

**Sunday, October 25, 2009**

**Matthew 7.12  
Golden Rule  
SWCOB 10.25.09**

Several men were in the locker room,  
Of an elite exercise club,  
When a cell phone laying on the bench rang.

Without hesitation, a man picked up the phone,  
And the following conversation took place:

“Hello?”

“Honey, it’s me.”

“Sugar!”

“I’m at the mall two blocks from the club,  
I saw a beautiful mink coat.

It is absolutely gorgeous!  
Can I buy it?  
It’s only \$1,500?”

“Well, okay, if you like it that much.”

“Thanks, baby! And oh, I also stopped by the Mercedes dealer,  
And saw the new models.

I saw one I really like.  
I spoke with the salesman,  
And he gave me a really great price.”

“How much?”

“Only \$60,000!”

“Well, okay. But for that price I want it with all the options.”

“Great! Before we hang up, there’s something else.

It might seem like a lot, but, well,  
I stopped by to see the real estate agent this morning,

And I saw the house we had looked at last year.

It’s on sale!

Remember?

The beachfront property,  
With the pool and the English garden?"

"How much are they asking?"

"Only \$450,000, a magnificent price,  
And we have that much in the bank to cover it."

"Well, go ahead and buy it,  
But put in a bid for \$420,000, okay?"

"Okay, sweetie. Thanks!  
I'll see you later!  
I love you!"

The man hung up the phone,  
Lifted it in the air, and said,  
"Does anyone know who this phone belongs to?"

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**Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.**

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Matthew 7.12,  
Is commonly known as the Golden Rule.

Whether you are a Christian or not,  
You have at least heard of the Golden Rule.

It maybe the last remnant of Christian teaching,  
In our schools today.

Most everyone would agree that it is indeed,  
A most valuable gem of wisdom.

As a matter of fact,  
Most religions have a saying similar to the Golden Rule.

The Buddhist says it this way:  
"Hurt not others in ways,  
That you yourself would find it hurtful."

The Jewish faith says,  
"Whatever is displeasing to you,  
Do not do to your neighbor."

The Muslims have a similar saying;  
"No one of you is a believer  
Until he desires for his brother,

That which he desires for himself.”

And finally the Baha’i faith states,  
“Blessed is he who  
Preferreth his brother,  
Before himself.”

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The Golden Rule is great ethical advice.

The world would be a better place,  
If we all lived by the Golden Rule.

But even though it is a truth we should live by,  
It doesn’t seem as if we are able to.

Our society today  
With its self-centeredness, violence, and corruption,  
Is evidence of our inability to live by the Rule.  
Because when you take the Golden Rule out of the Bible,  
It becomes nothing more than a piece of secular wisdom.

The Golden Rule loses its mooring.  
It becomes separated from its source,  
It is torn away from its roots.

A lot of non-religious people,  
Would want to lift up the Golden Rule,  
Without lifting up the One who proclaimed it.

The Golden Rule doesn’t stand on its own.

It is built on the foundation of Jesus Christ.

A Native American chief, after hearing the Golden Rule, said,

“It is impossible. It cannot be done.

“If the Great Spirit that made man,  
Would give man a new heart,  
He could do as you say,  
But not else.”

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It is in Jesus Christ,  
That we are given a new heart.

It is in Jesus Christ  
And through His Holy Spirit,  
That it becomes possible to live the Golden Rule.

It is in Jesus that we find the fuel,  
To power our lives,  
Towards a higher standard of living!

It is in Jesus alone!

We cannot live by the Golden Rule,  
Until we live in the One who said it!

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Jesus said,  
**So in everything,  
Do to others what you would have them do to you,**

**For this sums up the Law and the Prophets.”**

In Jesus the Law is LOVE.

