Greek New Testament with the six basic shades of meaning charted on the right. The appropriate meaning in 7:1 from this list in the BAGD Greek-English Lexicon is meaning 2.b., “to pass unfavorable judgment upon.” The other meanings are not applicable here, except for meaning 5 for the second instance of the verb. What this means then is that Jesus warns disciples against harsh, intentionally destructive criticism of others or else they will face divine judgment at the end.

Elsewhere¹⁵ the New Testament admonishes believers to engage in ‘judging’:¹⁶

John 7:24 (NRSV): “Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.”

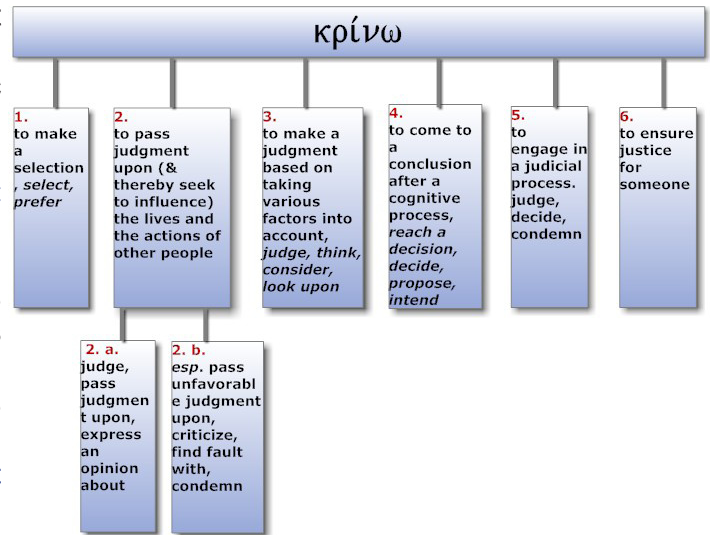
Luke 6:37-38 (NRSV): “Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”

1 Cor. 5:3-5 (NRSV): “3 For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present I have already pronounced judgment 4 in the name of the Lord Jesus on the man who has done such a thing. When you are assembled, and my spirit is present with the power of our Lord Jesus, 5 you are to hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.”

Titus 2:15 (NRSV): “Declare these things; exhort and **reprove with all authority**. Let no one look down on you.” If believers are to ‘judge’ others, including fellow believers, then how should it be done. Inherent to the statement is the foundational clue: we should judge the same way God will judge us. That is, our judgments must be fair and correct assessments. That is, we must judge ‘righteously.’ Jesus’ statement in Jhn. 7:24 is clear: *μὴ κρίνετε κατ’ ὄψιν, ἀλλὰ τὴν δικαίαν κρίσιν κρίνετε*. That is, our judgments must not be based merely on surface level appearances. Rather, they must be *δικαίαν* judgments, that is, just and correct. Paul admonishes believers to be motivated by compassion and restoration objectives in Gal. 6:1-5.

1 My friends, if anyone is detected in a transgression, you who have received the Spirit should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. Take care that you yourselves are not tempted. 2 Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way

Matthew 7:1-5



¹⁴The prohibitive present imperative verb form used normally demands the cessation of action already underway, but when used in axioms it normally specifies prohibition of action from becoming a part of a person’s way of living. Since the statement in verse one is clearly axiomatic in nature, the latter meaning is the preferred one.

¹⁵The list of NT texts treating ‘judging’ includes Mk. 4:24 (//Lk. 8:16-18); Jas. 4:11-12; Lk. 15:3-4; Gal. 6:1-5; 1 Tim. 5:20; 2 Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:13, 2:15.

¹⁶This NT perspective grows out of the long-standing Jewish heritage found in the Old Testament in places such as Jeremiah 22:3 (NRSV): “Thus says the Lord: **Act with justice and righteousness**, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor anyone who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the alien, the orphan, and the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place.”

you will fulfill the law of Christ. 3 For if those who are nothing think they are something, they deceive themselves. 4 All must test their own work; then that work, rather than their neighbor's work, will become a cause for pride. 5 For all must carry their own loads.

