

Matthew 7:12 – “The Golden Rule”

Introduction

I. The context of the Golden Rule

- A. In Matthew 7:12 we come to the _____ of Jesus teaching on the specific requirements and demands of kingdom living (in the Sermon on the Mount.)
- B. Much of Jesus’ teaching in the Sermon on the Mount has had to do with how we relate to our _____.
1. In all of this teaching, Jesus has simply been making clear to us what was all along the true _____ of the Law and the Prophets.
 2. Matthew 5:17 – 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.
 3. Matthew 7:12 – For this is the Law and the Prophets.
 4. The Golden Rule is meant to be a one verse _____ of *all* that the Sermon on the Mount has said about our relationships with each other (cf. Luke 6:27-31).
 5. In fact, it also sums up all the ethical teaching in the *entire* _____.

II. The Silver Rule versus the Golden Rule

- A. The Silver Rule – “Do _____ to others what you would _____ wish done to yourself.” (Confucius; cf. Stoicism, Buddhism, Judaism, etc.)
- B. The Golden Rule – “_____ to others what you would wish _____ to yourself.”
- C. It’s the difference between doing _____ and doing _____!

III. The Golden Rule

- A. “Whatever...”
1. Greek – “*All then as much as...*”
 2. “All things whatsoever” (KJV); “In _____” (NIV; NASB; NRSV)

- B. "...you wish..."
1. (Jesus is not including wishes that are contrary to God's will.)
 2. This teaching assumes nothing less than my _____ world.
- C. "...that others would do to you..."
- ✓ We are all highly trained and highly knowledgeable _____ when it comes to *whatever* we could possibly *wish* that others would do to us!
- D. "...do also to them..."
1. "_____!"
 2. *Do* to others _____ you _____ that they would do to you!
 3. Make your *ideal* world a _____ for your neighbor.
- E. "... for this is the Law and the Prophets."
1. We do not treat others the way we want them to treat us in order to _____ the chances that we'll be treated the way we want to be treated!
 2. We must treat others the way we want them to treat us because this is what Jesus, our Master and King, _____.
 3. If we are experts when it comes to *whatever* we could possibly *wish* that others would do to us, then we must also be experts in the _____ and the _____!
 4. And yet it is precisely this expertise that _____ us.
 5. The Golden Rule _____ us (Matthew 25:31-46) and exposes our desperate need for the _____.
- F. "So..."
1. Jesus wants us to hear the Golden Rule only in the light of verses 7-11.
 2. No, *we* cannot attain to the Golden Rule in ourselves. But if we sincerely ask, it will be _____ to us. If we earnestly seek, we will _____. And if we knock with all of our hearts, it will be _____ to us.

Teaching our Children

- Q. If we can keep the Golden Rule, then how much of God's Law are we obeying?
- A. To keep the Golden Rule is to obey *all* of God's Law! ("For this is the Law and the Prophets")
- Q. What is the Golden Rule?
- A. "Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them."
(*Do* to others what you wish others would *do* to you)
- Q. What is the Silver Rule?
- A. Do *not* do to others what you would *not* wish others to do to you.
- Q. What is the difference between these two rules? (Ask for examples?) Why is the Golden Rule so much harder to keep?
- A. ~ We can keep the Silver Rule as long as we don't do anything at all! (I won't speak an unkind word to my brother because I know I wouldn't want him to speak unkindly to me.)
~ In order to keep the Golden Rule there is a lot that we have to *do*! (I will speak words of encouragement and appreciation to my sister because I know how much I like it when people appreciate and encourage me.)
~ (Spend some time reflecting on what a big difference this is! Talk about the words "*whatever*" and "*wish*" and help your children to see how *much* God requires of us in the Golden Rule!!! Think of other applications of the Golden Rule.)
- Q. Do we treat others the way we want to be treated so that hopefully they will treat us the way we want to be treated? [Feel free to try and say this more simply!]
- A. No! We must do to others *whatever* we *wish* they would do to us because this is Jesus' command!
We should never be concerned with whether other people treat us the way we want to be treated.
- Q. Can you keep/obey the Golden Rule?
- A. No. The Golden Rule condemns us. (Don't be "flippant" with this answer. Model trembling and a sober spirit to your children.)
- Q. The Golden Rule shows us that we have a great need for what?
- A. We have a great need for the Gospel! (Don't be "flippant" with this answer either! Model a truly grateful and joyful spirit to your children.)
- Q. We can never obey the Golden Rule in our own strength. But if we have trusted in Jesus, how can we receive *God's* strength to obey the Golden Rule?
- A. If we earnestly and sincerely ask with all of our hearts, we *will* receive God's strength (grace)! (Matthew 7:7-11)