When Jesus was confronted by a lawyer,  
And was asked which of the commandments is the greatest,  
Jesus responded with not one but two,

**‘Love the Lord your God,  
With all you heart and with all your soul,  
And with all your mind.’**

**This is the first and greatest commandment,  
And the second is like it;**

**“Love your neighbor as yourself.’**

**All the law and prophets hang on these two commandments.  
(Matthew 22.34-40)**

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Paul, in Galatians 5.14 says the same thing,

**The entire law is summed up in a single command:  
‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’**

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Why is it so hard to do?

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Why is it that society cannot live by the Golden Rule?

C. S. Lewis, the great Christian apologist suggests:

“A Christian society is not going to arrive,  
Until most of us really want it.

And we’re not going to want it,

Until we become fully Christian.

I may repeat,  
'Do as you would be done by'  
Till I'm blue in the face,

But I cannot really carry it out,  
Until I love my neighbor as myself.

And I cannot learn to love my neighbor as myself,  
Until I learn to love God.

And I cannot learn to love God  
Except by learning to obey him."

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I would add that you can't learn to love God,  
Until you fully experience God's love for you!

Jesus says in John 15.12,

**My command is this:  
Love each other as I have loved you.**

Now this is the crux of the matter.

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"The last thing Lashanda Calloway saw before she died,  
Was people literally stepping over her  
To continue shopping as if nothing happened."

This was the beginning of an article,  
In the Houston Chronicle dated 7.4.07.

"Calloway had stopped to shop in a convenience store in Wichita,  
When she was stabbed in an altercation.  
As she lay dying,  
A surveillance camera recorded no less than five people  
Stepping over her to continue down the store's aisles.

Only one stopped briefly . . . to take a picture of Calloway,  
With a cell phone camera.

'It was tragic to watch,' police spokesman Gordon Bassham said,  
'The fact that people were more interested,  
In taking a picture with a cell phone,  
And shopping for snacks,

Than helping this innocent young woman is,  
Frankly, revolting.'"

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**Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.**

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The Golden Rule is a wonderful teaching.

And it would be great to think that all we have to do  
Is to convince everyone to live by the Golden Rule  
And everything will turn out okay.

The fact of the matter is that everyone pretty much knows  
That the Golden Rule is the better way to live  
And still won't live up to its standard.

There needs to be something more compelling,  
For people to live by,  
Than just wishing people would treat you nicely.

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you,  
Isn't going to save the world.

God is going to save the world,  
One soul at a time.

The world's plea should be the psalmist's plea,  
Found in Psalm 51.10-12;

**Create in me a pure heart, O God,  
And renew a steadfast spirit within me.**

**Do not cast me from your presence  
Or take the Holy Spirit from me,  
Restore to me the joy of your salvation  
And grant me a willing spirit to sustain me.**

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We Christians practice the Golden Rule,  
Not because it makes sense.

But because we have been liberated from the shackle of our sins,  
And we have found salvation in the Lord, Jesus.

And we are now empowered to live and love,  
As Christ lived and loved.

It is not so much that we want people to treat us,  
As we treat them,

Rather it is that, through Christ,  
We are willing to be love risk-takers,  
And love others who may not love us.

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There is a sign on a wall in a children's home,  
In Calcutta, India.

On it are written these words:

“People are unreasonable, illogical, and self-centered.  
Love them anyway.

If you are kind,  
People will accuse you of selfish ulterior motives,  
Be kind anyway.  
If you are successful,  
You will win some false friends,  
And true enemies,  
Succeed anyway.

The good you do today,  
Will be forgotten tomorrow.  
Be good anyway.

Honesty and frankness will make you vulnerable,  
Be honest and frank anyway.

What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight,  
Build anyway.

People need help but may attack you if you try to help them,  
Help them anyway.

In the final analysis,  
It is between you and God.

It was never between you and them anyway.”

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Do not practice the Golden Rule,  
Because it makes sense,  
You'll fail miserably.

Rather, ask God to come into your life,  
To fill you with the joy of salvation.

Ask God to forgive you and restore you.  
Ask God to fill you full of his love.

And then and only then,  
Can you love God with all your heart,  
And with all your soul,  
And with all your mind.  
Then, you'll do unto others as you would have them do unto you.