

THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN LIFE

Studies in the Sermon on the Mount

Part 39

“The Golden Rule”

"Therefore, Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets.

Matthew 7:12 NLT

I. The Genius of Jesus Christ

A. The Wisdom to Simplify Complex Things

1. Here in this one verse, (12 words), which is commonly called the “Golden Rule”, Jesus sums up the entire teaching of the Old Testament!

a. We learned back in Matthew 5:17 that when Jesus uses the term “the law and the prophets”, He was referring to the entirety of the Old Testament. (“Do not think I have come to do away with the Law and the Prophets”)

2. There was another place He did the same thing over in Matthew 22 when they asked Him which was the “greatest” of all the commandments:

Jesus replied, "'You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.'* 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'* 40 The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments."

Matthew 22:37-40 NLT

3. When we live by this Great Commandment and this “Golden Rule”, we will be keeping all the commandments in the Old Testament!

“The meaning is, that the second table of the law is fulfilled, when every man conducts himself in the same manner towards others, as he wishes them to conduct themselves towards him.”

John Calvin

- Love God with all your being
- Love your neighbor as yourself
- Do to others what you would want them to do to you

'This is the substance of all relative duty; all Scripture 'in a nutshell.' An incomparable summary!

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary

4. The concept presented here in the Golden Rule is not unique to Christianity!

It seems as if God has written (the Golden Rule) upon the hearts of all men, for sayings of this kind may be found among all nations, Jewish, Christian, and Heathen.

Adam Clarke

5. But if everyone agrees the Golden Rule is good, why doesn't everyone live this way? If the whole world agrees with the wisdom of it, why doesn't everyone do it?

“It is just at this point that theology comes in. The gospel begins with the statement that man is sinful and perverted, a creature that is so bound and governed by evil that he cannot keep to the golden rule. The problem is ‘self’.”

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones

6. And of all the world's religions, only the Christian faith teaches that the "self" must die and be "born again"! Apart from God, no one can consistently live this way. Why?

**Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.
Romans 8:7 NKJV**

7. And even if we ARE born again, we still have to deal with the problem of our "flesh"....

**"Self-love will feel itself sadly cramped when brought within the limits of this precept; but God hath spoken it: it is the spirit and design of the law and the prophets; the sum of all that is laid down in the Sacred Writings, relative to men's conduct toward each other."
Adam Clarke**

8. That is why living by this "Golden Rule" is....

B. The Normal Christian Life

1. We have spent 10 months working our way through the Sermon on the Mount, a series we call the "normal" Christian life; this is what true Christianity looks like!

2. Time and again we have proved the fact that only those who are born of God can live the Sermon on the Mount or consistently keep the Law of God.

**"The solution for the problems of the world today is essentially theological. The failure to implement the golden rule is due solely to the Fall and to sin.
David Martyn Lloyd-Jones**

a. This is why Jesus said, "You must be born again."

3. But even being born again does not guarantee we will live this way;

We have committed the Golden Rule to memory; let us now commit it to life
Edwin Markham, American Poet

4. God has given us the Holy Spirit to put it into practice!

“The Golden Rule is of no use whatsoever unless you realize it’s your move.”
Dr. Frank Crane, American Philosopher

5. The Golden Rule is called a “rule” because it is meant to be applied as a measure of every relational situation. Our first move in dealing with others is to ask ourselves, “If I was them, what would I want me to do?”

6. This gets very practical! Because how I consistently treat others is how I will be consistently treated! As in “Blessed are the merciful, for they will obtain mercy”.

7. We know this is true by remembering our recent study on judgment.

C. Another “Therefore”

1. Some of the new Bible translations leave out the first word of this verse:

“*Therefore*, what things so ever you would men do to you, do so unto them.”

When you read a “therefore” in the Bible, find out what it’s there for.”
Derek Prince

2. Remember this Chapter began with verse 1; “Judge that you be not judged”; then comes the “therefore”! We might say it this way...

BECAUSE you will be judged in the same way that you judge others...”therefore do unto others as you would others do unto you!

You do not like unkind things said about you? Well, do not say them about others. You do not like people who are difficult, and who make your life difficult, and bring problems into your life, and constantly put you on edge? Well; in exactly the same way, do not let your behavior be such that you become like that to them. It is quite as simple as that.

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones

II. Practical Expressions of the Golden Rule in People I Admire

A. The Family of Billy Graham

1. Most us remember **the humiliating fall of TV evangelist Jim Bakker**, the founder of the PTL Christian TV network, who went to prison because of his moral failures and financial impropriety.

2. 10 years later, in a Christianity Today article, he tells of his release from prison and how the family of evangelist Billy Graham reached out to him...

