

Context of Chapter 7: **Learn to Discern**

1. Discern your own sin—take the log out of your eye (v.3)
2. Discern your brother's sin—take the speck out of his eye (v.5)
3. Discern where you invest yourself—don't throw pearls before pigs (v.6)
4. Discern God's nature—He is a good Father! (v.11)
5. Discern how you should treat others—golden rule (v.12)
6. Discern your spiritual path—the narrow way of obedience (v.13)
7. Discern false prophets—know them by how they live—**fruit** (v.20)
8. Discern the truth of your own salvation—I never knew you (v.23)

Paragraph Context: Don't take the place of God

This part of the sermon wars against two types of outlooks/spirits

1. Critical spirit = taking the place of God as Judge (v.1-5)
2. Crusader spirit = taking the place of God as Savior (v.6)
 - You don't believe in the seed sown; you can't trust God
 - You take ownership of the person for your own reasons
 - You cannot force someone to see beauty if they have no capacity for it

Overview:

- I. Some Trample the Kingdom (dogs and pigs)
 - We contribute to this through pride and foolishness
- II. Some Treasure the Kingdom
 - We contribute to this through humility and wisdom

Only **God** can reveal His glory to a person. This is miraculous new birth, *undeserved!*

Forms of existence:

- Animal life: food, comfort, shelter, mating
- Human life: animal life, **plus**—beauty, art, music, politics, causes, significance
- God's life (eternal life): glory, immortality, holiness, relationship, LOVE

John 17:3: This is eternal life: that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

Those who Trample the Kingdom:

Ps. 22:16-18: For **dogs** encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet—I can count all my bones—they stare and gloat over me; they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.

2 Peter. 2:21-22: For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than *after knowing it* to turn back from the **holy** commandment delivered to them. What the true proverb says has happened to them: “The **dog** *returns* to its own vomit, and the **sow**, *after* washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire.”

Jude 10: But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like **unreasoning animals**, understand instinctively.

- What kind of things do you trample in your everyday life?

How Jesus guarded His pearls:

1. Discerned those who couldn't discern—"eyes to see, ears to hear"

Matt. 13:13, 16: This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear.

2. Discerned intellectual dishonesty—"neither will I tell you"—Matthew 21:23-27
3. Honored the refusal of those who rejected Him—"shake off the dust"
4. Don't respond to provocation—"no sign will be given;" "bent down and wrote"

How to waste holy things. How to see them trampled:

1. Argue with people who are intellectually *dishonest*
2. Win someone to Christ with guilt and pressure
3. Forfeit your body (the temple of the holy Spirit) to someone you're not married to
4. Partner with someone who opposes God (unequally yoked)
5. Allow a nonbeliever into holy sacraments: baptism and communion
6. Teach immature believers deep doctrines—God's sovereignty, predestination, calling
7. Teach stubborn believers childlike doctrines—spiritual gifts, miracles, love, charity
8. Correct the chronically unrepentant: if they will not hear, they are to be handed to Satan

But . . . there are those who Treasure the Kingdom!

Matt. 13:44-46: The kingdom of heaven is like **treasure** hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine **pearls**, who, on finding one **pearl** of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

1 Pet. 2:7: Therefore, to you who believe, *He is* precious. (NKJV)

John Piper: "*Belief* which saves is not just agreeing that the Bible is true. *Belief* which saves signifies a new nature which cherishes what God cherishes."

Q: How do I get here?

A: Look at Christ, in the Word, until He melts your heart!

Choose how you will approach the people around you.

1. Critical spirit = taking the place of God as Judge
2. Crusader spirit = taking the place of God as Savior
3. Complacent spirit = not taking a position
 - "I can't judge and I don't have to witness."
4. Christ's Spirit = taking a humble position
 - Let the Father lead you in wisdom—"I can do nothing on my own."

This text assumes you see Christ as a pearl, that you enjoy Him and that you TRY to share Him.