



**“Don’t cast your pearls before swine”
in contrast with:**

1 Peter 3:14-17 which says:

“But even if you do suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts reverence Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence; and keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are abused, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing right, if that should be God's will, than for doing wrong.”

Process here

- Biblical genre/history/cultural context
- Passage in Context
- Commentaries
 - List on last slide—in notes on website
- Applications by the church
- Pray for wisdom and personal application
- Beware always of our sinful, selfish hearts
- “Reverence Christ as Lord”

History/cultural setting/genre

- Matt. 7, part of Sermon on the Mount
- Proverbial Structure of Sermon on the Mount
- “A proverb is a concise, memorable saying, usually in poetic form, expressing **a generally accepted observation** about life as filtered through biblical revelation. . . .
- By following the canons of proverbial literature, a biblically-informed teacher would express his life observations in a proverbial format that is inherently oriented to be stated as generalized truth, **allowing for possible exceptions**. . . .
- **The individual proverbs or passages should be viewed in light of the book’s purpose and theme.”**

Problematic passages in Proverbs to be balanced by the rest of Scripture.

- This hermeneutical axiom (of looking at a specific passage in light of the Bible overall) is what the Reformers referred to as the *analogia fidei*, “the analogia of faith.” This is also referred to as *analogia scriptura*, **“the analogy of Scripture.”**
- This hermeneutical principle maintains that **Scripture interprets Scripture**. What this means is that the entirety of Scripture is the context and the guide in interpreting specific passages in Scripture. . . .
- **All Scripture is descriptive truth, but not all Scripture is prescriptive truth—either in general or specifically for you.**

Proverbs applications

- Some proverbs allow for limitations in various circumstances. . . .
- Proverbs 26:4–5 is certainly an example of this:
- Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you yourself will be just like him.
⁵ Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes.
- Wise planning with proper advice is praised in Proverbs 15:22: Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.
- However, this is balanced by Proverbs 19:21, “Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but the counsel of the LORD, it will stand”
 – <http://www.oldtestamentstudies.org/my-papers/other-papers/wisdom-literature/interpreting-proverbs/>

Summary so far

- Setting of the passage is the Sermon on the Mount
- Structurally, it contains a rabbinic, proverbial style of speaking
- Proverbial speak must be interpreted
 - Generally accepted, not absolute
 - Balanced by the rest of scripture (need to read, know, call to mind)
 - Descriptive does not mean prescriptive
 - Limitations in various circumstances

Study of Context: Immediate passage of the surrounding verses

- Matt. 7 “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. ² For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.
- ³ “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ⁴ How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? ⁵ You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.
- ⁶ **“Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.**

Parallel passages***Examine self as we read them—don’t be thinking of others they apply to***

- *Examples from Thompson Chain Reference Bible*
- Prov. 18: 2 Fools find no pleasure in understanding but delight in airing their own opinions. . . .¹³To answer before listening—that is folly and shame.
- Proverbs 26:4-5 Do not answer a fool according to his folly, Or you will also be like him. Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes.
- Proverbs 23:9 Do not speak in the hearing of a fool, For he will despise the wisdom of your words.
- Prov. 9: 7-9 Whoever corrects a mocker invites insults; whoever rebukes the wicked incurs abuse. Do not rebuke mockers or they will hate you; rebuke the wise and they will love you. Instruct the wise and they will be wiser still; teach the righteous and they will add to their learning.
- Proverbs 9:8 Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you, Reprove a wise man and he will love you.
- ***Sometimes you don’t know who the swine or fools are until you challenge them—if they turn on you, despise you, or don’t listen, you have learned something—walk away.***

Commentary on context

- ***Judge not refers to an unfavorable and condemnatory judgment. This does not mean that a Christian should never render judgment of any kind under any circumstances.*** The New Testament Scriptures are filled with exhortations to “mark those who cause divisions among you,” “receive not” those who deny Christ, “exhort,” “rebuke,” etc. Certainly judging ourselves and those who have failed in their spiritual responsibility is a necessity of church discipline (cf. 1 Cor 5). The point being made here is that we are not to judge the inner motives of another. We are not to render a verdict based upon prejudiced information. Nor are we to use ourselves as the standard of judgment for **with what . . . ye mete** you shall be judged. http://www.biblepath.com/commentary/sermon_on_the_mount.html
- “What would become of us, if God should be as exact and severe in judging us, as we are in judging our brethren; if he should weigh us in the same balance? We may justly expect it, if we be extreme to mark what our brethren do amiss. In this, as in other things, the violent dealings of men return upon their own heads.” Matthew Henry
- Then as a balance the next verse on not throwing pearls before swine... “balancing love with discernment” David Guizek

Classic Commentary on 7:1-6

(Classic Commentaries and Blue Letter Bible)

- Now, having warned his audience against judging others, this passage warns that as **there must not be too much severity (vv. 1-5), there must at the same time not be too much laxity** (v.6). Jesus anticipates a problem in the readers interpretation of his phrasings, and attempts to moderate and balance his warnings, for moral symmetry. The principles advanced in 7:1-5 are not to be abused. They do not eliminate the use of critical faculties when it comes to sacred concerns. One should not always throw the cloak over a brother’s faults. One must not be meekly charitable against all reason.
- There are two very clear and direct meanings in this passage that should be taken simultaneously:
 - First, this phrase is a general warning to limit the amount of time and energy one spends on the hard-core disbelievers. The gospel is directed to be presented to all, but there are separate admonishments to “shake the dust off” or walk away from those who are determined not to listen.
 - Secondly, there are certain teachings about God that are simply not appropriate to present to outsiders. This is not to assume a Gnostic viewpoint, in any way, but to underscore the very holy nature of His teachings, and to avoid situations where a heretic or other nonbeliever might mock or abuse that which is deeply sacred.

Teaching of ancient church Disciplina Arcani/Discipline of the Secret

- “It was desirable to bring learners slowly and by degrees to a full knowledge of the Faith. A convert from heathenism could not profitably assimilate the whole Christian religion at once, but must be taught gradually. It would be necessary for him to learn first the great truth of the unity of God, and not until this had sunk deep into his heart could he safely be instructed concerning the Blessed Trinity. Otherwise tritheism would have been the inevitable result. So again, in times of persecution, it was necessary to be very careful about those who offered themselves for instruction, and who might be spies wishing to be instructed only that they might betray.”
- Principle applies to Communion today
- And to progressive nature of much instruction: “milk” etc. Some people are not ready for teachings that would only be confusing or frustrating. Basics essential first.

Personal Applications

- Great Commission stands: share the gospel AND make disciples
- Discernment within it
- Discernment as to your personal calling
- What is your gift? Call?
- Who is your audience?
- In part determined by response
- Confirm with the Lord being always aware of our sinful hearts
- Serve Him—in the calling in which you are called
- Reverence Christ as Lord

Sources for both background study and citations

- [Commentaries on Blue Letter Bible & Classic Bible Commentaries](#)
- [Wikipedia and general history and background articles](#)
- <http://www.oldtestamentstudies.org/my-papers/other-papers/wisdom-literature/interpreting-proverbs/>
- <http://bible.cc/matthew/7-6.htm>
- <http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20080926141156AAPfM0h>
- http://www.biblepath.com/commentary/sermon_on_the_mount.html
- <http://oakridgechurch.com/riggs/pearl-sw.htm>
- <http://kingofages.com/2010/07/26/casting-pearls-before-swine-in-matthew-chapter-7/>
- http://www.veritasbible.com/commentary/catena-aurea/Matthew_7:6