

Practicing the Golden Rule

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: Matthew 7:12

Most people, religious or not, recognize the “golden rule” – do unto others as you would have them do unto you. This is based upon Jesus’ statement in our text. We know the statement, but how do we put it into practice?

We Must Take the Initiative

- Jesus did not say, “Treat others as they treat you,” He said to treat them how you want them to treat you – the kindness of others is not a prerequisite to this command; if people do not treat us well, we are still to show love
- People may not treat us the way we would like – could be as simple as ignoring/disregarding us (2 Timothy 4:16); could also take the form of persecution (2 Timothy 3:12); we must learn to turn the other cheek (Matthew 5:38-41)
- We are not to treat others as they treat us, but as we would want them to treat us – this is the Law and the Prophets; this is what God has been consistently teaching His people (Romans 13:8-10; Matthew 22:39-40)

Why Are We to Treat Others This Way?

- It is commanded – we are to do what He has taught (Matthew 28:18-20); if we are wise, we will hear and obey His word (Matthew 7:24); if we love Him, we will keep His commandments (John 14:15)
- The value of each person – treat others this way because they are worth treating this way; man was made in God’s image (Genesis 1:27); Jesus willingly died on the cross for each person (John 3:16; 1 Timothy 1:15); everyone is worth the same before God (cf. Exodus 30:11-16)
- Our relationship with God – God deals with us in the way we deal with others (Matthew 6:14-15; 7:1-2); if we love God, we must love others (1 John 4:11, 20-21)

How Should We Treat Others?

- Show respect – put others first (Philippians 2:3-4; Romans 12:10); be willing to forgive (Matthew 6:14; 18:21-22); strive to live in peace (Romans 12:17-21; Ephesians 4:2-3)
- Help them when they are in need – we must do good as we have the opportunity (Galatians 6:10; cf. Luke 10:30-37); failing to help those in need, when we are able to do so, indicts our faith (James 2:14-17)
- Lead them to the truth – if we were wrong, we would want others to correct us; do this with gentleness (2 Timothy 2:24-25) and humility (Titus 3:2-3); we need to learn how to talk to others about spiritual matters (Colossians 4:6; Ephesians 4:15)

Conclusion

- Regardless of how others treat us, we are to treat them with love and respect
- Let us treat others how we want them to treat us so the Lord will treat us how we want Him to treat us