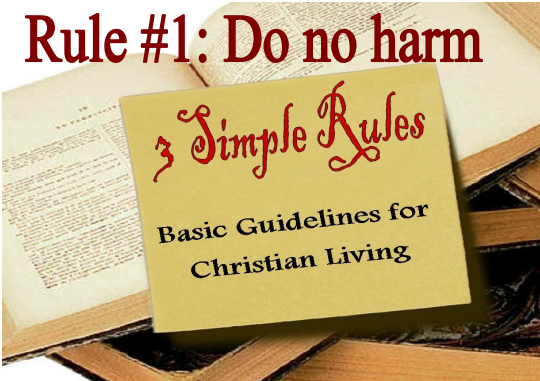


Rule #1: Do no harm



“No Wake Zone”

Life is complicated. Our airwaves, bandwidths and bookshelves are loaded with instructions aimed at making us prosperous, successful and fulfilled, not to mention fit and fabulous looking. Do you ever long for simplicity? A return to the basics? A clear, no-nonsense approach to living? John Wesley, the founder of Methodism and no stranger to complicated and chaotic times, originated three basic rules for the ‘People called Methodists.’

Sermon notes from January 6:

“No Wake Zone!”

Scripture reference: *Romans 12:9-18*

1. **Harm** is caused when we put ourselves first.

2. **Basic steps** for ‘doing no harm’

A. **Pro-actively** look for ways to **build** others up

B. **Control** our **tongues**.

C. Be **patient** with others...**God** is **patient** with **you!**

Daily Readings and Devotions for the Week of January 7-12

Monday, January 7 Read Psalm 75

In its warning against boastfulness and wickedness, this psalm calls us to humility, reminding us that ultimately it is God who is in charge of all things. How is doing no harm essentially a call to selflessness and trust in God? Give some examples from daily life as to how this might work. _____

Tuesday January 8 Read Matthew 5:38-48

Justice is often understood as putting everything on an equal footing. Jesus calls for something more here than simply getting even. Why? _____

What sort of Kingdom is envisioned when these passages are honored? _____

V. 48 can be a bit challenging but what do they tell us of the nature of God and the sorts of attitudes and actions God honors? _____

Wednesday, January 9 Read James 3:2-12

How might one of our first, most necessary steps in avoiding causing harm be gaining control of our tongues? _____

What is the warning that James gives us as concerns the words we speak? _____

How is this true in your own experience? _____

What are some seemingly harmless ways we use our tongues that have large and painful consequences for ourselves and others? _____

Ask God to help you with this today as you pray.

Thursday, January 10 Read Romans 12:9-18

Imagine for a moment what it would be like to live around a person (or people) who adhered to these guidelines. How would the presence of such attributes make your life easier? With this in mind,

No Wake Zone

why does scripture call us to live this way?

_____ What empowers us to do so?

Friday, January 11 Read Ephesians 4:1-6; 25-32

If we focus solely on ourselves and primarily serve ourselves first, we are bound to do harm to someone. Do you agree with this? Why or why not? _____

Reaching beyond ourselves does far more than just make ourselves and even others feel good. Look especially at vv.3 & 29. Why are we called to live humbly and selflessly? _____

What are the long term results for the gospel and for God’s Kingdom? _____

Saturday, January 12 Read Exodus 20:9-17

The first part of the 10 commandments deal with our relationship to God. These last move from how we treat God to how we treat each other. Which of these rules concerns doing no harm? _____

Do no harm

It’s one thing to talk about doing no harm, but quite another to be a proactive agent of positivity and grace. Below are some possible activities to try in the coming week. Try one or more and share the results with a prayer partner or devotional group.

- **Next Sunday, make a point of changing seats and sitting next to someone you don’t know well and really getting to know them.**
- **Tell someone how much you appreciate them. Send a card or note and tell them why you appreciate them. Do this with more than one person this week.**
- **Be a source of encouragement to everyone you meet today– compliment them, smile at them, do something generous. How do you feel at the end of the day?**

What kind of harm is stopped? Who is protected? _____

Which of these rules are easy for you to keep? Which are more difficult? _____

Why is that & where is your boundary between which you will keep and which you will not? _____

Small Group Discussion Guide

1. **Read Psalm 75** Share: “In its warning against boastfulness and wickedness, this psalm calls us to humility, reminding us that ultimately it is God who is in charge of all things. “

- How is doing no harm essentially a call to selflessness and trust in God? Give some examples from daily life as to how this might work.

2. **Read Matthew 5:38-48** Share: “Justice is often understood as putting everything on an equal footing. Jesus calls for something more here than simply getting even. Why? “

- What sort of Kingdom is envisioned when these passages are honored?
- V. 48 can be a bit challenging but what do they tell us of the nature of God and the sorts of attitudes and actions God honors?

3. **Review these points from last Sunday’s sermon and the accompanying scriptures. Discuss the questions that follow. Invite the group to share any notes or observations they may have made on these points.**

A. **Harm** is caused when we put **ourselves** first.

1. *Look up Romans 12:9-18. Discuss the following: How are Paul’s directives here focused on turning us outside of ourselves? Give some specific examples of what living out these instructions might look like.*
2. *Read Romans 12:2. How is this sort of selfless focus transformative and in what ways is the opposite attitude conformative to the culture around us. Give some examples where possible.*

B. Basic steps for ‘doing no harm’

1. **Pro-actively** look for ways to **build** others up

- * *Ask: Why is it not enough to simply refrain from doing harm? Discuss this proverb: ‘The opposite of love is not hate; it’s apathy!’ (You might also use the parable of the rich man and Lazarus from Luke 16:19-31 as a reference)*
- * *Look up Ephesians 4:1-6; 25-32. How is ‘building up’ a form of emulating Christ?*

2. **Control** our **tongues**.

- * *Read James 3:2-12. Do you agree with James? Share some examples of out of control tongues in your own experience.*
- * *What do Jesus’ teachings in Matthew 15:11,18 tell us about the power of what we say?*

3. **Be patient** with others...**God is patient** with **you!**

- * *How can recognition of our own sinfulness strengthen our ministry and ability to avoid doing harm to others?*
- * *Read Matthew 18:21-35. Chilling as this parable is, how does it guide us in our desire to do no harm?*