

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

Intro: This verse from the lips of Jesus is famously known as the Golden Rule – a famous, well known verse!

Some believe this verse received the name “Golden Rule” because the Roman Emperor Alexander Severus (222-235AD) inscribed this rule on his palace walls in gold. He wasn’t even a believer!

But, all the Words of Jesus are golden! All the Words of God are golden! They have greatest value! Infinite value!

John 7:46: The officers answered, "No one ever spoke like this man!"

Matthew 7:29: He was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

Matthew 24:35: Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.

1. What Is The Context Of Jesus’ Golden Rule?

a. The context of the whole sermon: Matthew 5:17-20: Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸ For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹ Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

The way you wish that others would be patient with you & not get angry, you be patient with them-don’t get angry. The way you wish that others who have something against you would come to you and be reconciled to you, you go to them and be reconciled to them in that same way.

The way you wish that others would think of you and your wife (husband) or your daughters (sons) with a pure heart, you go and think of others with that same purity of heart.

The way you wish your spouse would be faithful to you in marriage, you go and be faithful to your spouse.

The way you wish that others would love you when you are acting in an unlovable way (even like an enemy), you go and love them in the same way when they are acting in an unlovable, enemy-like way.

The way you wish others would do good to you (because they genuinely trust & love God, & they genuinely love you. They are not doing good deeds for show or for themselves!), you go & love them with right motives as well.

b. The immediate context: Verses 1-6: The way you wish that others would judge you, you judge them in the same way: with love, believing the best about them, according to the Word of God, not as a hypocrite. The way you want to be confronted about your own sins, you confront others in the same way.

V. 7-11: Since your Father in heaven is so great, & He loves you so much & gives you His Holy Spirit & is at work in you to make you holy, you can & should live out this rule: you should be obedient to all the law & the prophets!

Piper: Love is the overflow of joy in God that gladly meets the needs of others.

c. This golden rule is impossible for people to obey apart from knowing God through Jesus Christ: GOSPEL

2. Did Jesus Copy This Command From Others?

a. Other religions have passive rules: Confucianism: Don’t do to others what you do not want them to do to you

Hinduism: This is the sum of duty: do not do to others what would cause pain if done to you

Buddhism: Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful

Judaism: Rabbi Hillel (1st Century Rabbi): What is hurtful to you, do not do to others. This is the Torah, the rest is commentary. Go and learn it.

You can do absolutely nothing for other people and obey these rules! “You’ve never done anything to hurt me!”

We can be passive in our Christian lives: passive in evangelism, passive in discipleship, passive in hospitality, passive in doing the hard work of getting to know others, passive in love: we just don't do hurtful things.

b. Jesus' command here is different in that it's positive: Ligonier: We can keep [these other rules in their] negative form without lifting a finger. If we do not want others to steal from us, for example, we only need to refrain from theft. But the positive form is unknown prior to Jesus and is much more demanding. Doing unto others is a call to service. We want others to love us, and so we must first love them. We want to be prosperous, and thus we must first share what we have. The Golden Rule reveals that kingdom citizens put others first, endeavoring to love them as Christ has first loved us.

D. A. Carson: it [the Golden Rule] speaks against sins of omission as well as sins of commission. The goats in 25:31-46 would be acquitted under the negative form of the rule but not under the form [Jesus gives].

Consider the parable of the good Samaritan: The robbers did the exact opposite; the priest and Levite who didn't help the man who was robbed and beaten and left half dead did what all those other religions say to do: **Judaism:** Rabbi Hillel (famous 1st Century Rabbi): What is hurtful to you, do not do to others.

But the Good Samaritan followed Jesus' Golden Rule: **Matt. 7:12:** So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them

c. Jesus is teaching us the heart of the law and the prophets: Leviticus 19:18: You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

- **Leviticus 19:34:** You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

- **Matthew 22:36-40:** Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"³⁷ And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."³⁸ This is the great and first commandment.³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets." (You don't need to learn to love yourself first; Father love!)

- **Galatians 5:13-14:** do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

- **Romans 12:9-18:** Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.¹⁰ Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.¹¹ Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.¹² Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.¹³ Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be conceited.¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all.¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

3. The Golden Rule Is A Command To Love, Die To Selfishness, And Think Of Others Before Yourselves

1 Corinthians 13:1-8: If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.² And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.³ If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.⁴ Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;⁶ it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.⁷ Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.⁸ Love never ends.

