**Matthew 7:6**

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/matt/matt-7/matthew-76/>

*Jesus teaches His disciples to discern who they correct. They should not correct people who are like dogs or swine, people who are unwilling to receive correction, people who will respond with hostility.*

 There is no apparent parallel account of this teaching in the Gospels.

In the prior verses Jesus warned His disciples against the dangers of judging others. He told them that as they judged others they were creating their own standard for being judged by God. He told them to deal with their own faults first, so they could then *see clearly* how to advise others regarding their faults. Now Jesus provides some additional advice for His followers before they decide to attempt to take the speck out of their brother’s eye (Matthew 7:5)*.*

Jesus tells them to consider *dogs* and *swine*.

*Dogs* and *swine* in the Jewish culture were considered unclean animals. *Dogs* was a common term for contempt, used as an insult (1 Samuel 17:43, Isaiah 56:10-11, Philippians 3:2, Revelation 22:15). *Swine* was even worse. The Mosaic law forbids eating pig meat (Leviticus 11:7). Someone who tended swine was forbidden from entering the temple. Jesus used swine in His parable of The Prodigal Son to demonstrate how low and desperate the son became in his poverty. Peter uses both terms (and quotes Proverbs 26:11) to describe false prophets and teachers: “It has happened to them according to the true proverb, ‘A dog returns to its own vomit,” and, “A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire’” (2 Peter 2:22).

Jesus again uses the chiastic structure to advise His disciples. If they examine their own faults, they can then clearly see how to take the speck out of their brother’s eye. Now the question is whether to actually confront the brother about his fault. Jesus states:

 A Do not give what is holy to dogs, and

        B do not throw your pearls before swine

         B’ or they will trample them under their feet

 A’ and turn and tear you to pieces

The Chiasm is

 A Favor to dogs

        B Favor to pigs

         B' Pig result (trample)

 A' Dog result (bite)

Since the pig is the most vile animal in Jewish culture, it makes sense that the *swine* example would be the main point of the chiasm.

Jesus commands His disciples not to judge or condemn others, but at the same time He wants them to be discerning. In Jesus’ example, giving something *holy* or sacred to *dogs* is likely to result in them turning on you to *tear you to pieces.* So the thought progression is as follows:

1. Discern a fault in someone else who is a brother.
2. Presume you have that fault yourself, and deal with it (the “log in your own eye”*)*.
3. Now reexamine the fault of the other person, and see it clearly*.*
4. Next evaluate whether that brother is in a state of mind to receive your help, or if they are not in a position to listen. If they aren’t in a position to listen then don’t bother with any correction. It will cause you trouble without providing any benefit.

In Jesus’ example, He makes clear that if we first examine our own sin, to then give advice to someone—to remove a speck out of their eye*—*is to provide something *holy. Holy* means set apart, special, valuable. By removing the speck*,* that person has the opportunity to move closer to God’s *kingdom and His righteousness.* So it is a genuine good deed to provide correction out of a good motive. But if the person is not in a position to receive correction, they won’t be helped. It will be like trying to feed meat to a pack of wild *dogs*, and you will just get bitten. The person will try to *tear you to pieces.* You will seek to correct, and your reward will be for them to try to destroy you in retribution.

This is not a problem if we are truly seeking the best for others, rather than seeking to pass judgement. There is no need for us to control or put down other people, for we know we will all stand before God. By discerning their faults, we are helped to see our own faults. That frees us to discern whether we are truly in a position to offer them correction, in a manner that helps them, while avoiding unnecessary strife, and trouble for ourselves.

In addition to not offering the *holy* advice of correction to someone who will *tear you to pieces* like a pack of *dogs,* the same goes for *pearls* of wisdom. Specifically, the wisdom to uncover faults and replace them with constructive behavior*.* To live out *His righteousness* in a manner that brings the principles of *His kingdom* into our world*.* This wisdom is like *pearls. Pearls* are precious. They belong on something you treat specially, like a necklace or ornament. You wouldn’t think to throw a group of *pearls* into the pig slop. The *swine* won’t appreciate the *pearls.* They will gain no benefit from them. They will simply *trample them under their feet.* They will not discern the value of the *pearls,* and will treat them like any other slop.

If someone will not recognize the *pearls* of wisdom within your correction, helping them “remove the speck in their eye*,”* then don’t waste something of great value (wisdom) upon someone who is not willing to recognize that value. If they prefer foolishness, you should let them wallow in it, until such time as they are open to listening.

Jesus presumes we will see faults in others. Our job is not to sit in God’s seat and pass judgement upon them. But we are to evaluate ourselves. See our own faults by observing faults in others. And we are to judge whether that person is in a posture to listen to correction. If someone is unwilling to listen to truth and it angers them, then we should leave them alone. They will be the worse for it, and it is their choice. They will stand before God and answer for their actions. They will not stand before us (Romans 14:4, 10). The truth of God’s *kingdom* and *His righteousness* is not to be used as a weapon against scoffers. It is to be offered as a gift.

If we have *a* *brother* who is like the *dogs* and *swine* in Jesus’ parable, unable to receive the gift of the truth of correction, and perhaps only perceive correction as a threat, then Jesus’ advice is to not share corrective truth with them. They will just *trample* it *under their feet and turn and tear you to pieces*. It might be unpleasant to them because it exposes their sin (John 3:20). This applies to a *brother.* Jesus is speaking these parables regarding fellow disciples. Believers have no obligation to correct someone who is not a *brother* (1 Corinthians 5:9-11)*.*

**Biblical Text**

**7:6** **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 y**