

THE GOLDEN RULE

Matthew 7:12

I. INTRODUCTION-

- a. Jesus said the Golden Rule sums up the entire ethical teaching of the Old Testament... so that makes this verse pretty important.

II. WHAT THE GOLDEN RULE IS NOT-

- a. The Golden Rule is not the gospel...it is not the way to be saved...it is not the way to Heaven.
- b. Today many churches proclaim the “gospel” of the Golden Rule...they say in order to go to Heaven...you need to come to church every now and then...you need to be a nice person...you need to try to love your neighbor as yourself...you need to treat others kindly and treat them as you want to be treated ...and if you do this more often than you don’t...then you are good person...you are a Christian ...and you will go to Heaven.
- c. Every Christian should be faithful to church...every Christian should be a nice person...every Christian should try to love their neighbor as themselves ...every Christian should be kind to others and treat others as they want to be treated ... every Christian should be a good person...not to be saved...but because we are saved.
- d. But none of those things makes a person a Christian...that is not the gospel...and that is not the way to Heaven.
- e. Some people try to make the Golden Rule an alternative to the gospel...they say, *“You can believe in Jesus...but I am going to Heaven by keeping the Golden Rule”*...the Golden Rule is not an alternative to the Gospel ... it is not “another” way to Heaven.
- f. For you to go to Heaven by keeping the Golden Rule and the other laws and commands of the Bible ...you would have to keep them not 50%, 80% or 90% of the time...but perfectly...100% of the time.
- g. *Deuteronomy 27:26 (NKJV) “Cursed is the one who does not confirm (obey) all the words of this law.”*

- h. When it comes to salvation...the laws, commandments, rules and principals of the Bible do two things...(1) They reveal the holy and perfect nature of God...(2) They reveal the failure of every one of us to live according to God's standards.
- i. The Golden Rule and the laws, commandments, rules and principals of the Bible cannot save us...they can only condemn us...and show that we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.
- j. In order to go to Heaven...you have to be more than just a "good" person...you have to be a "perfect" person....since none of us can achieve perfection on our own... we must receive the perfection that God offers us in Christ.
- k. *Philippians 3:9 (NKJV) "and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith."*
- l. The Golden Rule is not the gospel...it is not an alternative to the Gospel...it is not a way to Heaven...so what is the Golden Rule?

III. WHAT THE GOLDEN RULE IS-

- a. The Golden Rule is God's standard...for how those who are saved are to treat others in the world.
- b. How are God's people to treat others in the world? ... We are to deal with others as we would like others to deal with us.
- c. Do you want to be loved? Then love others... Do you want to be respected? Then respect others...Do you want to be treated honestly? Then be honest with others ...Do you want to be forgiven when you fail? Then forgive others.
- d. Do you need affirmation? Then affirm others...When you are hurt, wounded, and broken do you need a gentle touch? Then be gentle with others...Do you appreciate kindness? Then be kind of others...Do you want to be encouraged? Then encourage others...Do you want others to keep their promises to you? Then keep your promises to others.
- e. The Golden Rule is agape love...God's kind of love...in action...in practical everyday living.

- f. The Golden Rule requires Christians not only to refrain from harming others...it requires us to take the initiative in doing good to others...even when they are not good to us ...and even when they don't deserve it.
- g. The Golden Rule should motivate us to share Christ...once you and I were lost without Christ...and someone cared enough to share the gospel with us ... shouldn't we now do the same with the lost?
- h. If we were doing something that would harm our walk with the Lord and hurt others ...wouldn't we appreciate a fellow Christian helping us to see it?... shouldn't we do the same for our fellow Christians?
- i. The Golden Rule is not a way of salvation...because only those who are genuinely saved and Spirit-filled...those whose heart is filled with love for God and others...will have the power and the desire to carry out the Golden Rule as set forth by the Lord Jesus.

IV. THE GOLDEN RULE SUMS UP THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS-

- a. *Matthew 7:12 (NKJV) "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."*
- b. Jesus said the Golden Rule summarizes...the ethical principles and laws found in the Old Testament.
- c. All of the ethical commands of the Old Testament...do not murder...do not commit adultery...do not steal...do not seek revenge...do not defraud others... do not envy...do not slander...protect the poor...provide for the needy...be a friend to strangers...can all be summarized by the Golden Rule.
- d. Imagine how different the church, the family, the nation and the world would be ...if God's people truly lived by the Golden Rule.
- e. Imagine if every husband and wife lived out the Golden Rule in their marriage ... if every employee and employer lived by the Golden Rule every day!

V. CONCLUSION-

- a. How should we respond to the Golden Rule as believers? ... #1, we should love this command... #2, we should agree with this command and acknowledge that

this is the way the Lord wants us to love people... #3, we should humble ourselves before the Lord and confess how often we have failed to live up to this command...and #4, we should ask God to give us a servant's heart and help us to grow in our ability to do unto others as we would have them do unto us.

- b. There is only one person who ever perfectly fulfilled the Golden Rule...the Lord Jesus Christ...at the cross He went beyond the Golden Rule for us...He did for us what we could not do for ourselves...He died for us.

- c. *Romans 10:6-13 (NKJV) "But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' " (that is, to bring Christ down from above) 7 or, " 'Who will descend into the abyss?' " (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 8 But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): 9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. 13 For "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."*