In the same way you wish others would be patient with you, be patient with them.

In the same way you wish others would be kind to you, be kind to them.

In the same way you wish others would not envy you, do not envy them.

In the same way you wish others would be humble & not boast around you, be humble & don't boast around them.
In the same way you wish others would not be arrogant and rude to you, do not be arrogant and rude to them.
In the same way you wish others would not insist on their own way with you, you don't insist on your own way.
In the same way you wish others would not be irritable or resentful toward you, you don't be irritable or resentful.
In the same way you wish others would not rejoice in the things you do wrong, you should not rejoice in the failures, sins, and wrongdoing of others.

In the same way you wish others would rejoice in the truth about you and tell the truth about you, you rejoice in the truth and tell the truth about them.

In the same way you wish others would always bear with you, believe the best about you, have great hopes for you, and endure all things for you and with you, you bear with them, believe the best about them, have great hopes for them, and endure all things for and with them.

In the same way you wish others will keep loving you no matter what, you keep loving them no matter what forever!

- **Matthew 16:24:** Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him **deny himself** and **take up his cross** and **follow me**."

- **Philippians 2:1-4:** So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ² complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

- 1) When you are dead in your sins and on your way to hell, would you want someone to tell you how to escape?
- 2) When you love a particular toy and you want to play with it, would you want your sister to share it with you?
- 3) Husbands and wives, when you want something from your spouse, would you want them to give it to you?
- 4) Drivers, are you happy when you are trying to merge into traffic and someone lets you in? Do so to others!
- 5) Would you like a note or word of encouragement from someone about how they see God working in your life?
- 6) Would you like to be invited over for a meal?
- 7) Would you like someone to give you a ride somewhere when you need it?
- 8) Would you like to be judged based on the content of your character & not on the basis of the color of your skin?
- 9) Would you like to be born and not killed by your own parents in the womb through an abortion?
- 10) Would you like to be visited when you are sick?
- 11) Would you like to be prayed for?
- 12) Would you like to be helped in your time of need?

Live a life in which you try to get into others' minds and consider what would make them happy, what they love, what they desire and want (**all guided by Scripture**) and seek to love them and do for them in those ways!

Boice: [Because we are transformed people by the work of Christ & the work of the Holy Spirit, we are to get our minds off of ourselves and] fix our attention on the needs, cares, loves, joys, hopes, and dreams of other people.

Stephen Witmer (Put God Back In The Golden Rule): 1. Jesus does not say, "Whatever others have done for you, do also for them." He doesn't limit our good deeds that way. The measure of our service to others is not their actual service to us, but what we'd like that service to be. "Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them." There's an invitation, limited only by our own desire and imagination. One of the distinctive marks of Jesus's followers is that they regularly go above and beyond what others expect.

2. Jesus does not say, "If there are a few things you wish others would do to you, do these also to them." He doesn't limit our good deeds that way. Instead, he says, "Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them." The word "whatever" (literally, "everything whatsoever") is very broad. It may include cutting a neighbor's grass when he's out of town, having a lonely friend over for dinner, writing a note to express appreciation, and so much more. The upper limit is our desire and imagination.

3. Jesus does not say, “Whatever you wish your best friends, and fellow Christians, and people who like you would do to you, do also to them.” He doesn’t limit our good deeds that way. He says, “Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them.” Others encompasses anyone in our lives. It includes the grumpy neighbor, the kid in your class no one likes, the spouse or child you’re struggling to understand, even the people who don’t love you back.

We are able to obey the Golden Rule as Christians (1) because of Jesus’ finished work and (2) by constantly looking to Jesus and His finished work: Philippians 2:3-11: Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus had everything done to Him what we, in our greatest imaginations of horror, pain, suffering, & sadness, would never want done to us! He took upon Himself all the curses of the law and the prophets so that we would never be cursed! And He rose up!

Christ Jesus Did What All Should Do
What You Wish Others Do To You
He Did To Them The Perfect Jew
He Loved Like No One Ever Knew
Fulfilled The Law And Prophets Too
Yet Sinners Hate The God-Man Slew
He Took God’s Wrath And Curse We’re Due

The Sinless Lamb Of God It’s True
He Died And Rose To Death Undo
By Faith Alone We’re Righteous Through
The Holy Spirit Called And Drew
So We Will Love And Sin Subdue
Christ’s Golden Rule We Live Pursue
For Jesus Has Made All Things New!