

## The Golden Rule

No. 164

### Introduction.

- I. One of the most profound truths Jesus ever uttered is found in Matthew 7:12. "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets."
- II. Tonight, I would like for us to probe into these familiar words of Jesus known as **The Golden Rule**. There are three thoughts I would like to emphasize about this splendid rule.
  - I. **Not Original With Jesus** - In the first place, **The Golden Rule** was not original with Jesus.
    - A. In fact many others have taught a similar rule.
      1. The **Hindu** religion taught: **This is the sum of duty: do naught to other which if done to thee would cause thee pain.** - The Mahabharata
      2. The **Buddhist** religion taught: **Hurt not others in ways you yourself find hurtful.** - Udana-Varga, 5.18
      3. The **Jewish** traditions taught: **What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow man. That is the entire Law; all the rest is commentary.** - The Talmud
      4. The **Muslim** religion taught: **No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself.** - Sunnah
      5. The **Baha'i** faith teaches: **He should not wish for others that which he doth not wish for himself, nor promise that which he doth not fulfil.** - The Book of Certitude
      6. **Here are some other uninspired statements or rules.** Some of these were given hundreds of years before the birth of Christ.
        - a. **Do not that to thy neighbor that thou wouldst not suffer from him.** - Pittacus of Lesbos (650-570 BC).
        - b. **What you do not want others to do to you, do not do to others.** - Confucius (551-479 B.C.)
        - c. **Do not do unto others what angers you if done to you by others.** - Isocrates (436-338 BC).
        - d. "Tzu-kung asked, 'Is there a single word which can be a guide to conduct throughout one's life?' The Master said, 'It is perhaps the word "shu". Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire.'" - Analects, 15.24.
        - e. **Treat your inferiors as you would be treated by your betters.** - Seneca (4 BC-AD 65).
    - B. We can see what Jesus taught was similar to what others had taught. There is, however, a difference.

1. Others basically taught, “Don’t do to others what you don’t want done to you.”
2. Jesus was positive. Jesus taught, “Do to others what you want them to do to you.”
3. Jesus requires us to do something favorable to others, while others only prohibit us from doing something unfavorable to others.
4. **What Jesus taught is superior to what others had taught.** Others rules are silver or bronze rules at best. God gave **The Golden Rule.**

C. It should be emphasized here that Jesus did not claim **The Golden Rule** originated with Him. (Matt. 7:12b).

1. Though not stated in these exact words in the Old Testament, Jesus taught this rule was the sum or substance of the law and the prophets - the Old Testament. (Lev.19:18b).
2. This rule of doing to others what we want them to do to us was a summary of the Old Testament. “The law and the prophets” all taught we are to love others and treat them as we desire to be treated.
3. Listen to what Paul wrote in Romans 13:8-10.

**ROM 13:8 Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. 9 For this, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; love therefore is the fulfillment of the law.**

4. Paul clearly shows loving neighbor and treating him as we desire to be treated was the fulfillment of the Mosaic law.
5. It is obvious that this rule is also **intended for the Christian Age.** It is obvious that this splendid rule is included in the new covenant of Christ that is binding on men today. There are countless passages in the New Testament that set forth we are to treat others with love, respect, and kindness. (John 15:12; Col. 3:14; 1 Pet. 1:22; 1 Jn. 4:7, 8).

**1CO 13:1 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing. 4 Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, 5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, 6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all**

**things. 8 Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. 13 But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.**

**II. Perfect Rule For Human Conduct** - In the second place, I would like to emphasize that **The Golden Rule** is a perfect rule for human conduct.

A. Yes, **The Golden Rule** is a perfect rule of human conduct. We are not always certain what to say. We are not always certain how to act. We are not always certain how to treat others. **The Golden Rule** is us the right answer every time.

1. This rule, if followed, will **revolutionize** our lives and the lives of others.
2. This rule, if implemented into our lives, would **destroy** envy, slander, poverty, crime, hate, unkindness, and most any other ill one could name.