James 5:19-20 implies a similar stance.

19 My brothers and sisters, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and is brought back by another, 20 you should know that whoever brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner's soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

The warning against 'judging' becoming a part of one's ongoing activities is targeted against a future eschatological judgment by God in the purpose clause. This is made clear by a parallel use of the same clause, *ἵνα μὴ κριθῆτε*, in James 5:9

Beloved, do not grumble against one another, **so that you may not be judged**. See, the Judge is standing at the doors!¹⁷

Jesus reminds us that we face judgment by God and that should be engaged in the forbidden activity a similar negative assessment of us will be given by God. It would be false to assume from this statement that we can escape judgment by obeying the admonition. The New Testament clearly states that every believer, along with the rest of humanity, must stand before God in final judgment; note 2 Cor. 5:10.

For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil.

What the purpose clause is asserting is simply that negative judging of others by us now will bring negative judgment by God eschatologically.¹⁸

Reason, v. 2. The rationale provided in verse two extends the idea in the negative purpose statement in verse one. The synonymous parallelism here means that *ἐν ᾧ γὰρ κρίματι κρίνετε* means the same thing as *ἐν ᾧ μέτρῳ μετρεῖτε*. Also *κριθήσεσθε* means *μετρηθήσεται ὑμῖν*. Thus 'judging' is 'measuring out.' That is, it is not only forming an opinion, it is expressing that opinion. Again, the theological principle reflected is that what we do in this life will become the basis of what God does in final judgment. Luke, interestingly, highlights abundant positive blessing for correct judgments (Lk. 6:38b): "A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back."

Helping fellow believers means taking risks. And we need to weigh those risks carefully so that we can be prepared to genuinely help others.

II. Here's how to judge properly, vv. 3-5

3 Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your neighbor, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," while the log is in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor's eye.

3 τί δὲ βλέπεις τὸ κάρφος τὸ ἐν τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου, τὴν δὲ ἐν τῷ σώῳ ὀφθαλμῷ δοκὸν οὐ κατανοεῖς; 4 ἢ πῶς ἐρεῖς τῷ ἀδελφῷ σου· Ἄφες ἐκβάλω τὸ κάρφος ἐκ τοῦ ὀφθαλμοῦ σου, καὶ ἴδου ἡ δοκὸς ἐν τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ σου; 5 ὑποκριτά, ἐκβαλε πρῶτον ἐκ τοῦ ὀφθαλμοῦ σου τὴν δοκόν, καὶ τότε διαβλέψεις ἐκβαλεῖν τὸ κάρφος ἐκ τοῦ ὀφθαλμοῦ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου.

By this point we should begin to understand that proper judging requires spiritual health. Jesus addresses this point in verses three through five. The dramatic imagery used here drives home this point forcefully. Self-examination must precede critical examination of others. And this critical examination must be motivated by a desire to help the 'neighbor' / 'brother' remedy his problem so he can return to spiritual health as well.

The language of Jesus here is intense and forceful.¹⁹ We can *βλέπεις* the *τὸ κάρφος* in our neighbor's eye,

¹⁷*μὴ στεναίξετε, ἀδελφοί, κατ' ἀλλήλων ἵνα μὴ κριθῆτε· ἰδοὺ ὁ κριτὴς πρὸ τῶν θυρῶν ἔστηκεν.*

¹⁸Clearly this was how later Church Fathers understood Jesus. Note the illustration in 1 Clement 13:1-2: "Let us therefore be lowly minded, brethren, laying aside all arrogance and conceit and folly and anger, and let us do that which is written. For the Holy Ghost saith, Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, nor the strong in his strength, neither the rich in his riches; but he that boasteth let him boast in the Lord, that he may seek Him out, and do judgment and righteousness most of all remembering the words of the Lord Jesus which He spake, teaching forbearance and long-suffering: 13:2 for thus He spake Have mercy, that ye may receive mercy: forgive, that it may be forgiven to you. As ye do, so shall it be done to you. As ye give, so shall it be given unto you. As ye judge, so shall ye be judged. As ye show kindness, so shall kindness be showed unto you. With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured withal to you."