Former televangelist Jim Bakker speaks of events that occurred immediately after his release from prison:

When I was transferred to my last prison, **Franklin [Graham] said he wanted to help me out when I got out—with a job, a house to live in, and a car.** It was my fifth Christmas in prison. I thought it over and said, "Franklin, you can't do this. It will hurt you. The Grahams don't need my baggage." He looked at me and he said, "Jim, you were my friend in the past and you are my friend now. If anyone doesn't like it, I'm looking for a fight."

So when I got out of prison the Grahams sponsored me and paid for a house for me to live in and gave me a car to drive. The first Sunday out, Ruth Graham called the halfway house I was living in at the Salvation Army and asked permission for me to go to the Montreat Presbyterian Church with her that Sunday morning. When I got there, the pastor welcomed me and sat me with the Graham family. There were like two whole rows of them—I think every Graham aunt and uncle and cousin was there. The organ began playing and the place was full except for a seat next to me. Then the doors opened and in walked **Ruth Graham. She walked down that**

aisle and sat next to inmate 07407-058. I had only been out of prison 48 hours, but she told the world that morning that Jim Bakker was her friend.

Afterwards, she had me up to their cabin for dinner. When she asked me for some addresses, I pulled this envelope out of my pocket to look for them—in prison you're not allowed to have a wallet, so you just carry an envelope. She asked, "Don't you have a wallet?" And I said, "Well, yeah, this is my wallet." After five years of brainwashing in prison you think an envelope *is* a wallet. She walked into the other room and came back and said, **"Here's one of Billy's wallets. He doesn't need it. You can have it."**

"The Re-education of Jim Bakker," Christianity Today (12-7-98)

B. The Story of James Cash Penney

In 1898, James Cash Penney began working for a small chain of general stores in the western United States called the Golden Rule stores. In 1902, the owners were so impressed by his work ethic and salesmanship, they offered him one-third partnership in a new store he would open. Penney invested \$2,000 and moved to Wyoming to open a new store, then 2 more; then 5 years later bought out his partners, moved to Salt Lake City, Utah and re-incorporated the company in 1916 under a new name...the J. C. Penney Company. When asked his secret of success...

"I cannot remember a time when the Golden Rule was not my motto and precept, the torch that guided my footsteps."

James Cash Penney

C. Founder and CEO Dan Cathy

Pastor Rick Warren recently told a about Dan Cathy, the President and CEO of the Chick-fil-A. Cathy was in southern California checking on some new Chick-fil-A restaurants their company was building near Saddleback Church, where Rick is the founding pastor. These two stopped at a construction site of a new Chick-fil-A.

Here's how Rick Warren told the story.

We were looking at the building. While we were there we were hungry so we went next door to, I think it was a Taco Bell. It was some other fast food in competition

with Chick-fil-A. We'd been out, our hands were all sweaty and dirty and we went in the restroom and washed our hands. Then I watched Dan take out extra sheets ... This is the CEO of a chain of restaurants. I watched him pull them out and I watched him hand clean the sinks of the Taco Bell bathroom we were just in. I looked at him and said, "Thank you for doing that Dan." He said, "Rick, “

“We teach our staff to always leave any place they are at better than it was when they found it, whether it's our place or not.”

Dan Cathey, Chick-Fil-A CEO

Nobody at Taco Bell and nobody at Taco Bell Corporate knew that the CEO of their competition just cleaned their bathroom ... for free.

D. The Spinach Behind Popeye's Success

Cheryl A. Bachelder, the CEO of Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen, turned her company around with a focus on serving others. A committed Christian in the workplace, Bachelder is also the author of Dare to Serve: How to Drive Superior Results by Serving Others. In a recent interview, she share her thoughts on servanthood:

The Bible verse that's on my calendar every day is Philippians 2:3 which is how I lead in my family and in my work. It says, "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves."

Cheryl A. Bachelder

1. Only heaven can record all the stories of how living the Golden Rule brings blessings into our lives!

III. Conclusion

A. We Have The Cure for What's Ailing Our World

“Sometimes we foolishly tend to think that our international and other problems are economic, social or political; but in reality they all come down to this, our relationships with people.”

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones

1. Start with being honest...

“Instinctively we are all self-centered. We are resentful of what is said and thought of us, but we never seem to realize that other people are the same, because we never think of the other person.”

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones

2. This Golden Rule is so simple a child can understand it...

All that you "expect" or "desire" of others in similar circumstances, do to them. Act not from selfishness or injustice, but put yourself in the place of the other, and ask what you would expect of him. This would make you impartial, candid, and just. It would destroy avarice, envy, treachery, unkindness, slander, theft, adultery, and murder.

Albert Barnes

3. Let me say it for the millennial generation...

“Tweet others the way you would want to be tweeted.”

4. What a world it would be if we all lived like this!

COMMUNION THOUGHT

Dr. Leonard Sweet gave us the different rules people live by...

The Iron Rule: Do unto others before they do unto you.

The Silver Rule: Do unto others as they do unto you

The Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

The Titanium Rule: Do unto others as Jesus had done unto you.

Title Slide