**B. There are five basic desires that all humans have in common.**

1. We all want others to: (1) like us (2) to treat us kindly (3) to overlook our faults (4) to appreciate us, (5) and to understand us.
2. These desires will be fulfilled if we treat others this way.
3. **The Golden Rule** is an application of **the law of sowing and reaping**. (Gal. 6:7, 8).
  - a. The words of Paul **refer to evil**. We reap what we sow in regard to evil things.
  - b. The words of Paul also **refer to good things**. Others, almost without exception, will treat us as we treat them. There is something in man which compels him to treat others as he is treated. Only those who have seared consciences can resist this strong impulse to return good for good.

**C. Here are some examples of how to apply this rule.**

1. It should be used in **deciding how to treat others**. (Lk. 10).
2. It should be used in **teaching the lost**. (Eph. 4:15).
3. It should be used in **restoring the fallen brother**. (Gal. 6:1).
4. Once **a man was driving down Church Street** in Nashville, Tennessee.
  - a. The traffic was unusually heavy. When he saw a driver desperately trying to get on the main thoroughfare, he slowed down to allow him entrance. As he slowly proceeded down the bustling highway, a little later, he noticed that the man he had let on the busy thoroughfare was extending the same kindness to another desperate driver.
  - b. So it is with life. The kind things we do to others are repeated and the world is made better. **The Golden Rule** is contagious and we need an epidemic in the church and in the world today.

5. There is a **plaque in a well-known university field house** honoring a certain athlete

- a. To most he is either unknown or forgotten. But in 4 years he did not miss a practice, he never broke training, he never complained. Yet, in 4 years he played only 2 minutes. The coach presented the plaque with the inscription, “He Never Quit.”
- b. It is my prayer that we will be this persistent in the practicing of **The Golden Rule**. Let’s not practice it occasionally, but everyday to those who love us and to those who hate us. It is the Christlike way of making life a thrill for us and for others.

III. **The Golden Rule Alone Will Not Save** - In the third place, I would like to emphasize that **The Golden Rule** alone will not save.

A. This rule needs to be practiced by every living person. It is a rule that will never become obsolete and will bless our lives and the lives of others.

B. This rule alone, however, will not save.

1. Some people, when you speak to them of salvation, say, “**Oh, I live by The Golden Rule.**” They believe they are saved by treating others as they would like to be treated.
2. They are, however, **basing their salvation on a false assumption**. No man ever keeps this rule perfectly. And even if we could possibly live up to every part of **The Golden Rule**, we should remember that we are not only saved by the way we treat our fellow man, but we are also saved by the way we treat Christ.
3. **I can imagine a man coming to the end of the way and standing before God**. Then the great question will be asked him, “What did you do with Jesus?” And the man will answer, “I lived by **The Golden Rule**.” “But what did you do with my Son who died for you?” And the man will say, “I tried to treat everybody fair and square.” Then God will ask, “But what did you do with my Son who died for you on the cross, and knocked at the door of your heart, seeking entrance?” The man will say, “I did nothing with Him, Lord, but...” And before the man finishes that sentence the command is given, “Cast him into the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”

C. Oh, once again **let me sound out the message** that our salvation is in Christ and Christ alone. **The Golden Rule** and all of the other divine rules must be kept, but unless one gives his life to Jesus and lives for Him he will be lost.

1. Acts 4:12.

2. **Jesus is the only way to heaven**. He is the one who made atonement for man. We cannot spurn Christ and have eternal life.

a. We must put our complete, undivided **trust in Christ** to have eternal life. (Jn. 8:24).

b. We must **turn from our sinful, pernicious ways** to have eternal life. (Lk. 13:3).

c. We must **confess Christ** to have eternal life. (Matt. 10:32, 33).

d. We must **be baptized** to have eternal life. (Mk. 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21).

e. We must then **live faithfully** to have eternal life. (Rev. 2:10).

## Conclusion.

I. **Do you want the best life here and in the hereafter?** Then let Christ enter your heart today. He will help you to live, He will be with you in sorrow and temptation and at the end of the way He will open you the gates of eternal glory.

II. Come to Christ now. Come as we sing.

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