

## The Golden Rule

Eric C. Coher

Matthew 7:12

---

*So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. Matthew 7:12*

The Golden Rule – One of the most universally praised, but most misunderstood verses of the Bible.

*People hear the Golden Rule and they praise it as marvelous and wonderful, and as a perfect summary of a great and involved subject. But the tragedy is that, having praised it, they do not implement it. After all, the law was not meant to be praised, it was meant to be practiced. Our Lord did not preach the Sermon on the Mount in order that you and I might comment upon it, but in order that we might carry it out.<sup>1</sup>*

Jesus will say that explicitly in verses 24-27...

*Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it." Matthew 7:24-27*

This verse is not the sum total of Christianity or God's plan for redemption. We should no more build our theology on the Golden Rule than we should build our astronomy on "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star".

"So" or "Therefore" – This verse is not detached from the context in which it falls. What is the context? The context is our judgment of others.

Therefore, in regards to your judgment of others, when it comes to the question of your relationship to other people, let this be the rule. This statement is the summing up of the whole subject of judgment.

---

<sup>1</sup> Martyn Lloyd Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976), 470.

## **WHY DON'T WE CARRY OUT THE GOLDEN RULE**

Because we are selfish. We are not to deal with others as others deal with us: That is selfishness and heathenism.

*And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these. Mark 12:30–31*

*Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, Philippians 2:3–5*

How we treat others is not to be determined by how we expect them to treat us or by how we think they *should* treat us, but by how we *want* them to treat us.

*It does not merely forbid all petty malice and revenge, all cheating and overreaching: it does much more, It settles a hundred difficult points, which in a world like this are continually arising between man and man; it prevents the necessity of laying down endless little rules for our conduct in specific cases; it sweeps the whole debatable ground with one mighty principle; it shows us a balance and measure, by which everyone may see at once what is his duty. Is there a thing we would not like our neighbor to do to us? Then let us always remember that this is the thing we ought not do to him. Is there anything we would like him to do us? Then this is the very thing we ought to do to him. How many intricate questions would be decided at once if this rule were honestly used?<sup>2</sup>*

## **AN IMPOSSIBLE STANDARD**

A man can only do what Jesus says if his mind is completely off himself and rather on the needs, cares, loves, joys, hopes, and dreams of others.

## **THIS STANDARD CONDEMNS US**

The purposes of this standard is to reveal that we cannot measure up to its demands.

## **HOW DO WE LIVE OUT THIS PRINCIPLE**

---

<sup>2</sup> J.C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on Matthew* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2012), 54.

1. We must realize that we cannot carry out this command on our own.

2. We must have a right view of God.

*And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. Mark 12:30*

We see God as: holy, righteous, worthy of honor and praise...

We see ourselves as: vile sinners, unclean, unworthy...

The response is: humility, no preoccupation with my own rights...

3. We must have a right view of man.

We see others as being in the same predicament that we are in. In need of the same grace.

4. We must be thankful that God doesn't treat us as our sins deserve.

*He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him. For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust. Psalm 103:10–14*

There is a reason that verse 12 is placed where it is... We are given the example in the preceding verses... Jesus said, "Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him" Matthew 7:9–11! This is the argument... God doesn't give us what we deserve; He gives us His good things in spite of who we are. He deals with us in grace. Now Jesus says, "you deal with your fellow man in the same manner."