

THE GOLDEN RULE

Matt 7:12

INTRODUCTION

- A. Have you ever found yourself in a situation faced with the need to make a decision on the spur of the moment? Wondering what is the right way to act? Unable to recall whether the Bible specifically addresses the moral dilemma in which you find yourself?
- B. Jesus provides a helpful tool in such a situation, a quick and easy way to know what to do, something that is easy to remember
- C. It is found in Mt 7:12, and is commonly called "The Golden Rule"
- D. But what is "The Golden Rule"? Was Jesus teaching anything new or original by what He stated?

DISCUSSION:

I. THE "GOLDEN" RULE VS. THE "SILVER" RULES

- A. Many have taught that which is similar
 - 1. HINDU religion taught: This is the sum of duty: do naught to others which if done to thee would cause thee pain.
- The Mahabharata (a work from India)
 - 2. BUDDHIST religion taught: Hurt not others with that which pains yourself. – (Udanavarga an early Buddhist collection)
 - 3. JEWISH traditions taught: What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow men. That is the entire Law; all the rest is commentary. – The Talmud (Jewish religious law)
 - 4. MUSLIM religion taught: No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself.
- The Hadith (collection of sayings of Muhammad)
 - 5. BAHAI' faith teaches: He should not wish for others that which he doth not wish for himself, nor promise that which he doth not fulfil. – Book of Certitude (writer in Baghdad 1861/62)
 - 6. Some other sources:
 - a. Do not that to thy neighbor that thou wouldst not suffer from him. - Pittacus (a Greek statesman 650-570 BC)
 - b. What you do not want others to do to you, do not do to others. - Confucius (Chinese philosopher 551-479 BC)
 - c. Do not do unto others what angers you if done to you by others. - Isocrates (Greek orator 436-338 BC)
- B. Jesus' "rule" was slightly different
 - 1. It requires you to do something favorably to others, while the others only prohibit you from doing something unfavorably
Jesus: Do unto others what you want them to do to you.
Others: Don't do to others what you don't want done to you
 - 2. With the others, all that is required is don't harm other people; Jesus required you to show kindness to others
 - 3. Jesus' rule is truly the "Golden" rule the others are "Silver" rules which are of value, but not as much as "gold"

- 4. Only ones coming close to what Jesus taught was: that found in Hadith, the traditions of Islam; but, much of Islam is based on what Jesus taught 600 years before Mohammed and that stated by Seneca, who lived about same time as Christ (wonder if he was influenced by the teachings of Christ?)

- C. What Jesus taught was something new compared to what many had taught prior. But in another sense it was nothing new; rather, a simple and easy to remember statement.

II. A GUIDELINE FOR RIGHTEOUS CONDUCT TOWARDS OTHERS

- A. In harmony with law and prophets. Matt 5:20-48 (read from tablet)
 - 1. Jesus taught a standard of righteousness contrasted with Scribes and Pharisees, but it was in harmony with what the Law actually revealed (emphasize "but I say unto you")
 - 2. Summarizes what Law and Prophets were all about
 - 3. Just as the commandment "Love your neighbor as yourself" summed up the Law according to Paul Rom 13:8-10
- B. A sort of "pocket knife" or "carpenter's rule"; something always ready to be used. Treat others as you would be treated, and it is unlikely you will ever do the wrong thing

III. SOME EXAMPLES OF HOW TO APPLY THIS "RULE"

- A. In teaching the lost imagine what it must be like to be told you are wrong, or in sin. Wouldn't you want to be told in a loving and patient spirit? 2Tim 2:24-26; Eph 4:15
- B. In correcting one another: no one likes to have their mistakes, errors, etc., pointed out. When necessary, wouldn't we prefer to be approached with a meek and patient spirit? Gal 6:1-2
- C. In treating our family, neighbors, enemies: everyone likes to have loving families, good neighbors, and no enemies.
 - 1. Applying the golden rule will not only transform ourselves, but may also transform those around us!
 - 2. Sibling rivalry would cease; neighborly squabbles would be non-existent; enemies would become friends.
 - 3. Don't limit application of Golden Rule to religious matters!

CONCLUSION

- A. "The Golden Rule would reconcile capital and labor, all political contention and uproar, all selfishness and greed." Joseph Parker (1830-1902)
 - 1. Such would be the impact on society if we followed Jesus' words
 - 2. But let's start close to home, and let the Golden Rule transform our own lives and those closest to us!
- B. "We have committed the Golden Rule to memory; let us now commit it to life." Edwin Markham (1852-1940)
 - 1. Most people; know the rule, but don't live by it
 - 2. If Jesus is truly our Lord, then His "golden rule" will govern our life