

The Golden Rule

Ponder: “Just do it!”

Scripture: “Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets” (Matt. 7:12, NKJV).

It sounds so simple. And really, it is! Whatever you want people to do to you, do also to them. Conversely, don't do to others what you don't want them to do to you. “For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (Gal. 4:14). And “love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law” (Rom. 13:10).

I have no difficulty knowing how I want to be treated. Love, kindness, consideration, understanding, and patience are easy to recognize and universally desired by practically everyone. My problem is in demonstrating those admirable traits in my conduct toward other people.

When I'm unhappy with someone, it's uncomfortable for me to approach that person, explain my displeasure, and ask for resolution. It's easier to complain about it to a third party, especially if I think they'll sympathize with me. However, it irks me when someone is upset with me, but they talk to others about it rather than giving me an opportunity to explain or apologize.

That's inconsistent, isn't it? As the saying goes, “What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander!” If I expect others to follow the Golden Rule when dealing with me, then I must overcome my discomfort and abide by it when interacting with them.

Conflicts are not the only times the Golden Rule applies. In every relationship with people, we ought to treat them as we want to be treated. Whether they are fellow-Christians, neighbors, friends, or strangers, we owe it to them and to the Lord to be Christ-like in our behavior toward them. “Having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation” (1 Pet. 2:12).

Indeed, those who don't know the Lord might be so shocked to be treated with kindness and respect that they want to know the reason behind it. Today and every day, make a special effort to apply the Golden Rule!

Song: “Oh, To Be Like Thee”

Prayer: Kind Father, we plead for Your forgiveness where we have treated others in ways we would not want them to treat us. Help us, we pray, to value every soul, and to practice the Golden Rule in all of our dealings. In Jesus' name, Amen.