¹⁹In verses 3-5, the dramatic use of a 'splinter' (*κάρφος*) and a 'log' (*δοκός*) clearly has hyperbole tones, and perhaps, comic intention. The extreme scene of two individuals with either a splinter of wood or a large log sticking out of one of their eyes unquestionably

but we can't *κατανοεῖς* the *δοκὸν* in our own eye. The eye cleaning action in both cases is *ἐκβάλλω*. The passage is saturated with forceful expressions of compassionate ministry to fellow believers, just as is Luke's version in 6:35-39. There this emphasis is focused on loving one's enemies (v. 35) and is concluded by a parable about a blind person disastrously trying to guide a blind person (v. 39). This emphasis follows the apostolic emphasis upon compassionate 'restoration' ministry in Gal. 6:1-5, James 5:19-20; Titus 2:1-15; etc. First Peter 5:8-11 summarizes the issue well:

8 Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. 9 Be hospitable to one another without complaining. 10 Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. 11 **Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ.** To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.

The connection of 7:1-5 to the fifth petition of the Model Prayer is easy to see. We must bring a forgiving spirit to our prayer request for God's forgiveness. This forgiving spirit is also a critical part of the posture toward others that must be present when we ask for God's forgiveness. A judgmental, condemning spirit stands in stark contradiction to what Jesus demands from us.

Diagram of the Sermon on the Mount Mt. 7:1-5

126 ^{7:1} **Do not be judging**
lest you be judged;

7:2 for
with the judgment you judge

127 **you will be judged,**
and
with the measurement you measure

128 **you will be measured.**

7:3 and

129 **why do you see the splinter**
that is in the eye of your brother,
but

130 **do not notice the log**
that is in your eye?

7:4 Or

131 **how do you say to your brother,**
Let me cast out the splinter
from your eye,
and
indeed

132 **you do not cast out the log**
that is in your eye?

7:5 Hypocrites,

133 **cast out the log**
first
from your eye,
and
then

134 **you can see to cast out the splinter**
from your brother's eye.

