

The Golden Rule

Introduction

Matthew 7:12 Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

1. **Have you ever found yourself in a situation...**
 - A. **Faced with the need to make a decision on the spur of the moment?**
 - B. **Wondering what is the right way to act?**
 - C. **Unable to recall whether the Bible specifically addresses the moral dilemma in which you find yourself?**

2. **In His sermon on the mount, Jesus provided a helpful tool in such a situation...**
 - A. **A quick and easy way to know what to do**
 - B. **Something that is easy to remember**
 - C. **It is found in Matthew 7:12, and is commonly called "The Golden Rule"**

3. **But what is "The Golden Rule"?**
 - A. **Was Jesus teaching anything new or original by what He stated?**
 - B. **Well, in a way it was something new...**

"Golden Rule" vs "Silver Rule"

- 1. Many have taught that which is similar...**
 - A. The HINDU religion taught: This is the sum of duty: do naught to others which if done to thee would cause thee pain. — The Mahabharata**
 - B. The BUDDHIST religion taught: Hurt not others with that which pains yourself. — Udana-Varga**
 - C. The JEWISH traditions taught: What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow men. That is the entire Law; all the rest is commentary. — The Talmud**
 - D. The MUSLIM religion taught: No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself. — Hadith**
 - E. Confucius said, What you do not want others to do to you, do not do to others. (551-479 BC)**

2. Jesus' "rule" was slightly different...

A. Jesus requires you to do something favorably to others, while the others only prohibit you from doing something unfavorably to others!

1) Jesus: Do unto others what you want them to do to you

2) Others: Don't do to others what you don't want done to you

a. Note the difference...

b. With the others, all that is required is that you don't harm other people

c. With Jesus, what is required is that you show kindness to others

B. Jesus' rule is truly the "Golden" rule

1) The others are "Silver" rules

2) Of value, yes, but not as much as "gold"

3. So what Jesus taught was something new compared to what many teachers had taught prior. But in another sense it was nothing new; rather, in a simple and easy to remember statement, Jesus gives us...

A Guideline for Righteous Conduct Toward Others

- 1. It is in harmony with the Law and the Prophets.**
 - A. As we have seen earlier in the sermon.**
Matthew 5:20-48
 - 1) Jesus taught a standard righteousness that contrasted with that of the scribes and Pharisees.**
 - 2) But it was in harmony with what the Law actually revealed.**
 - B. This one “rule” summarizes what the Law and the Prophets were all about.**
 - C. Just as the commandment “Love your neighbor as yourself” summed up the Law according to Paul.**
Romans 13:8-10
 - 1) It is something that is always ready to be used.**
 - 2) The “golden rule” can be a guide for proper conduct in any given situation through life.**
 - 3) Treat others as you would be treated, and it is unlikely you will ever do the wrong thing.**

Examples of How to Apply This "Rule"

1. In teaching the lost...

- A. **Imagine what it must be like to be told you are wrong, or in sin.**
- B. **Wouldn't you want to be told in a loving and patient spirit?**
- C. **As you would have others try to persuade you to change religiously, so treat those you seek to convert.**
2 Timothy 2:24-26

Ephesians 4:15 but, **speaking the truth in love**, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—

2. In correcting one another...

- A. **No one likes to have their mistakes, errors, etc., pointed out.**
- B. **When necessary, wouldn't we prefer to be approached with a meek and patient spirit?**
- C. **As you would have others offer you constructive criticism, so give it to them.**
Galatians 6:1-2

3. In treating our family, neighbors, and enemies...

- A. **Everyone likes to have loving families, good neighbors, and no enemies.**

- B. Applying the golden rule will not only transform ourselves, but may also transform those around us!**
 - 1) Sibling rivalry would cease.**
 - 2) Neighborly squabbles would be non-existent.**
 - 3) In some cases, enemies would become friends.**
- C. Don't limit the application of the Golden Rule to religious matters!**

Conclusion

- 1. "The Golden Rule would reconcile capital and labor, all political contention and uproar, all selfishness and greed." Joseph Parker (1830-1902).**
 - A. Such would be the impact on our society if more followed Jesus' words.**
 - B. But let's start close to home, and let the Golden Rule transform our own lives and those closest to us!**
- 2. "We have committed the Golden Rule to memory; let us now commit it to life." Edwin Markham (1852-1940).**
 - A. This reflects what is true with most people; they know the rule, but don't live by it.**
 - B. If Jesus is truly our Lord, then His "golden rule" will govern our life!**

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