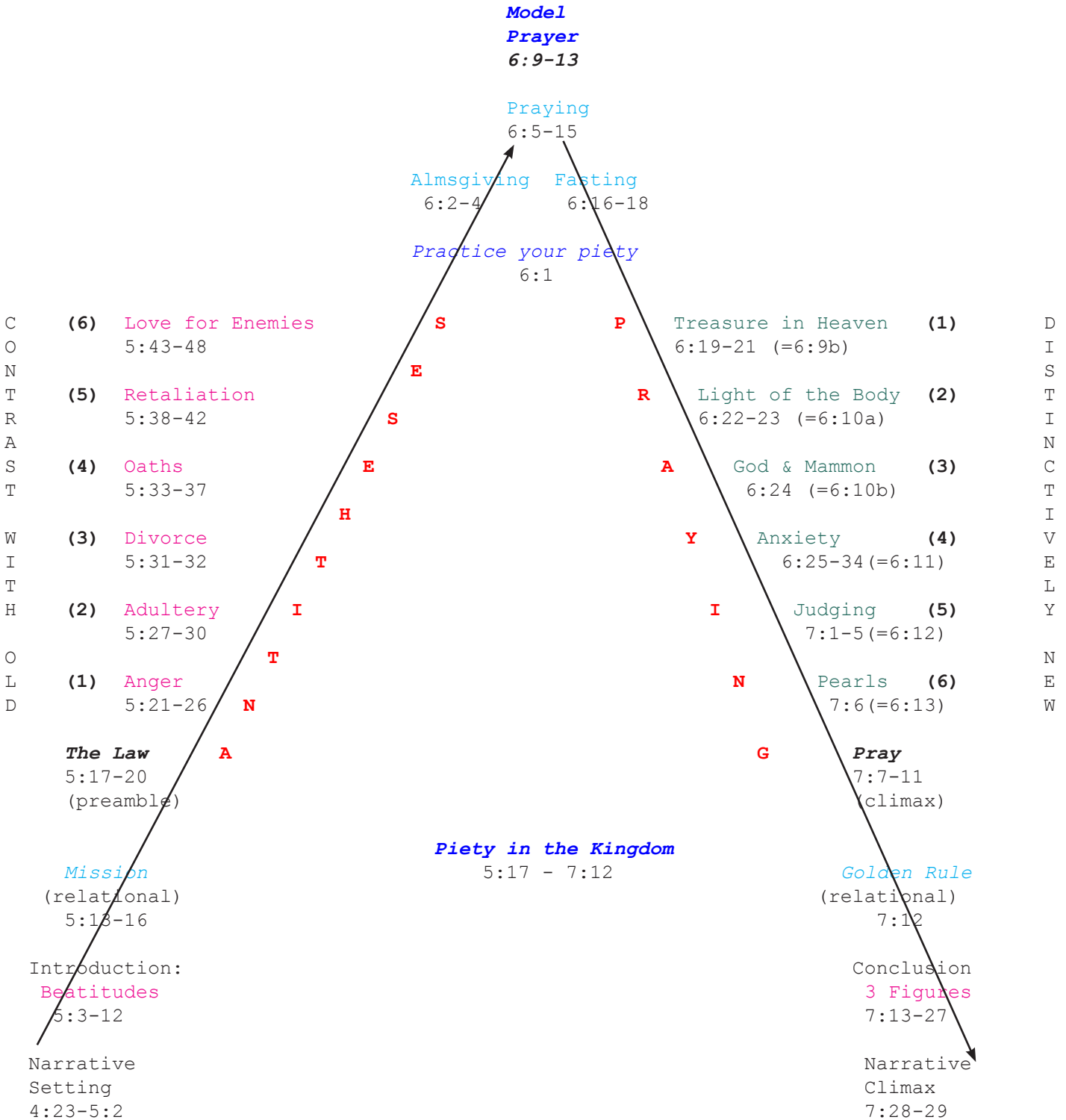
The text divides itself naturally into two sections: statements 126-128 and 129-134. The first section sets forth an admonition against 'judging' (#126) and then gives a reason for the admonition (#s 127-128). The warning thus is based upon eschatological judgment principles that God will use in final judgment. This principle is declared through the form of synonymous parallelism of "judging" and "measuring." These are but two ways of

is not alluding to an everyday experience, nor even a rarely occurring situation. The pieces of wood, portrayed in extreme difference from one another in size, represent moral / spiritual failures in the life of each individual. The highly improbable picture at the physical level of meaning painted by Jesus was most likely intended to capture the attention of the audience and vividly drive home a powerful spiritual point: *clean up your own life before trying to help others clean up their life.*

expressing the same idea.

The second half of the text (#s 129-134) set forth a prescription for 'judging' one's brother properly. First one must 'judge' himself (#s 129-132) and then he can see how to 'judge' his brother (#s. 133-134). The dramatic imagery used to express this is the outrageous picture of a brother with a 'splinter' in his eye while the one judging has a 'log' in his eye. The demand is that only those in good spiritual health are in a position to help their brother clean up their lives spiritually. People spiritually 'sick' are in no condition to be able to help their brother, even one with a lesser problem.

The Literary Structure of the Sermon on the Mount *Matthew 4:23-7:29*



Source: Lorin L. Cranford, *Study Manual of the Sermon on the Mount: Greek Text* (Fort Worth: Scripta Publishing Inc., 1988), 320. Adapted from Gunter Bornkamm, "Der Aufbau der Bergpredigt," *New Testament Studies* 24 (1977-78): 419-432.